

# Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

## GUYANA | APRIL 2024

Climate change presents a clear and continuing threat to food security and livelihoods in the Caribbean. Increased climate variability destabilises food systems by disrupting production, access and availability. This increased climate variability, along with high living costs, poses additional challenges for already vulnerable households, particularly those reliant on climate-sensitive livelihoods such as farming and fishing, to manage and recover from shocks.

To inform decision-making in the Caribbean, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey to highlight the impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and the effect of natural hazards on food security and livelihoods over time. The online survey was circulated via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails.

This report analyses data for Guyana 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. 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 Guyana surveys

	Apr 2024	May 2023	Aug 2022	Feb 2022	Jun 2020	Apr 2020	
<b>LIVELIHOODS</b>	Disrupted livelihoods	50%	64%	68%	65%	61%	81%
	Reduction/loss of income	25%	37%	51%	56%	63%	38%
<b>MARKETS</b>	Lack of market access	39%	57%	61%	44%	32%	20%
	Change in shopping behaviour	82%	91%	92%	94%	93%	87%
	Increase in food prices	97%	95%	97%	80%	81%	68%
<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>	Reduced food consumption	33%	42%	45%	36%	34%	16%
	Lack of food stock	23%	28%	27%	24%	7%	3%



**April 2024**

**600**

Respondents

66% Female | 34% Male

**May 2023**

**1151**

Respondents

74% Female | 26% Male

**Aug 2022**

**675**

Respondents

65% Female | 35% Male

**Feb 2022**

**391**

Respondents

88% Female | 12% Male

**Feb 2021**

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

**Jun 2020**

**176**

Respondents

64% Female | 36% Male

**Apr 2020**

**288**

Respondents

72% Female | 28% Male

**METHODOLOGY** | The survey was conducted thanks to the support of WFP's donors. The online survey was circulated via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails. 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.



## Natural Hazards

Guyana remains susceptible to a range of natural hazards partially attributable to its geography and natural landscape. Flooding and droughts are the predominant hazards, affecting both coastal and inland regions. Six major floods are recorded in the Emergency Events Database for Guyana, between 2000 - 2021, affecting a 762,000 people and causing a total of US\$677.8M in damages.

In this survey, 45 percent of respondents reported experiencing natural hazards in the past year, primarily heatwaves (30 percent) and drought (20 percent). Forty-four percent of those respondents were moderately affected, while 17 percent reported severe impact from the natural hazards experienced. In 2023, Guyana experienced a prolonged dry season which had harmful effects on agricultural production, and the availability and cost of essential food supplies.



## Macro-Economic Dynamics

Food imports account for 56 percent of all food trade in Guyana (excluding fish; FAOSTAT, 2022). Fluctuations in regional and global food prices impact the price of imported commodities and exports such as rice and oil.

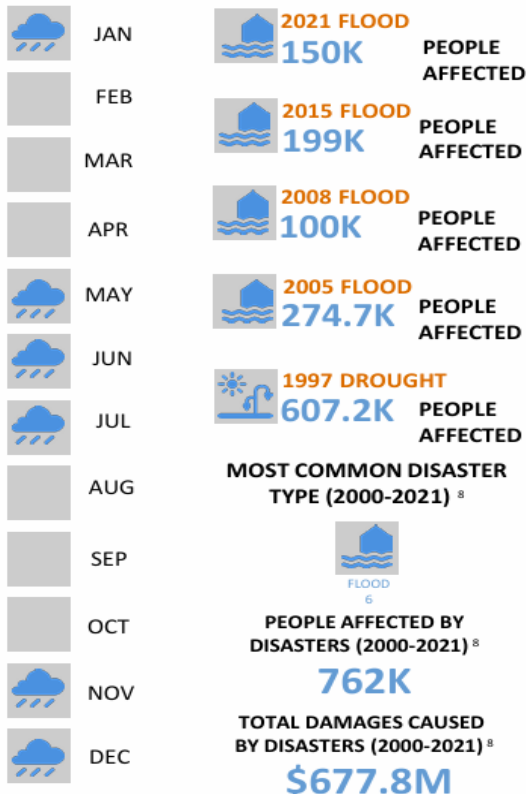
According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices fell by 12 percent in January 2024 compared to January 2023, and by 29 percent since peaking in March 2022. Food inflation in Guyana increased 4.6 percent in March 2024 over the previous 12 months and remains higher than general inflation.

