

# Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

## Saint Lucia | April 2024

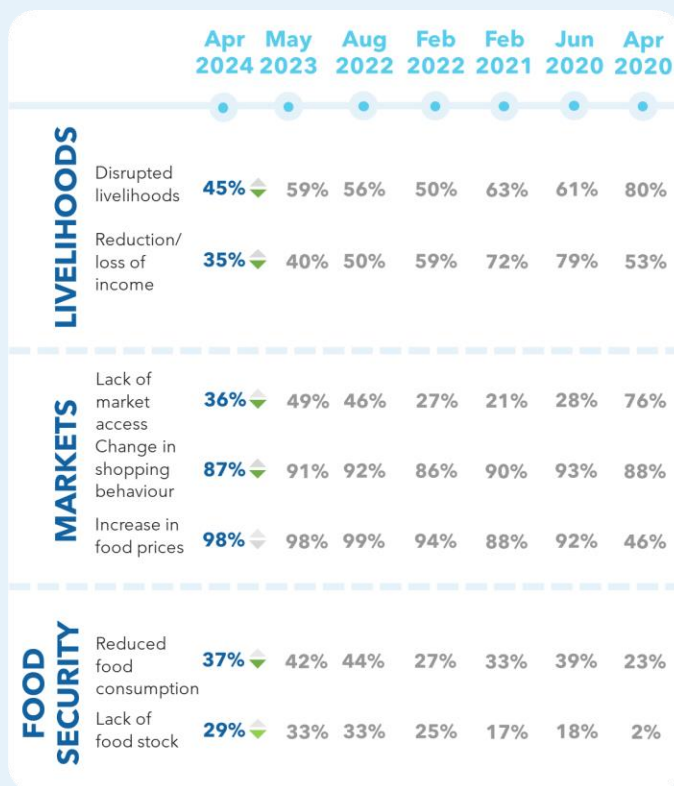
Climate change threatens food security and livelihoods in the Caribbean by disrupting food production, access, and availability. This increased climate variability, combined with high living costs, provides additional challenges for already vulnerable households, particularly those dependent on climate-sensitive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



**Apr 2024**

**544**

Respondents

71% Female | 29% Male

**May 2023**

**938**

Respondents

74% Female | 26% Male

**Aug 2022**

**599**

Respondents

72% Female | 28% Male

**Feb 2022**

**322**

Respondents

74% Female | 26% Male

**Feb 2021**

**165**

Respondents

83% Female | 17% Male

**Jun 2020**

**301**

Respondents

78% Female | 22% Male

**Apr 2020**

**244**

Respondents

72% Female | 28% Male



## Natural hazards

Situated in the Lesser Antilles island arc, Saint Lucia is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards that pose a significant threat for climate sensitive livelihood activities and people's lives. Being within the zone of the Atlantic Hurricane Belt, tropical storms during the storm season pose additional risk of coastal and riverine flooding.

The major recorded events in the Emergency events database (EMDAT) between 2000 and 2021 were storms, which came in the form of hurricanes and floods affecting over 200,000 people in Saint Lucia, and an estimated total damage of approximately USD75 million. In 2021, Hurricane Elsa caused the most damage, estimated at USD 34 million in total damages.



## Macro-Economic Dynamics

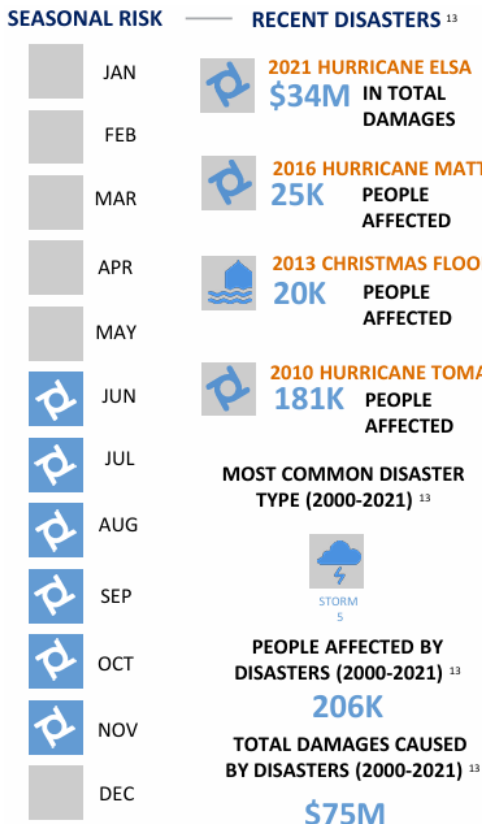
According to FAOSTAT and IMF, point to point inflation rate for 2024 has been hovering around 6.9 percent. Food inflation is following a similar trend but at a slightly higher percentage, recorded at 7.37 percent in December 2022.

