



# The Gambia National Food Security Survey Report 2026

MAY 2026

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**World Food Programme**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gambia National Food Security Survey 2025–2026 was conducted to assess the food security situation of households across all eight (8) Local Government Areas (LGAs) and to monitor trends since 2023. The survey applies WFP standard indicators, including the Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), Food Consumption Score (FCS), Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), Food Expenditure Share (FES), and the Household Hunger Scale (HHS).

The findings provide evidence to inform national policy dialogue, humanitarian and development programming, and the targeting of social protection and resilience interventions.

The survey found that **21 percent** of households are food insecure, including **20 percent** moderately and **1 percent** severely food insecure. This represents an estimated **61,992** food-insecure households, of which approximately **2,591** face severe food insecurity. Although severe food insecurity remains low at the national level, **55 percent** of households are marginally food secure, reflecting acceptable consumption but limited resilience to shocks. Moreover, food security outcomes show a modest improvement compared to 2024. The proportion of food-secure households increased to **79 percent**, while households with inadequate food consumption declined to 16 percent, down from **22 percent** in 2023–2024. Poor food consumption fell to **3 percent**, and severe hunger declined to near zero following a temporary rise in 2024.

These gains are largely attributable to post-harvest seasonal effects, moderate inflation, and the continued implementation of social safety net programmes, including school feeding and nutrition support. However, the persistence of moderate hunger (**13 percent**) and widespread marginal food security highlight the continued fragility of household resilience.

The findings proved that food insecurity in The Gambia is driven primarily by economic access constraints. High food prices remain the most frequently reported shock, affecting **33 percent** of households, while 32 percent spend more than 65 percent of their income on food, limiting their ability to meet other essential needs. Livelihoods are largely informal and seasonal; **23 percent** of households reported employment or income loss.

Climate-related risks continue to affect rural livelihoods, with **10 percent** of households reporting crop failure, undermining both food availability and income stability.

In terms of geographic and population vulnerabilities, food insecurity remains concentrated in rural LGAs, particularly Kuntaur, Basse, Janjanbureh, Kerewan, and Mansakonko, where food expenditure burdens, recurrent shocks, and reliance on coping strategies are highest. Urban areas show lower prevalence overall, but Banjul and Kanifing face growing exposure to market dependence and employment shocks.

Groups most affected include rural households, female-headed households, households headed by individuals with no formal education, widowed or separated household heads, and large households with high dependency ratios.

# What should be done to improve food security in the Gambia?

Scale up targeted food and cash-based assistance in Kuntaur, Basse, Janjanbureh,

Strengthen and expand social safety nets, including school feeding programmes and predictable seasonal cash or food support,

Enhance market monitoring and price stabilization measures, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas exposed to high food prices and employment shocks

Promote livelihood diversification and income-generating activities for rural and informal workers

Reinforce climate-resilient agricultural production and access to productive assets in agriculturally dependent regions

Strengthen national coordination and evidence-based planning through a Food Security and Nutrition Coordination Platform

Expand programming addressing urban food security, market dependence, and employment vulnerability

Adequate and timely availability of quality inputs to farmer (fertilizer, seed, pesticide etc.) should be ensured.

Expand predictable cash or food support for vulnerable households during seasonal stress periods



## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Intersecting vulnerabilities continue to shape the economic and social landscape of the Gambia and directly influencing household food security outcomes. Despite indications of macroeconomic improvement in 2025 including declining inflation and modest gains in labor income, the persistence of structural poverty and systemic fragilities underscores the ongoing challenges faced by Gambian households<sup>1</sup>.

Findings from the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index show that **41.7 percent** of Gambians are multidimensionally poor, with significantly higher deprivation in rural areas where **67.5 percent** of the population experiences overlapping deficits in nutrition, schooling, sanitation, housing quality, and access to basic services.<sup>2</sup> This pronounced rural–urban difference demonstrates the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources, highlighting the heightened vulnerability of rural communities, especially subsistence farmers, informal workers, women, and children.