Most survey respondents from Guyana continue to report significant increases in the price of food, housing, healthcare and gas. Notable increases were also observed across a range of other essential goods and services (see page 3).

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

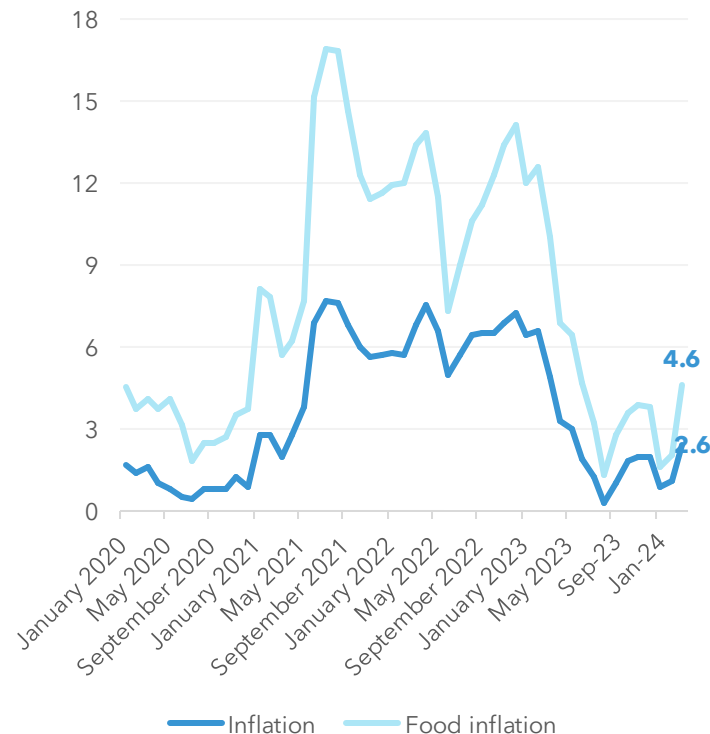
Source: OCHA - Guyana Country Profiles - EMDAT

#### SEASONAL RISK — SIGNIFICANT DISASTERS\*



### Inflation in Guyana (Jan 2020 - Jan 2024; %)

Source: Guyana Bureau of Statistics





## Markets

### Nearly every four out of ten respondents from Guyana reported that they had difficulty accessing markets

in the 30 days prior to the survey, reduced from 57 percent May 2023. Nevertheless, more than half (56 percent) of respondents with below or well below average household income had difficulty accessing markets compared to 18 percent for respondents with above and well above average household income. More respondents from female headed households (44 percent) also reported challenges accessing markets than those from households headed by males (33 percent).

### Respondents continue to experience increases in essential goods and services.

Almost all survey respondents (97%) reported increases in the price of food in the three months prior to the survey. A substantial number of respondents also reported increases in the price of housing (85%), gas (82%), healthcare (76%), and electricity (72%).

### Lack of money to spend continues to be the main barrier to market access for respondents in Guyana.

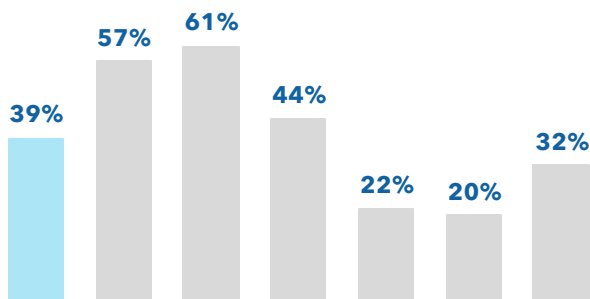
Almost all respondents (96 percent) indicated lack of funds as the main reason they were unable to access the markets in the 30 days prior to the survey. These results were consistent across income, age, and sex disaggregation. However, more respondents relying on informal labour or assistance from family and friends reported difficulties with transportation and distance to markets as barriers to market access.

### To cope with these challenges, most respondents (82 percent) have adjusted their shopping behaviours.

Majority of respondents adjusted their shopping habits by buying smaller quantities than usual (69%), buying cheaper or less preferred foods (64%), and going to different stores (40%). More female respondents reported buying smaller quantities and cheaper or less preferred foods, but more males reported going to different stores to shop.

