



World Food
Programme

AFGHANISTAN FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

2nd Quarter July 2024

CHAPTER 01

The data presented in this chapter reference WFP's market monitoring and the World Bank's economic monitor



Inflation

Market Prices Update

Labour Market Update

Afghanistan

Economic Overview

01 Protracted Economic Risks:

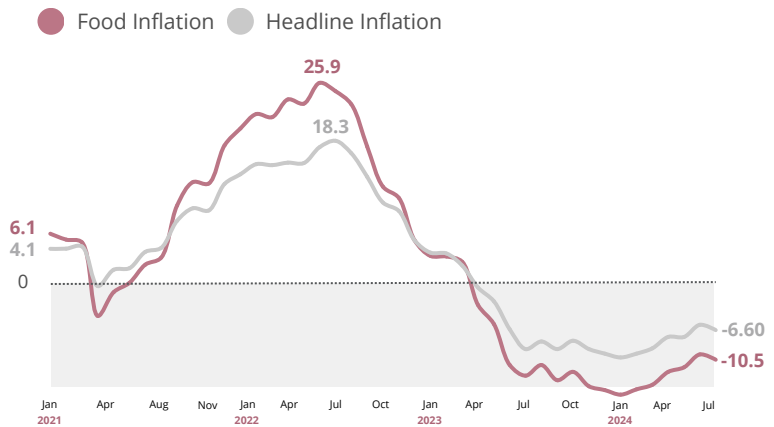
Since April 2023, inflation has remained negative amid sustained economic weakness and depressed demand, but the pace of deflation has slowed over the second quarter of 2024. In July 2024, the deflationary trend in headline inflation (including food and non-food/essential commodities) improved to -6.6 percent, easing from a low of -10.2 percent in January 2024. This easing deflationary trend might potentially be attributed to a recovery in demand and the stabilization of the Afghani.

02 Gradual Improvements in Key Staple Commodity Prices:

In Afghanistan, there has been a steady decrease in the national average prices of key staples throughout the previous year. Similarly, the WFP Food Basket prices have declined over the year, showing a 17 percentage point reduction compared to the same period last year. However, the downward trend slowed during the second quarter of 2024, influenced by an increasing trend in global cereal prices and rising tensions in the Black Sea region.

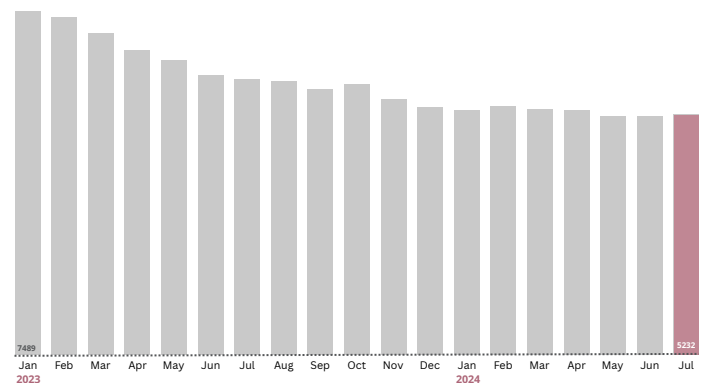
On the other hand, although domestic prices for fertilizers have eased from their peaks in June 2022, they remain elevated. As of July 2024, the domestic prices of DAP and UREA fertilizers were 46 percent and 42 percent higher, respectively, compared to June 2021. This situation places a significant burden on smallholders in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the prices of improved seeds have significantly decreased, returning to levels similar to those before the collapse.

Change in Food and Headline Inflation¹

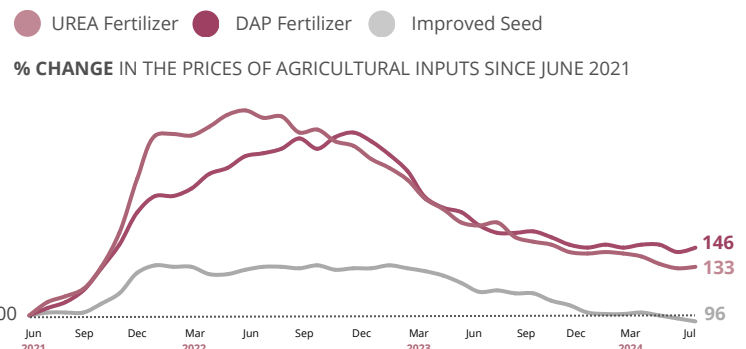


Change in the WFP Food Basket Prices²

JAN 2023 - JUL 2024 (AFN)