The structure of the national economy contributes meaningfully to these challenges. The African Development Bank’s 2025 diagnostic note emphasizes The Gambia’s limited economic diversification, noting that the country remains heavily dependent on low-productivity agriculture, tourism, and re-export trade.<sup>3</sup> The country experiences recurrent **climate-related hazards**, including flooding, erratic rainfall, and land degradation, all of which undermine agricultural productivity and increase livelihood insecurity for rural households<sup>4</sup>.

Macroeconomic pressures reinforce these vulnerabilities. The Gambia relies heavily on imported goods, particularly food, fuel, and essential commodities. This dependence increases national exposure to global price fluctuations and foreign currency shocks. Although inflation moderated to **6.6 percent in December 2025**, many households continued to face reduced purchasing power, disproportionately affecting poorer families whose expenditures are dominated by food purchases<sup>5</sup>. Currency pressures exacerbate this situation, further elevating the cost of imported food items and essential goods and leaving households with limited buffers to absorb rising prices.

These intersecting economic, social, environmental, and macroeconomic pressures converge to shape the food security landscape in The Gambia. National food insecurity affected **24 percent** of households in 2024, revealing significantly underlying fragility even before further stressors intensified<sup>6</sup>. As agricultural yields fluctuate due to climate conditions, and as imported food prices rise due to currency depreciation and global market shifts, households confront increasing difficulty in maintaining adequate food consumption and dietary diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> [GAMBIA MPO](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/mpireport2025en.pdf>.p.21

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/gambia\\_2025\\_country\\_diagnostic\\_note.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/gambia_2025_country_diagnostic_note.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> CBG

<sup>6</sup> The Gambia Food Security Survey 2024



# OBJECTIVES

**Assess Household Food Security Status**

**Measure Food Consumption and Diet Quality**

**Identify Drivers of Food Insecurity**

**Assess Vulnerable Population Groups**

**Monitor Seasonal and Geographic Variations**

**Strengthen Early Warning and Preparedness**

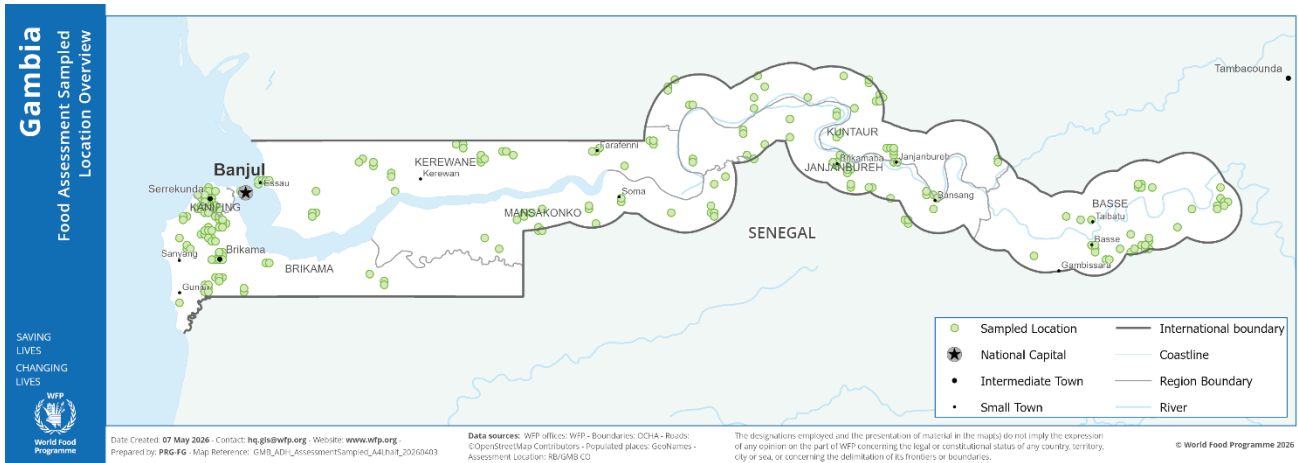


**Providing operational and strategic recommendations to address emerging issues**

## METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATION OF THE SURVEY

The survey methodology collected primary quantitative data at the household level in the eight Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the country. A household listing exercise was conducted to establish a complete and up-to-date sampling frame. Twelve (12) teams, each consisting of one (1) supervisor and 4 enumerators, who were trained by WFP, GBoS and DoP staffs before being deployed to the field from December 20<sup>nd</sup> to January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Map 1: Surveyed households



**Sampling approach:** The survey employed a two-stage stratified cluster sampling design to ensure representativeness at the Local Government Area (LGA) level and comparability with previous survey rounds.