### 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.



Apr-24 May-23 Aug-22 Feb-22 Feb-21 Apr-20 Jun-20

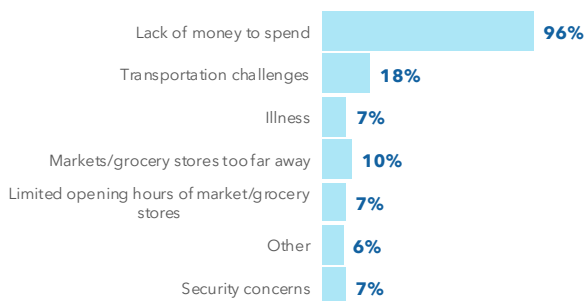
### Respondents reporting a change in the costs of the commodities in the 3 months prior to the survey

Significant increase   Increase   No change   Decrease   Significant decrease

Commodity	Significant increase	Increase	No change	Decrease	Significant decrease
Food	70%	27%	3%	0%	0%
Gas	34%	48%	17%	1%	0%
Housing	57%	28%	11%	0%	4%
Health	36%	40%	20%	1%	0%
Electricity	32%	44%	22%	1%	0%
Other fuels	25%	44%	21%	1%	0%
Transport	29%	46%	23%	1%	0%
Education	31%	38%	24%	1%	0%
Water	20%	42%	36%	0%	0%

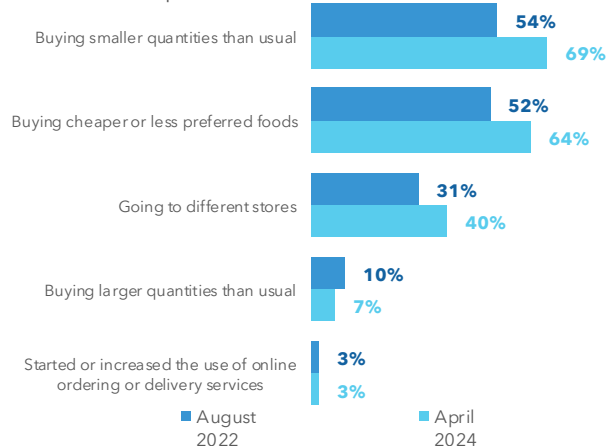
### For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 30 days, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.



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

Multiple choices could be selected.





## Livelihoods

**Half of respondents experienced disruptions to their livelihood activities** in the month prior to the survey. Livelihood disruptions were more widespread among respondents whose household income levels were below or well below average (64 percent) compared to those with above or well above average (24 percent). Large disparities were also observed by source of income, with 62 percent of respondents whose main income source was informal labour reporting that they experienced disruptions to their livelihood, compared to 46 percent for respondents with regular employment.

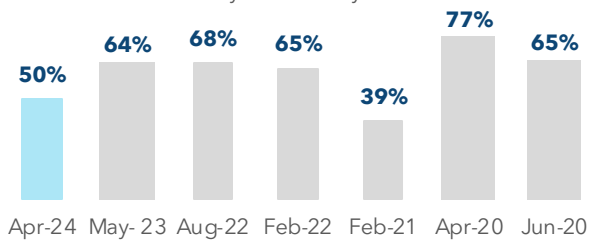
**High cost of livelihood inputs continues to be the main contributor**, as reported by 70 percent of respondents affected by livelihood disruptions. Respondents involved in agricultural activities reported increased cost of vital inputs, particularly fertilizer, animal feed, tools and material, and seeds.

**A quarter of households experienced loss of job or reduced income** in the six months prior to the survey. While this represents a decline from May 2023, the percentage of respondents who resorted secondary or alternative sources of income remains unchanged (29 percent) and has steadily increased since June 2020. This is an indication that households are still adapting to the challenges caused by high cost of living.