According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices have decreased by 7.4 percent as of April 2024 from same time a year ago. Food inflation in Saint Lucia has steadily been increasing and reached an all-time high of 12.27 percent in August 2023.

Most survey respondents from Saint Lucia 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).

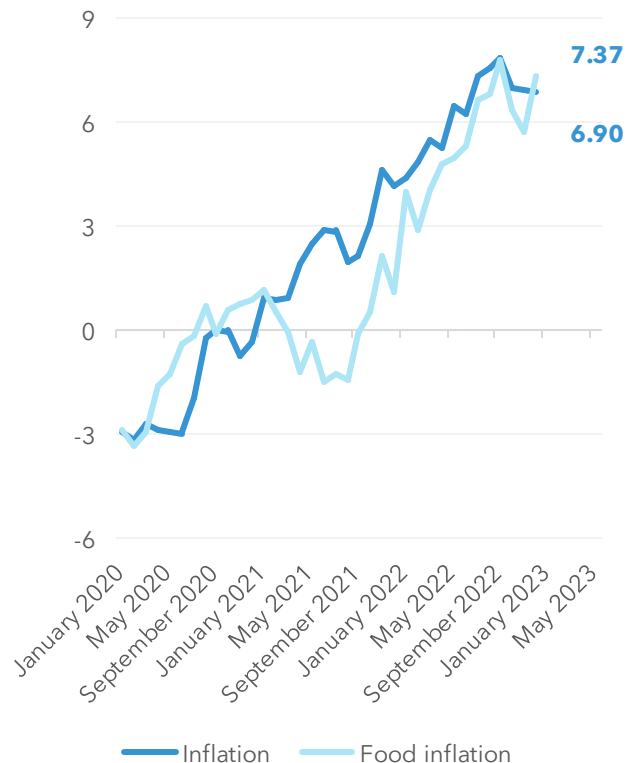
### Seasonal Risk and Recent Hazards in Saint Lucia (2000-2021)

Source: OCHA - Saint Lucia Country Profiles - EMDAT



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

Source: FAOSTAT and IMF





## Markets

**Challenges to accessing markets were reported by one third of respondents** in the month prior to the survey. This exhibits a 13 percent improvement from the previous survey round.

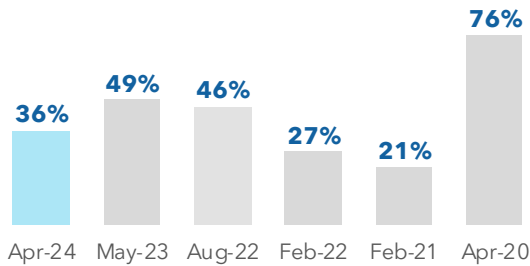
**Respondents continue to report increased prices in commodities, especially food.** Nearly all (97 percent) of respondents reported an increase in food prices over the three months prior to the survey. Significant price increases were also observed for housing (53 percent), health (47 percent), education (43 percent) and gas (39 percent).

**Lack of funds continue to be the overwhelming factor with almost all (94 percent) of those facing challenges citing it as the main barrier to accessing markets.**

**In order to adapt to these disruptions, the majority of respondents (87 percent) have changed how they shop.** Three-quarters of respondents are purchasing cheaper or less preferred foods. Nearly two-third of respondents are buying smaller quantities than usual. Nearly half of respondents are going to different stores. These behaviours are largely similar to what was reported in May 2023.