Prices of agricultural inputs remained significantly higher than the three-year average



1. WFP, Data viz, July 2024.

2. WFP, Monthly Market Price Monitoring, July 2024.

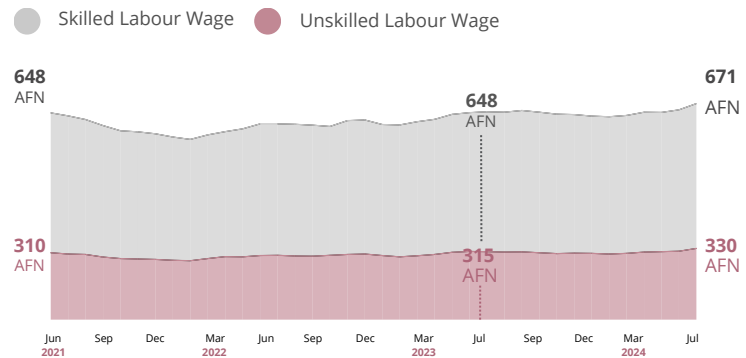
Afghanistan Labour Market Update

03 Stagnant Labor Wages & Unemployment

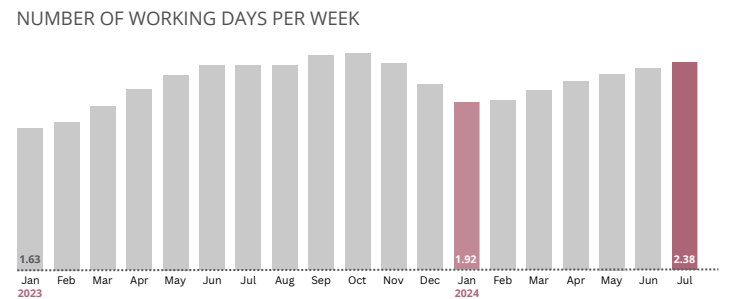
Despite stability in the prices of key food commodities, labor wages have stagnated over the past year, and limited employment opportunities have contributed to a decrease in purchasing power. The wages for unskilled labor have remained nearly unchanged compared to the same period last year. Households are facing financial challenges due to high unemployment, reduced economic activity, and slowing down of labour market during winter lean season.

With the start of the main wheat harvest season in most parts of the country, the average number of available workdays per week nationwide has moderately increased from 1.92 days in January 2024 to 2.38 days in July 2024. This increase is particularly evident in the northern and northeastern regions of the country, where the wheat harvest began in July. Furthermore, the availability in July 2024 remained at a similar level compared to the same period last year.

Skilled and unskilled labour wages have stagnated over the past two years



Casual labor opportunities have slightly improved with the start of the harvest season



The data presented in this chapter are collected via mobile surveys



© WFP / Seung Jee CHOE

Restrictions against Women Working
Food Consumption
Coping Strategies
Access to Market and Healthcare
Change in Income

Background and Methodology

WFP has been conducting monthly telephone surveys across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan for over 2.5 years to gain a better understanding of the food security situation and its underlying factors. Starting in 2023, the reporting frequency has shifted to a quarterly basis. This specific report presents data collected in July 2024.

The methodology has remained consistent throughout the survey rounds, with a few minor adjustments. Since August 21, 2021, panel surveys have been conducted for 80 percent of the respondents in each round. The results are weighted to ensure geographic and socio-demographic representativeness. It is important to note that due to the nature of this survey being conducted through mobile phones, the results may have an upward bias on key outcomes, as households with cell phone ownership are more likely to be better off.