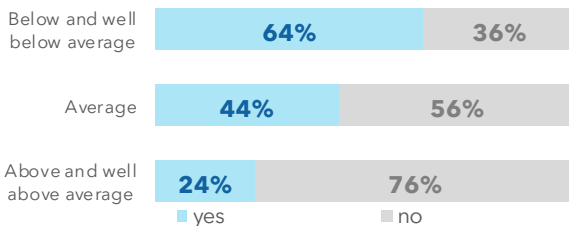
**Households with lower education and income levels experienced more widespread livelihood disruptions.** One hundred percent of respondents with no formal education as the highest household education level resorted to secondary sources of income. Further, 43 percent of respondents whose household income was well below average experiencing loss of jobs or reduced income compared to only 12 percent among those with well above average household 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.



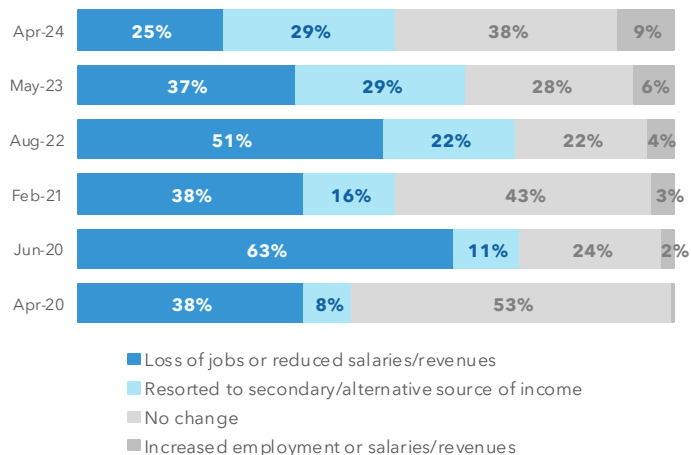
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey By perceived income level



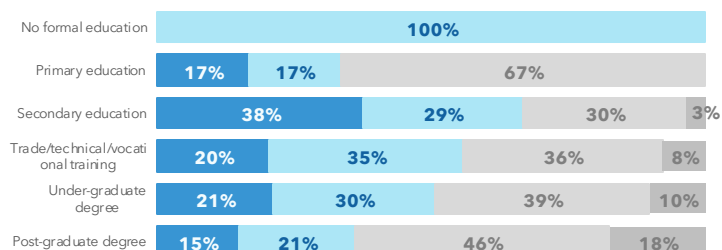
*"Loss of my husband has caused my household income to decrease. I haven't taken any steps to change that as I do not know what can be done."* - female, 45, Guyana

### 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.



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





## Coping Strategies

**Households in Guyana continue to utilize negative coping strategies to meet their immediate food needs.** In the 30 days prior to the survey, almost half (46 percent) of respondents decreased the amount spent on essential non-food expenditure including education and health. Two-thirds of respondents resorted to utilizing their savings to meet immediate food needs, while a quarter sold productive assets to meet food needs.

**Lower income households were significantly more likely to apply negative coping strategies** than those with higher income. In the 7 days before the survey, 88 percent of respondents from lower income households utilized savings to meet essential food needs, compared to 50 percent of higher income households. Moreover, 64 percent of respondents from lower income households resorted to reducing essential non-food expenditure to meet immediate food needs, compared to just 37 percent of those from higher income households.



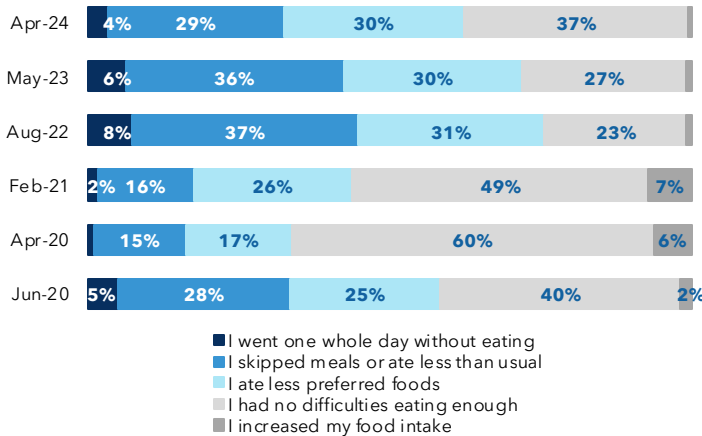
## Food Consumption

**Food consumption patterns have shown very slight improvements,** with 63 percent of respondents reporting that they ate less preferred food, skipped meals or ate less than usual, or went an entire day without eating. This represents only a marginal improvement from the 72 percent reported in May 2023.