### 1. Stage 1: Selection of Enumeration Areas (EAs)

In the first stage, Enumeration Areas (EAs) were selected within each LGA using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. The eight LGAs were stratified by urban and rural residence, resulting in 14 sampling strata, excluding Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Council, which do not contain rural areas. Samples were independently drawn within each stratum, with a predefined number of EAs allocated per stratum. In total, 144 clusters (EAs) were selected across the country, comprising 86 rural clusters and 58 urban clusters

### 2. Stage 2: Selection of Households

In the second stage, 20 households were selected within each sampled EA using simple random sampling with equal probability of selection. All households within a selected EA had the same chance of being included in the survey.

### 3. Sample Size:

The final survey sample consisted of 2,439 households distributed across the eight LGAs. The sample was designed to ensure adequate representation of both urban and rural populations.

### 4. Sample Weighting:

Given the **two-stage stratified cluster design**, sampling weights were calculated to account for:

- The probability of EA selection at the first stage
- The probability of household selection at the second stage

Weights were applied during analysis to correct for unequal probabilities of selection and to ensure that survey estimates are representative of the target population.

#### **5. Representativeness:**

Survey findings are representative at the LGA level and are statistically comparable with data collected in 2023 and 2024, allowing for robust trend analysis over time.

#### **6. Limitations of the findings**

While interpreting and comparing these findings, it would be relevant to account for the limitations of the study including the seasonal bias. Otherwise, the study was conducted during the post-harvest period, a time when food availability and household food consumption are typically at their highest. As a result, the findings may overestimate food security conditions and may not fully capture the experiences of the previous studies conducted during the lean season, when vulnerability and food insecurity are generally more pronounced. While post-harvest timing is discussed later in the report, it represents a key methodological constraint that affects the overall interpretation of results.

Besides, the results depict a situation in time, rather than a comprehensive assessment of year-round food security dynamics.



# SURVEY FINDINGS

## HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The **demographic profile** of surveyed households highlights several structural vulnerabilities with important implications for food security and resilience. The findings show that **44 percent** of household heads have no formal education, a factor that may limit livelihood opportunities and reduce adaptive capacity. In contrast, only **9.4 percent** of household heads attained higher education, underscoring overall low levels of human capital development.

**Marital status** patterns further reflect the dominance of traditional household structures in The Gambia. A significant majority (86.7 percent) of household heads are married underscoring the strong cultural norms surrounding marriage and family cohesion.

**Gender distribution** also reveals notable disparities. Male-headed households constitute 80 percent of all households, compared to **20 percent** that are female-headed. This imbalance has important implications for programming, as female-headed households in similar contexts often face higher vulnerability due to limited access to productive resources, lower income-earning potential, and reduced decision-making power.

**Household size** varies considerably across Local Government Areas (LGAs). Banjul records the smallest average household size at 6, while Kuntaur and Basse exhibit significantly larger averages of 11 members per household. The national average household size is 8.0, indicating the prevalence of extended family arrangements. Very large households that constitute 28 percent may face greater consumption needs, increasing pressure on available resources, particularly during periods of economic stress or market price volatility.

The demographic characteristics including low education levels, gender imbalances, and large household sizes represent key structural drivers that may influence household vulnerability and food security outcomes.

### FOOD SECURITY | Overview

*Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life<sup>7</sup>.*

The food security in this context is analysed through the *Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security* (CARI), the WFP's approach that combines the current status of the household and its coping capacity<sup>8</sup>. Food Security Classification is determined by calculating a simple average of their current status score and their coping capacity score.

A total of **61,992 households** equivalent to 495,936 people in The Gambia are classified as *food insecure*, among which **2,591 households** (20,728 people) are experiencing *severe food insecurity*.