Sample population at a glance:
JULY 2024

1,499 households surveyed



Male-headed households: 97%
Female-headed households: 3%



Average household size:
10.3 members



Urban households: 49%
Rural households: 51%



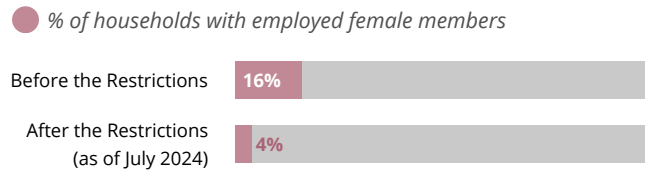
Households reporting having
a member/s with a disability: 16%

3. The data are weighted to ensure geographic representativeness with 9 regions (Central Highland, East, Hirat, Kabul, North, North East, South, South East and West)

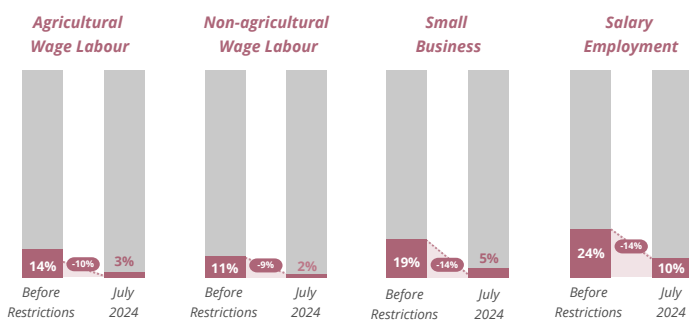


Restrictions against Women Working

Female Employment Before and After the Restrictions

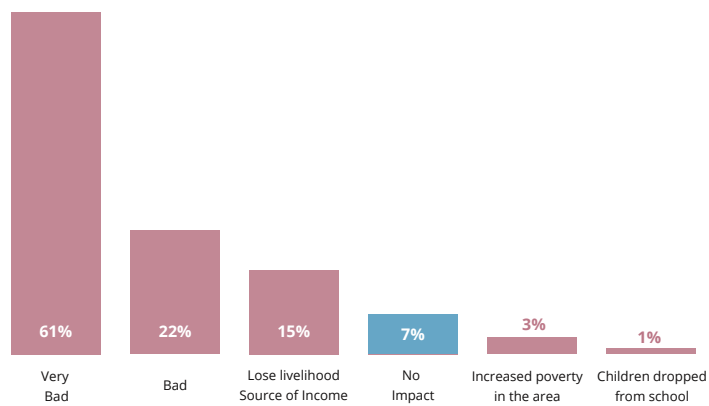


BY PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE



Impact of the Restrictions on Households with Female Members Previously Employed

JULY 2024



De facto authorities have imposed restrictions on Afghan women, including banning them from most areas of public life, higher education and employment, since taking control of Afghanistan in August 2021. The restrictions were then extended to prevent Afghan women from working at non-governmental organisations and the United Nations in 2023.

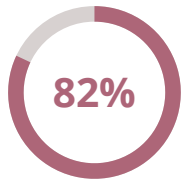
Before the restrictions, 16 percent of households had employed female members. As of July 2024, this number has significantly decreased to 4 percent. Additionally, households with female members in salaried positions and small businesses were the most significantly affected, experiencing a 14 percentage point reduction in July 2024 compared to the period before the restrictions.

Majority of households with female members who were previously employed experienced an adverse impact with the restrictions

Among households with female members who were employed before the restrictions on women working, 61 percent were severely affected by these restrictions. Furthermore, 15 percent reported losing their main source of income, 22 percent experienced a negative impact, and 3 percent noted increased poverty in their area of residence. Conversely, only 7 percent of households reported no impact on their household income or purchasing power.



Food Consumption



of people in Afghanistan face inadequate food consumption⁴

Poor food consumption has marginally improved with the seasonal increase in casual labor opportunities over the summer

With the seasonal increase in casual labor opportunities during the spring wheat planting (April-May) and harvest season (July-August), the prevalence of poor food consumption has decreased from 53 percent in March 2024 to 45 percent in July 2024, reaching a level similar to that observed in August 2021.

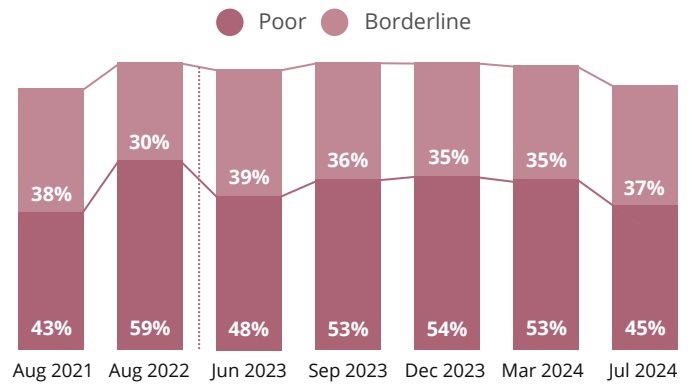
Female-headed households are disproportionately affected by negative food consumption outcomes

As of July 2024, 64 percent of female-headed households are experiencing poor food consumption, which is 19 percentage points higher than that observed in male-headed households.