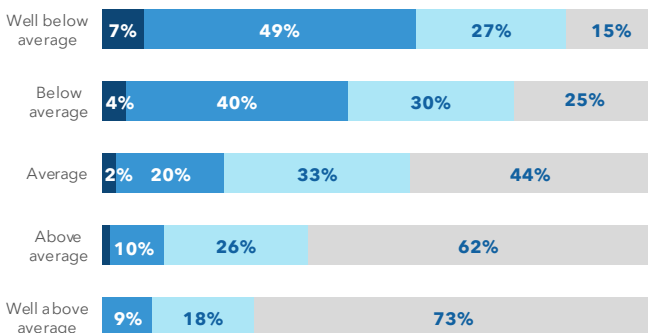
**Worryingly, nearly half (49 percent) of respondents from households with well below average income skipped meals or ate less than usual.** More female respondents also reported utilizing these food consumption patterns as well as respondents whose primary source of income was informal labour or support from family and friends.

**Nearly two thirds of respondents had no food stock** at home, while 43 percent had less than one-week of food supplies at home.

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

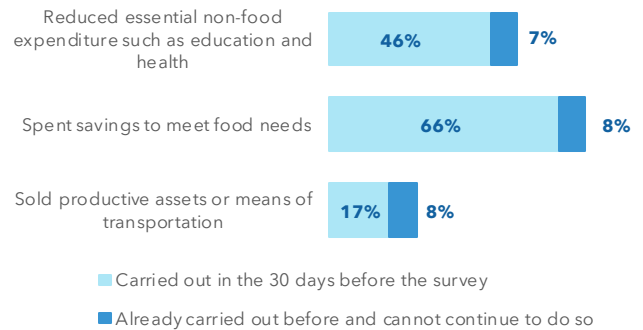


**Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days? By perceived income level**

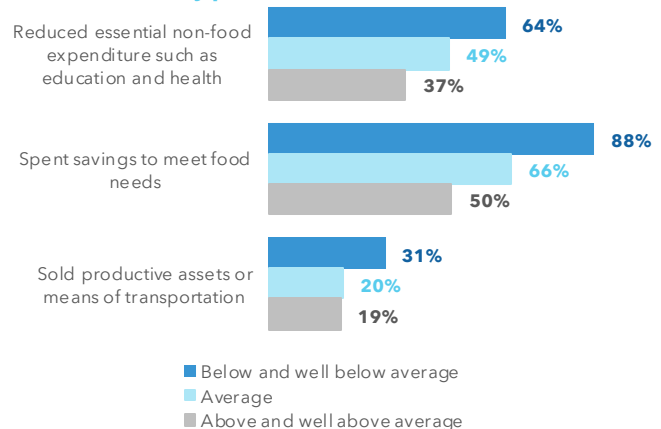


**Households' coping strategies**

Multiple choices could be selected.



**Households' coping strategies By perceived income level**





## 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 \(CARI\)](#).*

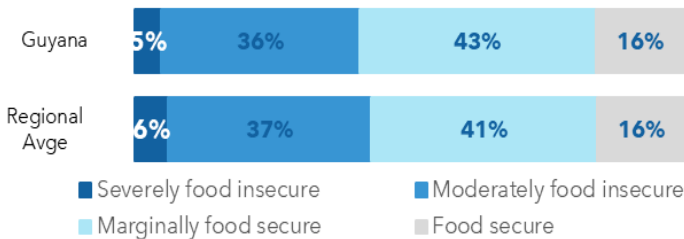
**Applying the rCARI methodology for measuring food security, it is estimated that 41 percent of respondents in Guyana are food insecure**, of which, 5 percent are estimated to be severely and 36 percent moderately food insecure. These results are consistent with the regional average.

**Income is a key factor linked to food insecurity, with households in the much below average (67 percent) and below average (53 percent) income levels, with higher levels of food insecurity**, compared to 14, 17 and 32 percent of households in the well above, above and average incomes, respectively.