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<sup>7</sup> World Food Summit, 1996

<sup>8</sup> For more information about CARI please refer to the WFP guidelines available at the following link: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000134704/download/>

Table 1: CARI console 2025

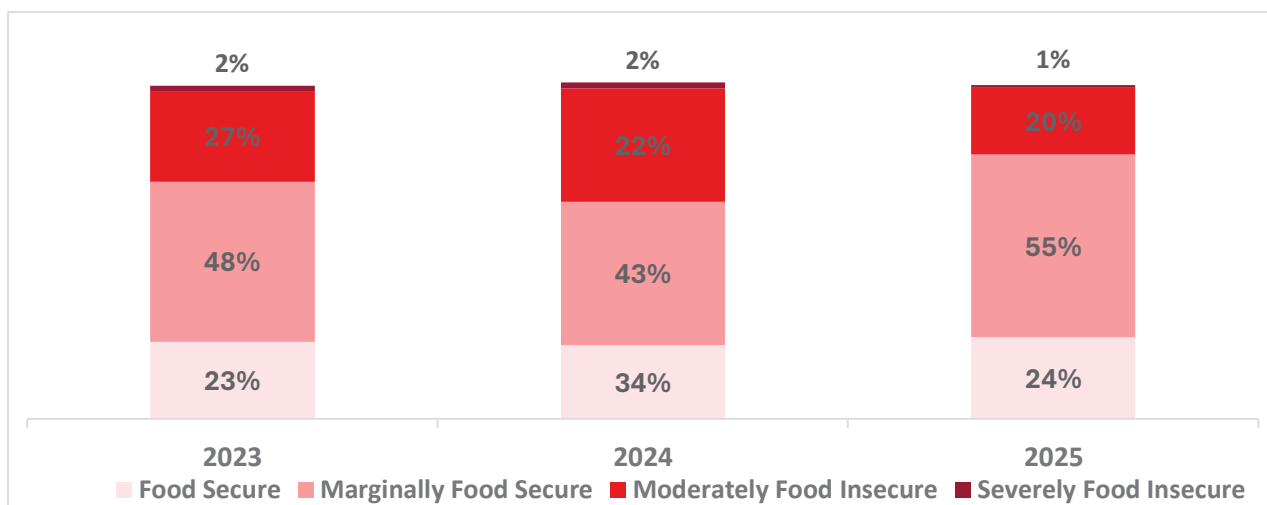
		Indicators	Food Secure	Marginally Food Secure	Moderately Food Insecure	Severely Food Insecure
Current Status	Food consumption	FCS and rCSI	<b>Acceptable</b> 46%	<b>Acceptable and rCSI&gt;=4</b> 38%	<b>Borderline</b> 13%	<b>Poor</b> 3%
		Economic Vulnerability	Food Expenditure Share <50% 30%	50-65% 38%	65-75% 21%	>75% 11%
Coping Capacity	Livelihood Coping Strategies	Livelihood coping strategies	<b>No coping</b> 41%	<b>Stress</b> 39%	<b>Crisis</b> 10%	<b>Emergency</b> 9%
		<b>CARI</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS</b>					<b>21%</b>	

The analysis indicates that the national food security situation improved modestly in 2025 compared to 2024. The improvement from **77 percent** in 2024 to **79 percent** in 2025 is primarily attributed to a combination of macroeconomic stabilization, post-harvest seasonal effects, and the continued implementation of social protection programmes. At the macroeconomic level, stronger growth estimated at **5.7 percent** in 2024 and moderating inflation helped strengthen household purchasing power<sup>9</sup>.

Additionally, social protection interventions, including school feeding and targeted nutrition assistance under the WFP country strategic plan (2024–2028), provided critical support to vulnerable populations and mitigated the impact of shocks. Market conditions also improved slightly, with imported rice prices remaining near their 2024 levels, thereby stabilizing access to the most consumed staple. These combined factors contributed to the observed improvement in household food security in 2025.