Food consumption outcome varies by household's primary income source

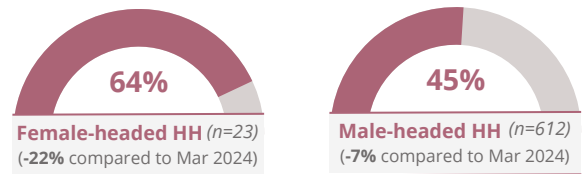
Households relying on non-agricultural wage labor are more likely to face negative food consumption outcomes, with 55 percent reporting poor food consumption. However, this situation has improved compared to the last quarter, with seasonal improvement in casual labour opportunities. In contrast, households with small businesses and salaried employment were relatively less likely to experience poor food consumption.

Food Consumption Group

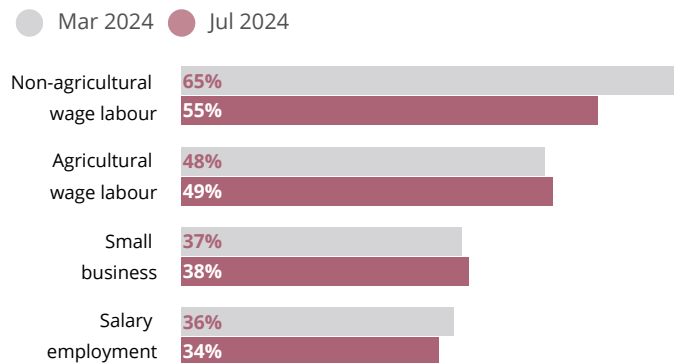


Proportion of Poor Food Consumption by Gender of Household Head⁵

FEMALE VS MALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS



Proportion of Poor Food Consumption BY PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE



4. Based on the Food Consumption Score indicator which is calculated according to the types of foods consumed during the previous 7 days, the frequencies with which they are consumed and the relative nutritional weight of the different food groups. Inadequate food consumption refers to the households classified with Borderline or Poor food consumption.

5. With limited sample size for female-headed households, the above findings are only indicative.

Consumption-based Coping Strategies

The proportion of households resorting to high coping strategies has marginally decreased compared to the last quarter

As of July 2024, 36 percent of households have engaged in high coping strategies under the consumption-based coping strategies scheme, marking a 3 percentage point decrease from the previous round in March 2024. Additionally, this figure represents a 6 percentage point reduction compared to the same period last year.

While food consumption has shown a marginal improvement over the previous quarter, this trend of gradual improvement in consumption-based coping suggests that households are less likely to resort to critical coping strategies, such as restricting adult consumption or reducing the number of meals eaten in a day.

This modest improvement can potentially be attributed to the beneficial effects of local harvests, seasonal improvements in casual labor opportunities, and the stabilization of key staple commodity prices.

Consumption-based Coping Strategies

ONE YEAR COMPARISON

June 2023 VS July 2024

Proportion of households which have used the following strategies at least once in the past seven days



Rely on less preferred and less expensive food

87% (No change compared to June 2023)



Borrow food or rely on help from a relative or friend

72% (-5 pts compared to June 2023)



Reduce the number of meals eaten in a day

32% (-8 pts compared to June 2023)