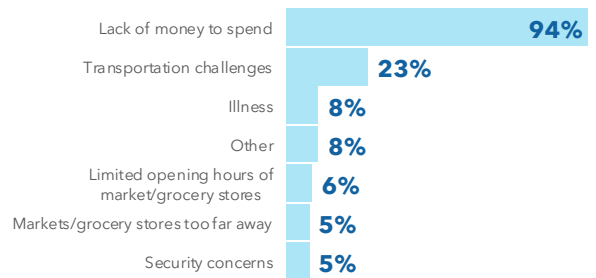
### Respondents unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the survey

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

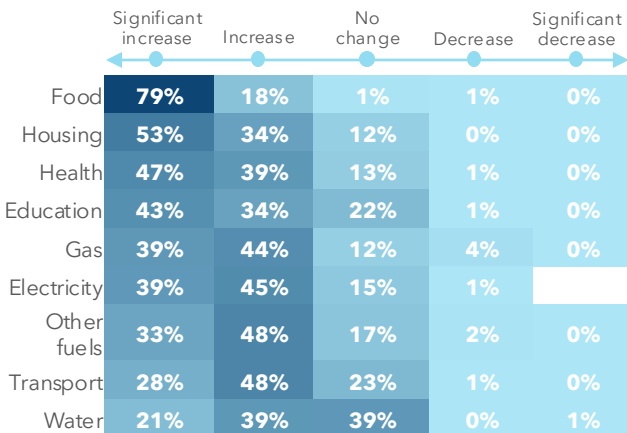


### For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 30 days, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

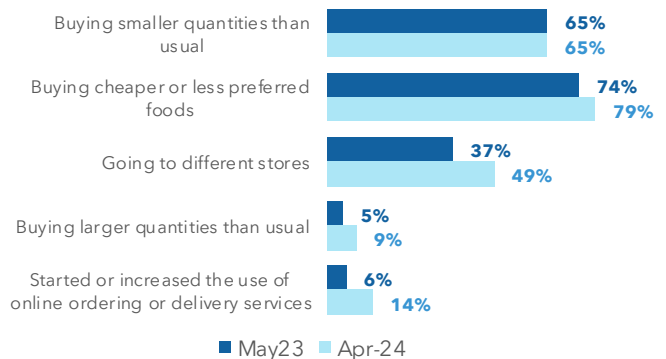


### Respondents reporting a change in the costs of the commodities in the 3 months prior to the survey



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

Multiple choices could be selected.





## Livelihoods

**Approximately four out of ten respondents from Saint Lucia continue to experience disruptions to their livelihoods activities in the 30 days prior to the survey.** Households with incomes well below average income (71 percent) report to face more disruptions when compared to those who perceive above average income (18 percent). Households relying on informal/casual labour and petty trade, with no formal education, with disabilities and with single parents were also more likely to be affected. There were no major differences between sex or locality of the respondents on disruptions.

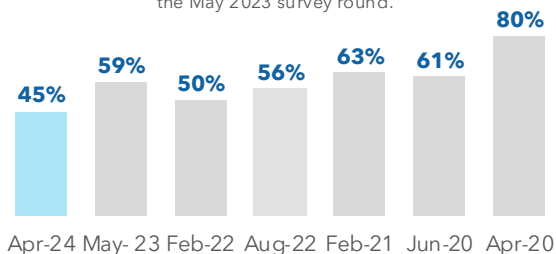
**Unaffordability of livelihood inputs remains the main driver across most respondents,** cited by 70 percent of those affected by disruptions. Respondents involved in agriculture and fishing report high costs of inputs, especially for tools/machinery, arable land and labour.

**Over one third of respondents experienced job loss or reduced salaries in their households** in the six months prior to the survey, which is similar to what was reported in May 2023.

**There were some marked differences in household income changes between sex, education and perceived income levels of the respondents.** The entirety of pool of respondents with no formal education reported to also have suffered from job or revenue losses, when compared with under half of those who are primary or secondary educated. Households from "below" and "well below average" income levels were also more likely to suffer losses. Youth respondents ages 25 and under (61 percent) were more likely to experience job loss or reduced salaries/revenues when compared to adult respondents ages 41 to 60 (22 percent).