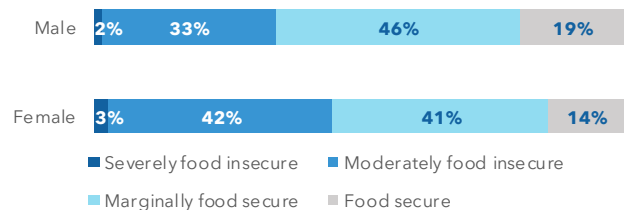
**A higher prevalence of food insecurity (severely plus moderately food insecure), was found among households with one or more members with a disability or suffering from chronic illness (48 percent)**, when compared with those without (33 percent).

Female headed households showed a slightly higher prevalence of food insecurity (45 percent), when compared with their male counterparts (35 percent).

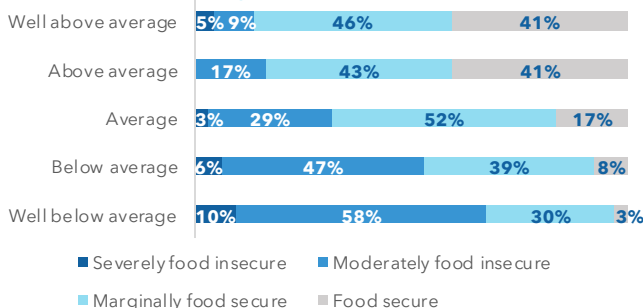
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology - April 2024



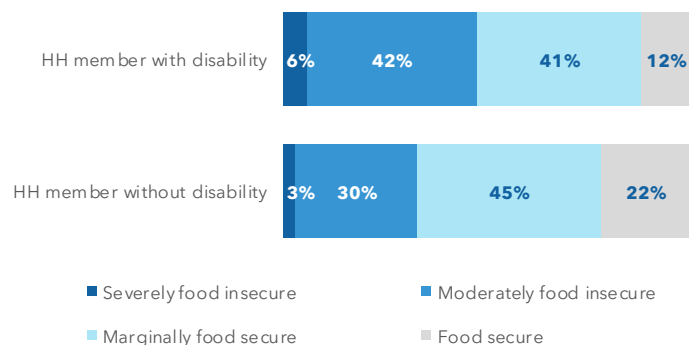
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology by sex



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.

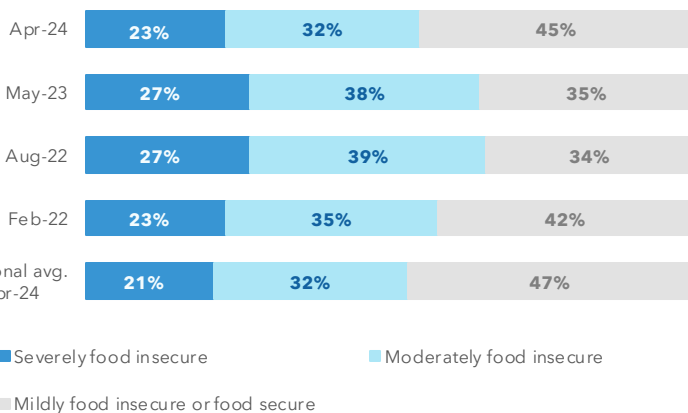
**Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology, it is estimated that 55 percent of respondents in Guyana are food insecure.** Of these respondents, 23 percent are estimated to be severely food insecure and 32 percent moderately food insecure.

The most frequently reported negative food experiences were eating only a few kinds of food (71 percent), unable to eat healthy and nutritious food (63 percent), worrying about not having enough to eat and eating less than usual (both 54 percent). Furthermore, 42 percent of respondents reported that their household ran out of food and 27 percent went an entire day without eating, in the 30 days prior to the survey.

**Lower income households, were disproportionately more likely to encounter negative food insecurity experiences than those with higher income.** Among households whose income levels are well below average, 45 percent are estimated to be severely food insecure in contrast to 11 percent of household with well above average income. Female respondents and those from single parent households also reported higher levels of negative food insecurity experiences.

### Prevalence rates of food insecurity

Based on FIES methodology.