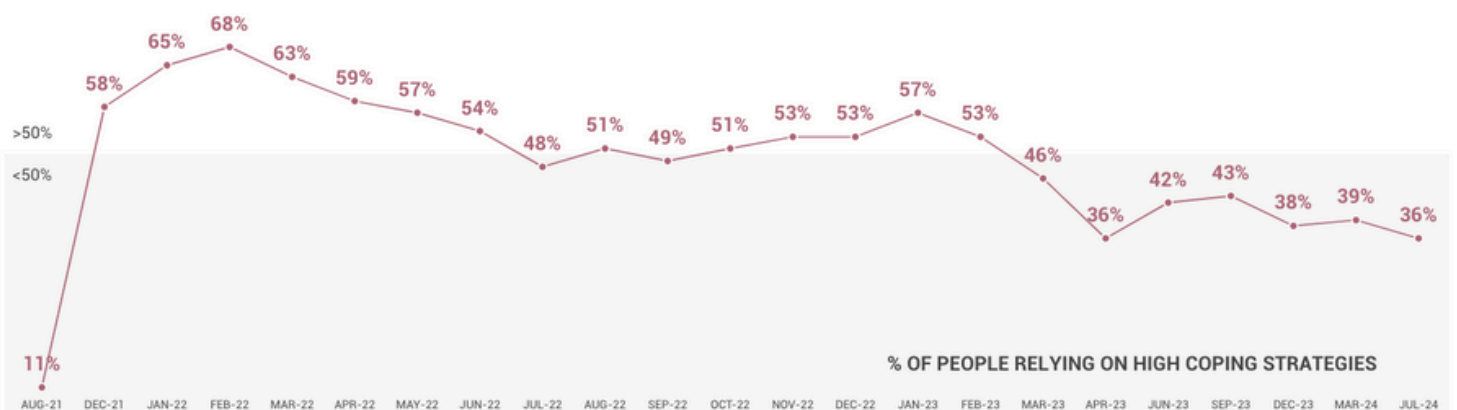
Limit portion size of meals at meal times

54% (-2 pts compared to June 2023)



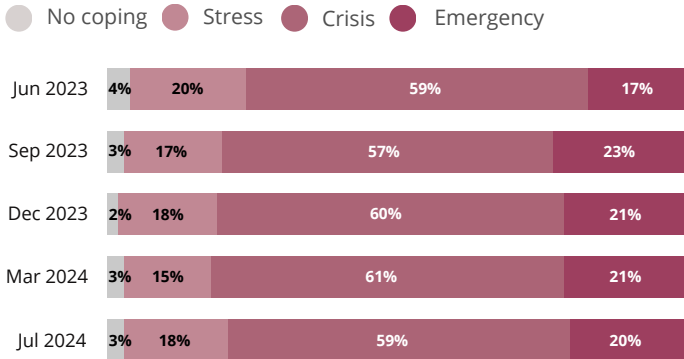
Restrict adult consumption so small children can eat

52% (-7 pts compared to June 2023)



Livelihood Coping Strategies

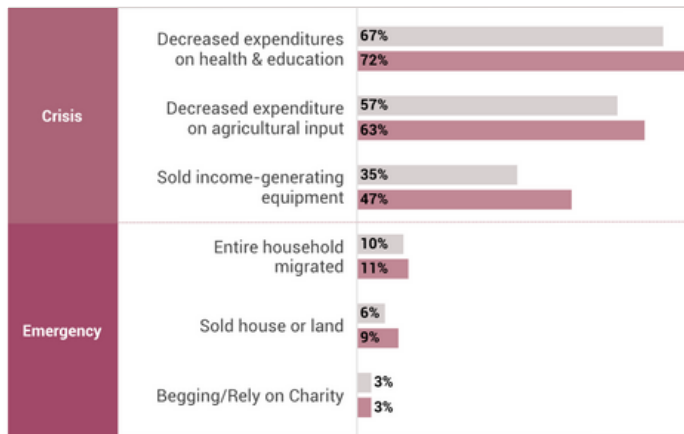
Livelihood Coping Strategies ⁶



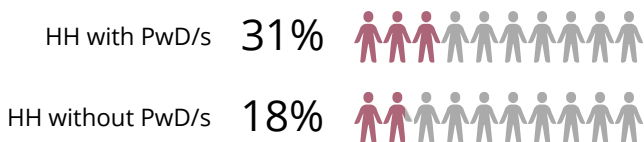
ONE YEAR COMPARISON

● June 2023 ● July 2024

Proportion of households which have used the following strategies at least once in the 30 days



Proportion of Emergency Coping Strategies by Household with PwDs



About one-fifth of households surveyed are resorting to emergency coping strategies

In July 2024, the proportion of households employing emergency coping strategies was 20 percent, remained at a similar level as observed in the last quarter. However, the prevalence of emergency coping has marginally increased from 17 percent in July 2024 to 20 percent compared to the same period last year (June 2023).