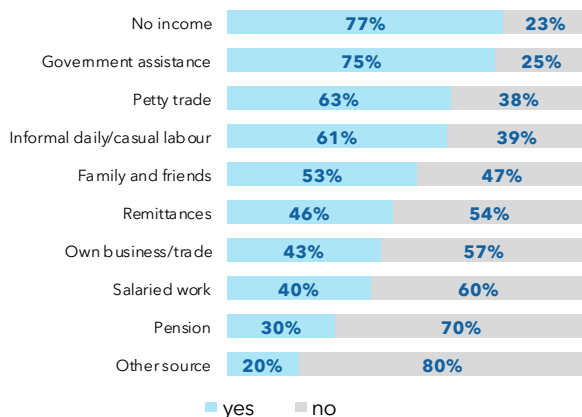
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

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



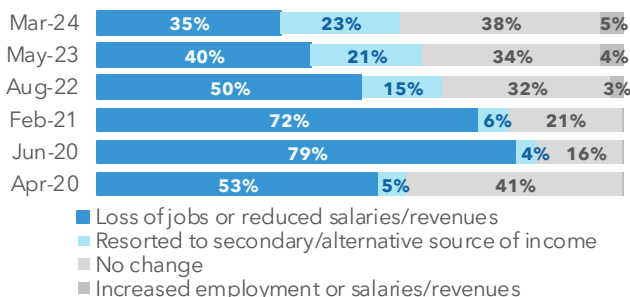
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

By income sources



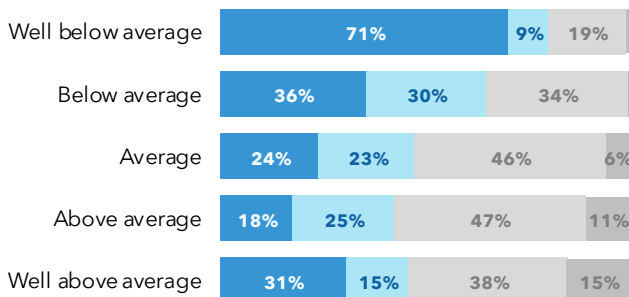
### Has your household income changed in the 6 months prior to the survey?

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



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

By perceived income level





## Coping Strategies

### Respondents from Saint Lucia are employing various coping strategies to address immediate needs.

Respondents may be compromising their wellbeing or future livelihoods spending savings (67 percent), reducing expenditures on health and education (50 percent) or by selling productive assets (20 percent).

Households with persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses are reporting slightly higher frequencies of having to spend their savings in order to make ends meet when compared with other households. Respondents with no formal education are also at the raw end of the spectrum as all are having to reduce non-essential expenditure and spending savings.

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



## Food consumption

### Food consumption patterns have shown very slight improvements.

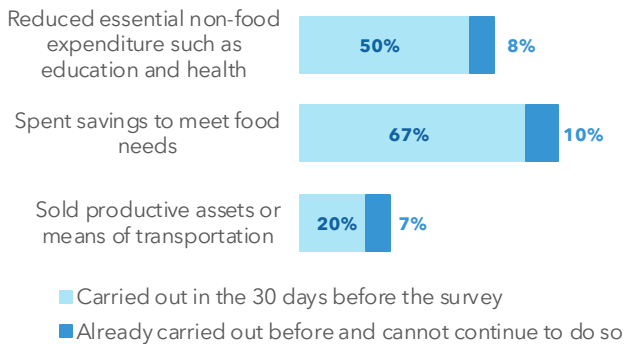
Two thirds of respondents (68 percent) are skipping meals, eating less preferred foods, or going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey. These results show slight improvements from May 2023 (73 percent).

Majority of respondents (90 percent) from “well below average” perceived income households are resorting to negative food consumption patterns described above at a higher frequency when compared with households with average and above income levels.

One third of respondents have no food stocks at home, while 41 percent reported having less than a week’s worth of food stocks. This is similar to the results from May 2023.