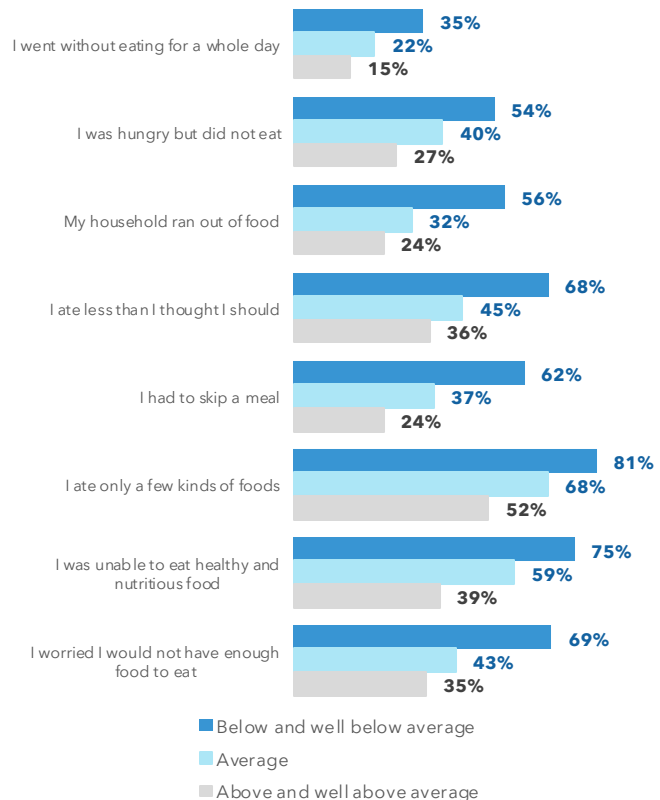
"I had to find odd jobs in my spare time to earn extra cash to provide basic needs for my family"-male, 35, Guyana

"I had reduced the amount we spend on food, because medication, utilities and everything else increased in cost"-female, 42, Guyana

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

Multiple choices could be selected.

#### By perceived income level





## Resilience capacity

**In the past year, forty five percent of respondents in Guyana were affected by a range of natural hazards.**

The primary hazards reported were heatwave (30 percent) and drought (20 percent). A smaller proportion of respondents also reported being affected by flooding and wildfires. Among respondents affected by natural hazards in the 12 months prior to the survey, 17 percent reported severe impact on their livelihoods or income, while 44 percent reported moderate impacts.

**The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) was used to assess respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards.**

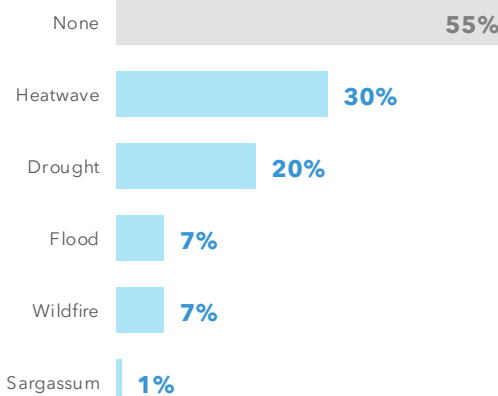
For this indicator, respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with nine statements, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results generate a score which serves as a marker of overall subjective resilience.

**Using the RCS, almost half (49%) of respondents from Guyana have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards.** Only 5 percent of respondents are highly resilient, while 46 percent of the respondents have medium resilience capacity.

Of the nine resilience characteristics, respondents scored the highest (or had a lower capacity to respond to future shocks) in the areas of anticipatory capacity (the ability to take preventive measures to minimize exposure to shocks), and financial capital (i.e., funds that can be utilized to enable their households to absorb the effects of shocks). On the other hand, lower scores were recorded for human capital/learning and adaptive capacity, indicating a stronger capacity to respond to future shocks by utilizing knowledge and skills to adapt to changing conditions.