Households are increasingly resorting to crisis and emergency coping strategies

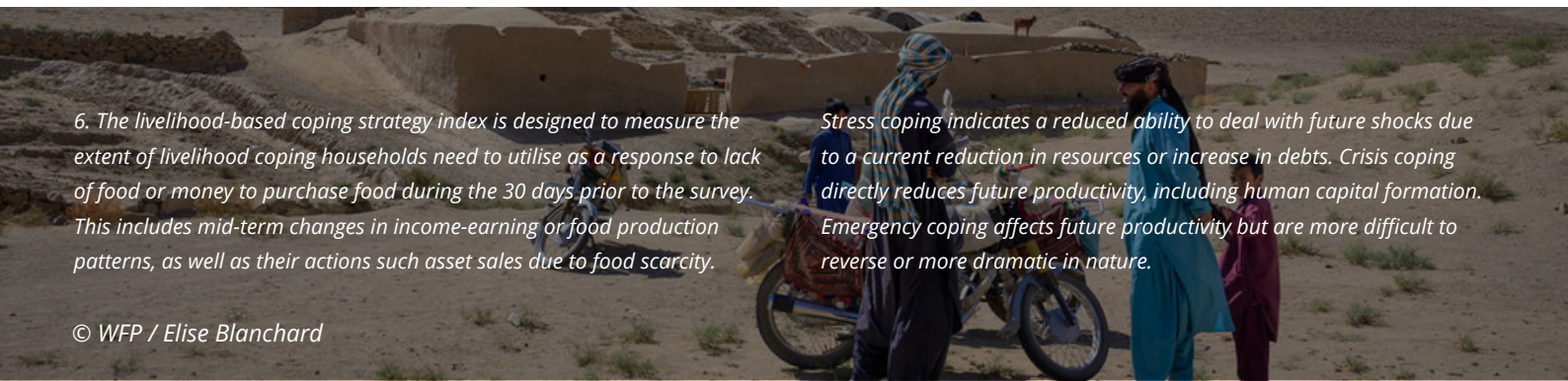
Despite a moderate improvement in food consumption and consumption-based coping strategies, the livelihood coping strategies indicate that households are increasingly relying on crisis and emergency coping mechanisms. Compared to the same period last year, the proportion of households that sold income-generating equipment increased from 35 percent in June 2023 to 47 percent in July 2024. This indicates that while the stabilization of cereal prices and the seasonal easing of casual labor opportunities have temporarily improved food consumption, households are still under significant pressure, leading them to adopt crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies.

Households with Person with Disabilities (PwDs) remain disproportionately impacted

Households with PwDs are more likely to resort to emergency coping strategies, with 31 percent relying on emergency coping compared to 18 percent of households without PwDs.

6. The livelihood-based coping strategy index is designed to measure the extent of livelihood coping households need to utilise as a response to lack of food or money to purchase food during the 30 days prior to the survey. This includes mid-term changes in income-earning or food production patterns, as well as their actions such as asset sales due to food scarcity.

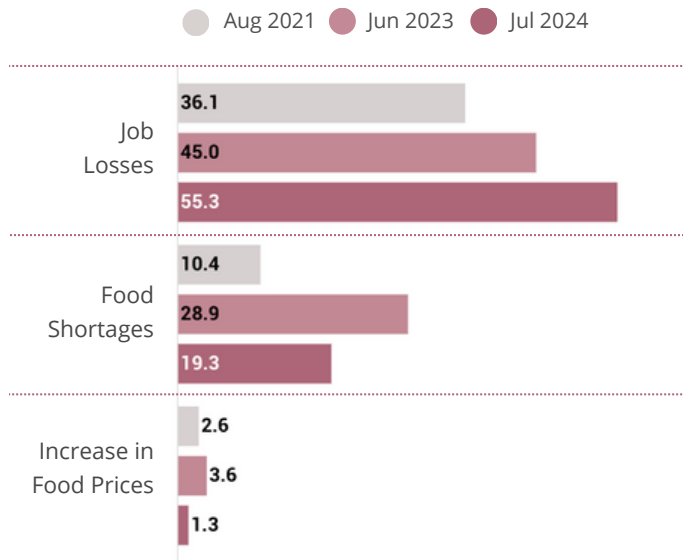
Stress coping indicates a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts. Crisis coping directly reduces future productivity, including human capital formation. Emergency coping affects future productivity but are more difficult to reverse or more dramatic in nature.