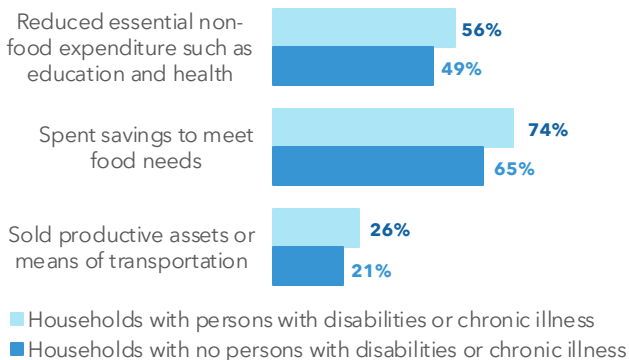
### Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected.

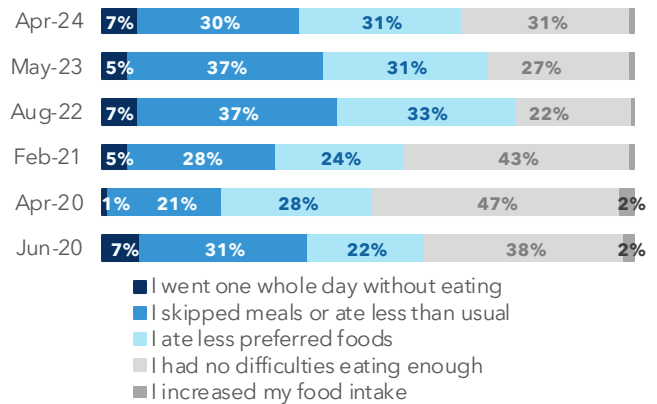


### Households' coping strategies

By households with a disability or person with chronic illness

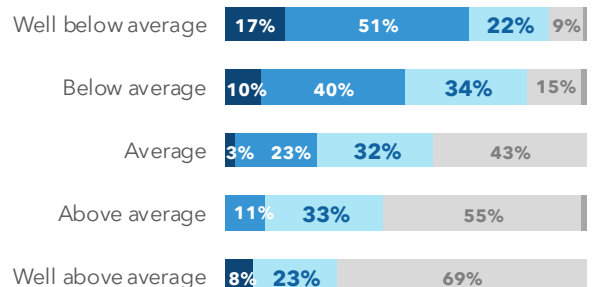


### Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?



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

By perceived income level





## 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 \(CARI\)'](#).

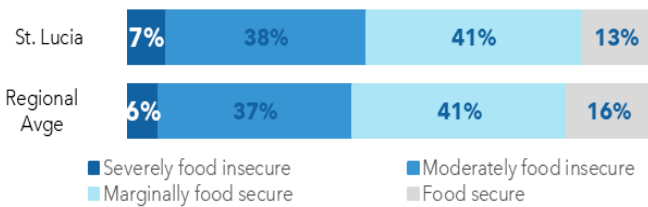
**Using the rCARI methodology to determine the levels of food insecurity, in Saint Lucia, it is estimated that seven percent are severely food insecure, while 38 percent are moderately food insecure.** These results are consistent with the regional average.

**When comparing by income levels, households reporting much below average income makes up 55 percent of households who are severely food insecure.** In comparison, just three percent of respondents describing their household income as much above average are estimated to be severely food insecure.

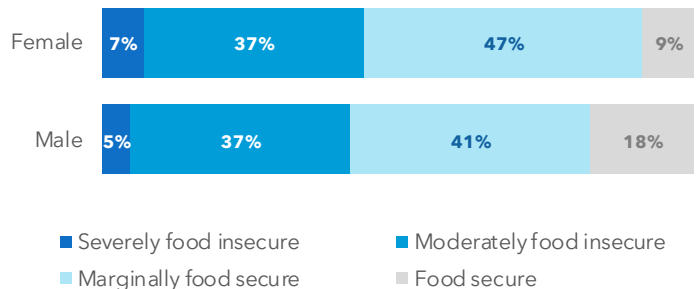
Moderate and severe food insecurity were also slightly higher among households where at least one member has a disability or chronic illness (51 percent) relative to those households where no member has a disability or chronic illness (41 percent).