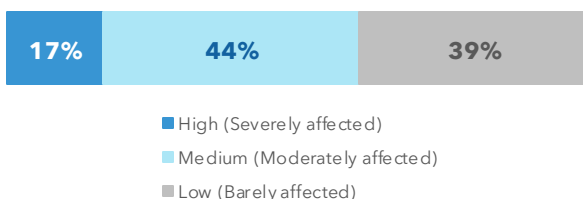
### Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

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

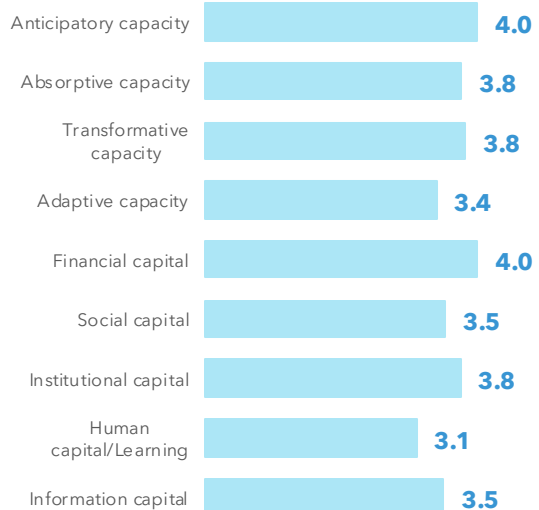
Resilience capacity score (RCS)



\*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

The main worries expressed by respondents from Guyana were inability to cover essential needs (51 percent) and decreasing savings (38 percent).

Respondents were also concerned about inability to cover food needs (33 percent), unemployment or income loss (30 percent) and illness (29 percent).

Six percent of respondents reported receiving assistance from the government in the 12 months prior to the survey, almost the same as was reported during the May 2023 round of the survey.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents expressed negative or very negative sentiments. Respondents were given the space to provide further insights on how they are coping and adapting. Of the 600 respondents from Guyana, 200 answered the open-ended question



## Main differences

Differences in results among respondents were most pronounced when comparing income levels, based on the survey findings. Households describing their income levels as below or well below average indicate the poorest results on all key metrics of well-being and are at risk of further falling behind economically. Female respondents and those relying on informal/casual labour also scored lower on key indicators.

While disaggregated findings should be treated with caution due to the number of respondents from the country, the findings appear consistent with regional survey trends. The results suggest that women may be facing greater challenges compared to men. Younger respondents and those from single parent households also appear to be experiencing greater challenges across most metrics.

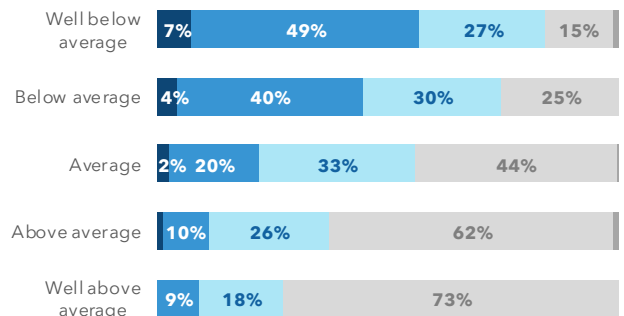
### Main worries expressed by respondents

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	51%	49%	35%	10%	28%
Illness	29%	28%	58%	80%	69%
Unemployment / Income loss	30%	31%	34%	29%	45%
Decreasing savings	38%	30%	18%	12%	18%
Inability to cover food needs	33%	38%	35%	17%	35%
Inability to receive or repay loans	14%	12%			
Violence/crime in the community	13%	6%	5%	5%	10%
Child/dependent care	10%	12%	11%	8%	7%
Natural hazards	6%	8%			
Inadequate infrastructure	5%	9%			
Inadequate housing	9%	7%			
Disruption of public services (education, health)	8%	2%	18%	25%	17%
Other worries	2%	1%	28%	59%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
No access to services due to migration status	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%

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

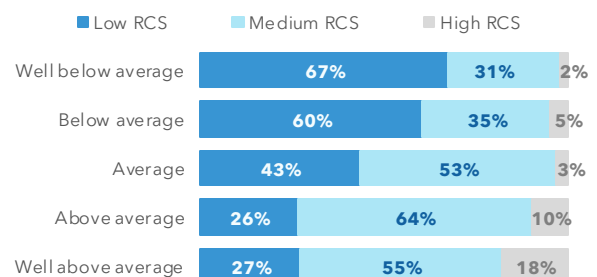
#### By perceived income level



- 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
- I increased my food intake

### Overall resilience capacity

#### By perceived income level





## 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

##### Caribbean Community Secretariat

Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown

PO Box 10827, Guyana

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

#### World Food Programme

##### Caribbean Multi-Country Office

UN House, Marine Gardens

Christ Church, Barbados

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>