Concerns and Access

Top Concerns

% CITING THE TOP CONCERN



An increasing number of households are expressing concern over job losses

The proportion of households reporting food shortages and increases in food prices has decreased compared to August 2021, mainly benefiting from the downward trend in global and domestic key food prices, as well as the stabilization of the Afghani. However, an increasing number of households are expressing concerns about job losses, which have risen from 36 percent in August 2021 to 55 percent in July 2024. This indicates that fundamental vulnerabilities and concerns related to limited working opportunities have escalated across the country, exacerbated by sustained economic weakness and depressed demand.

Market Access

JULY 2024



14% (+2 pts compared to Mar 2024)
of households facing difficulties in accessing market

Over one in ten households is facing difficulties in purchasing basic needs

Lack of money has been reported as a major reason preventing access to markets at 72 percent, which is a 9 percentage point increase from March 2024.

Health Access

JULY 2024



25% (-7 pts compared to Mar 2024)
of households facing difficulties in accessing health care

About one-thirds of households have trouble accessing and/or receiving health care.

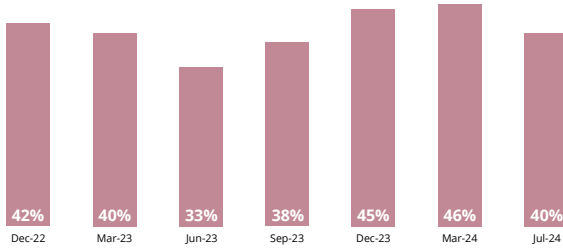
77 percent of households cited lack of money as a major reason for having difficulties in accessing health care, followed by far distance to hospital (9 percent).



Incomes and Food Expenditure

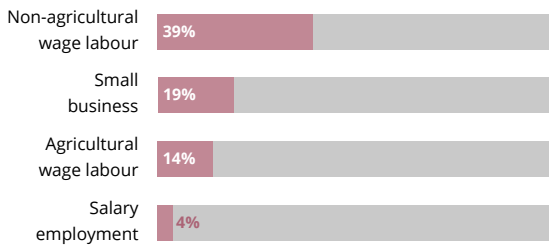
Income Change

% FACING SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASING INCOMES



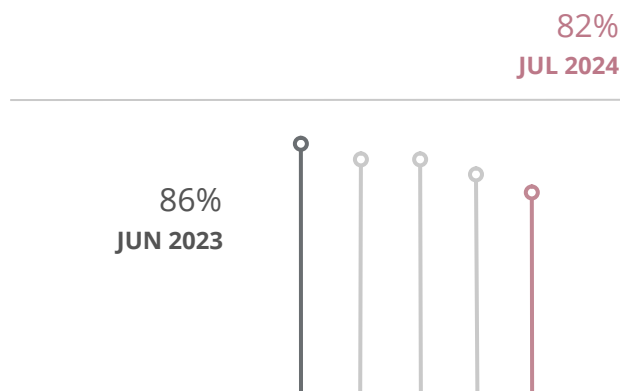
BY PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE

% FACING SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASING INCOMES



The majority of household income is allocated towards food expenses

PROPORTION OF INCOME SPENT ON FOOD (%)



Households experiencing a significant reduction in income has marginally decreased

The proportion of households reporting a marginal decrease in their income decreased from 45 percent in December 2023 to 40 percent in July 2024. However, this represents an 7 percentage point increase compared to the same period last year. This trend suggests that although seasonal improvement in casual labour opportunities with a harvest season affect positively to household's income but the households still experiencing challenges in stabilizing their income. Further, households that rely on non-agricultural wage labor are more likely to experience a significant reduction in their income, with 39 percent affected, compared to only 4 percent of households with salaried employment.

Households continued to allocate more than 80 percent of income on food

Although the prices of food commodities have remained stable, the proportion of income spent on food has consistently been high over the past year due to limited working opportunities and a persistent deflationary trend. A region-wise analysis reveals that the northern region (Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, and Sar-e-Pul provinces) reported the highest food expenditure share, with 87 percent of income spent on food. This trend can potentially be attributed to the impact of drought and limited casual labor opportunities, despite a marginal improvement with the onset of the main wheat harvest.

This report updates Afghanistan's food security situation based on 25 rounds of data collection via telephone surveys across 34 provinces. Since August 2021, panel surveys are conducted for 80 percent of respondents in each round. Results are weighted to ensure socio-demographic representativity.

WFP Response:

WFP is working to meet the food and nutrition needs of millions of people in Afghanistan. In 2024, WFP requires US\$2.2 billion to deliver emergency food, nutrition, and livelihood support to those in need.