Food insecurity levels were consistent between female and male respondents, with no significant differences observed. However, slightly higher food insecurity levels were observed among female headed households (56 compared to 43 percent of male headed households) and those with no/without regular income (68 compared to 32 percent of more regular income).

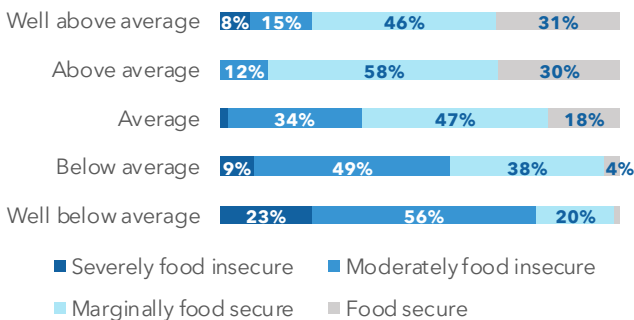
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology - April 2024



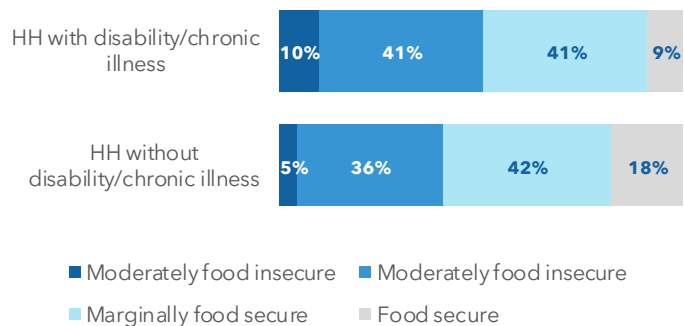
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology By sex of respondents



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



Prevalence rates of food insecurity Based on rCARI methodology. By persons in the household with a disability/chronic disease





## Food Insecurity Experience (FIES)

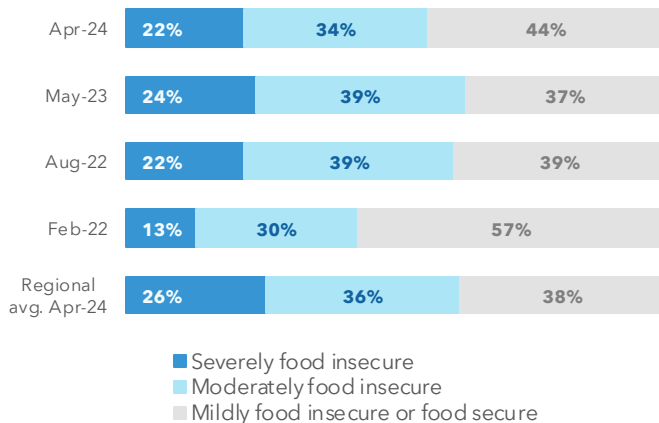
The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), is an indicator used for the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero hunger (SDG 2), is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level. It relies on people's self-reported food related behaviors and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

**Using the FIES methodology, it is estimated that 56 percent of the respondents in Saint Lucia are experiencing food insecurity.** Out of these, 22 percent are estimated to be severely and 34 percent moderately food insecure. The prevalence of severe and moderate food insecurity in Saint Lucia is somewhat consistent with the regional survey average.

The negative food experience most often reported by respondents in Saint Lucia was "eating only a few kinds of food" (74 percent), followed by being "unable to eat healthy and nutritious food" (63 percent). Alarmingly, almost half of respondents (48 percent) skipped meals or ate less than usual. Lower income respondents appear to be performing the worst across all individual negative food-related experiences

While the indicators should be analysed collectively as a scale and individual statements should only be looked at as reference, there were some differences between sex of respondents, whereby female respondents were more likely to reduce the kinds of foods consumed, more frequently reported to inability to eat healthy and nutritious foods and more worried about not having enough food to buy cheaper or less preferred foods.

### Prevalence rates of food insecurity Based on FIES methodology.



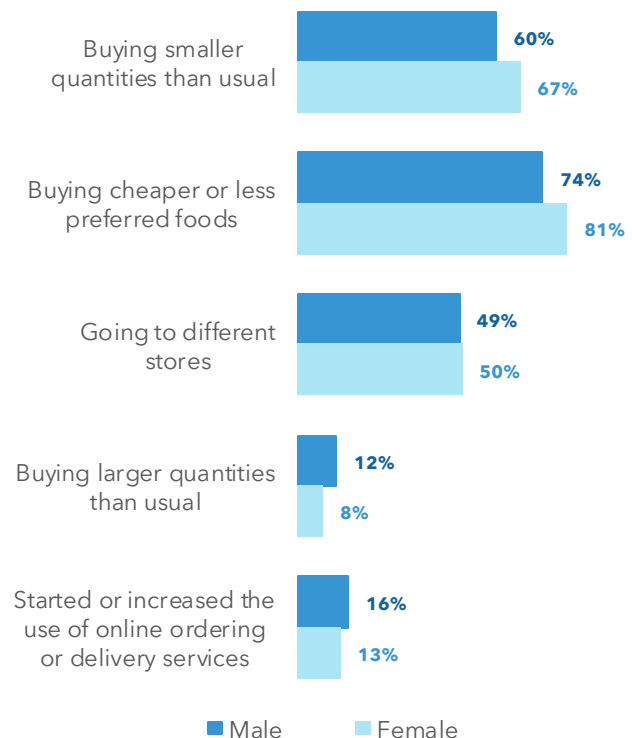
\*For more information on the FIES, see FAO's [The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences..](#)

"I always ensure that my children always get something to eat. I stay without a meal just to ensure that the food lasts longer so that they will always have something to eat"-female, 35, Saint Lucia

"The increase in the prices of everything. It is very difficult to budget even after stripping yourself down to the strict minimum."-female, 55, Saint Lucia

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

Multiple choices could be selected.  
By sex





## Resilience capacity

**A range of natural hazards have affected nearly a third of respondents in Saint Lucia over the 12 months prior to the survey.** The main reported hazards were heatwave (14 percent) and drought (ten percent). Of respondents affected by natural hazards over the last year, 50 percent reported moderate, and 12 percent reported severe impacts on their livelihoods or income.

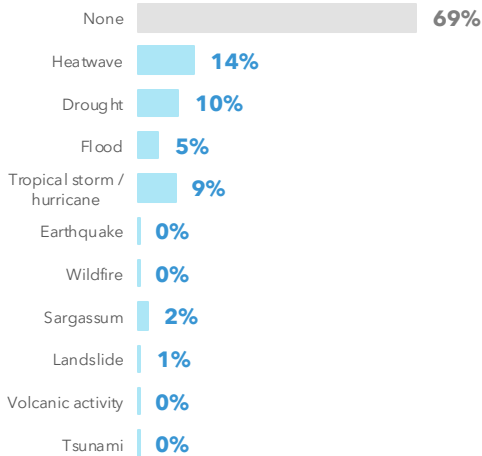
**The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator was used to measure respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards.** The method uses nine statements and respondents rate their level of agreement with each, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These generate a score that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

**Based on the RCS, 28 percent of respondents have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards.** Only seven percent of respondents are highly resilient, while 60 percent of the respondents have medium resilience capacity. Those ages 25 to 40, up to secondary education and 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 information capital (ie. access to early warning information to deal with natural disasters) and human capacity (ie. learned lessons from past hardships). On the other hand, respondents feel that they are better equipped with financial capital, accessing financial support and institutional capital, support from government and/or other institutions.

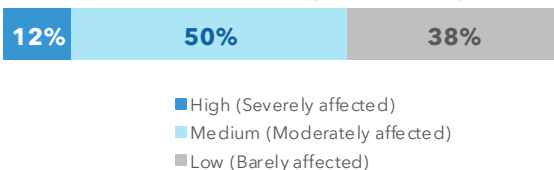
### Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

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



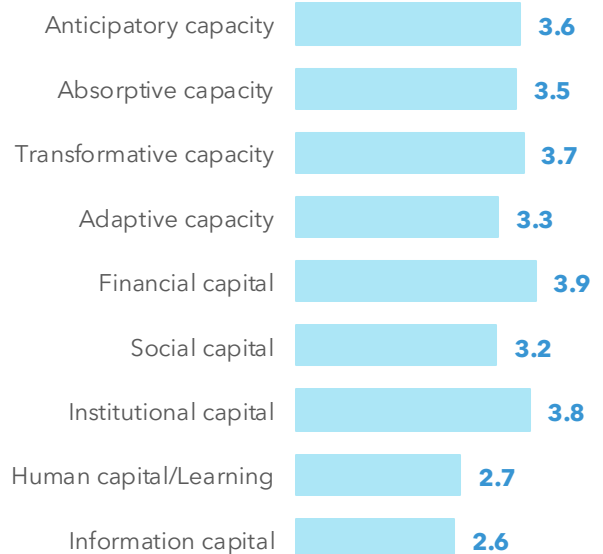
### Overall resilience capacity



■ 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 (51 percent) and illness (41 percent) are the top concerns among respondents in Saint Lucia**, followed by unemployment/ income loss (38 percent) and decreasing savings (36 percent) then inability to cover food needs (28 percent).

**Four percent of respondents reported receiving assistance from the government** in the year prior to the April 2024 survey mainly as social security, vouchers and other forms.

**Four out of five respondents 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 544 participants in Saint Lucia, 185 responded to the open-ended question



## Main differences

**Differences in results among respondents were 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.

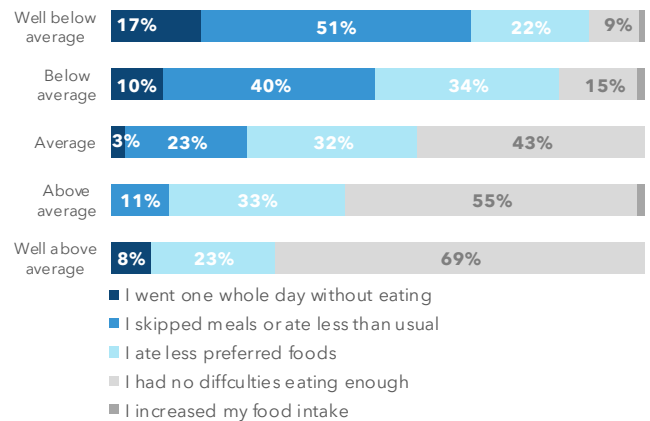
While disaggregated findings should be treated with caution due to the number of respondents from the country, the findings appear in line with regional survey trends. The results suggest that women may be facing greater challenges compared to men. Younger respondents also appear to be experiencing greater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

### Main worries expressed by respondents

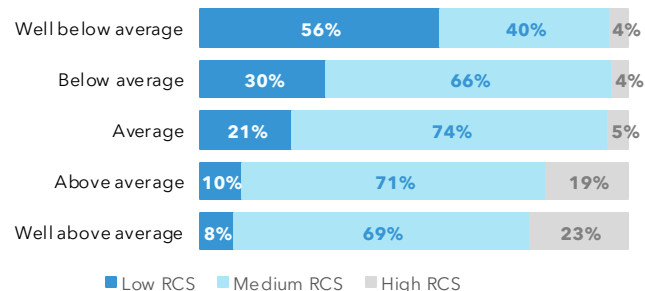
Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other worries".

	Apr-24	May-23	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
Inability to cover essential needs	51%	48%	31%	37%	45%
Illness	41%	36%	46%	65%	46%
Unemployment / Income loss	38%	35%	38%	52%	63%
Decreasing savings	36%	33%	18%	16%	21%
Inability to cover food needs	28%	31%	24%	25%	37%
Inability to receive or repay loans	14%	15%			
Violence/crime in the community	16%	13%	13%	8%	8%
Child/dependent care	13%	12%	14%	14%	15%
Natural hazards	12%	12%			
Inadequate infrastructure	9%	6%			
Inadequate housing	4%	5%			
Disruption of public services (education, health)	3%	2%	19%	13%	9%
Other worries	1%	2%	35%	27%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
No access to services due to migration status	1%	0%	1%	2%	3%

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



### 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>