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/gambia\\_2025\\_country\\_diagnostic\\_note.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/gambia_2025_country_diagnostic_note.pdf)

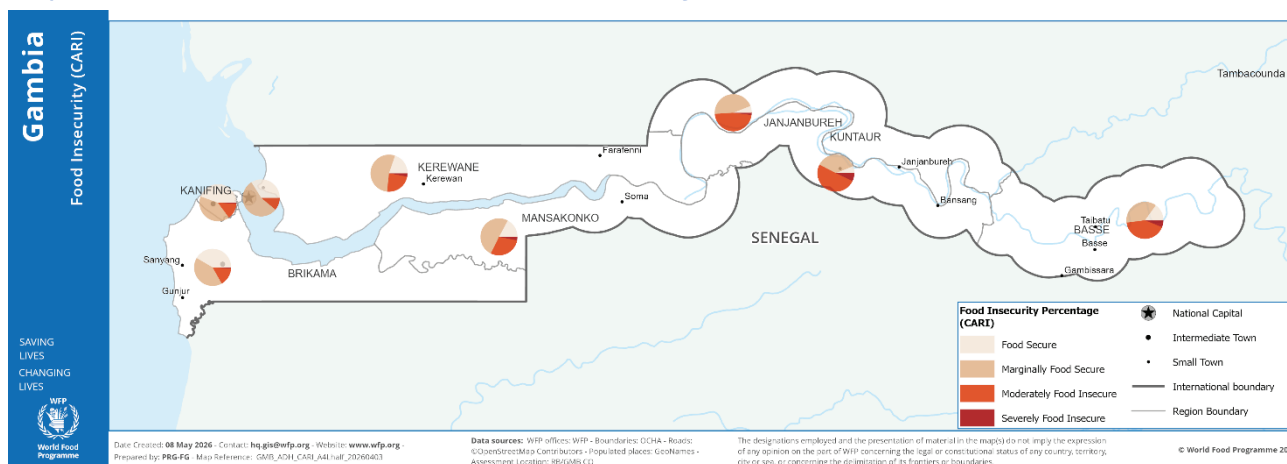
Figure 1: Annual comparison of Food Security prevalence



It can be observed in the above graph that **55 percent** of the households are marginally food secure in 2025 which illustrates that most households are living very close to food insecurity, with limited ability to absorb economic or environmental shocks. This high share of marginally food secure households reflects fragile food access, low resilience, and a strong likelihood that even minor disruptions such as price increases, income loss, or poor seasonal production could push many of them into moderate or severe food insecurity

Overall, the results suggest a gradual shift in vulnerability from rural to urban settings. This trend appears to be driven by increased economic pressures in urban areas and the positive impact of social safety net programmes in rural communities

Map 2: Prevalence of food insecure households by LGA



The following regions; Janjanbureh, Basse, Kerewan, kuntaur and Mansakonko are beyond the national average of **21 percent** regarding food insecurity. The same regions continue to experience food insecurity for the past 5 years. This could be a manifestation of structural poverty including low-wage jobs, high unemployment rates, and a lack of access to basic services.

The analysis of the past three years proves that food insecurity remains chronic in Janjanbureh, Basse, Kerewan and Mansakonko, which requires efforts including social protection interventions and resilience building programs to enhance the livelihood of the vulnerable population while in Banjul and Kanifing, the population remained episodically food insecure. World Bank diagnostics echo these constraints and link them to **limited human capital** and **weak formal labor absorption**, keeping households locked into **low-productivity agriculture** highly exposed to climate variation<sup>10</sup>

## FOOD SECURITY | Food Consumption

The households' food consumption is analysed through the Food Consumption Score (FCS), a proxy for households' food access and a WFP indicator assessing the adequacy of food consumption at the time of the survey. Households are classified into three groups based on the adequacy of the foods consumed in the seven days preceding the survey.

In 2025, 16 percent of households recorded inadequate food consumption, including 3 percent with poor food consumption. This represents a slight improvement compared with the previous two years, when **22 percent** of households fell into the inadequate food consumption category. The trend suggests modest gains in household dietary diversity and food access, although vulnerabilities persist for a significant portion of the population.

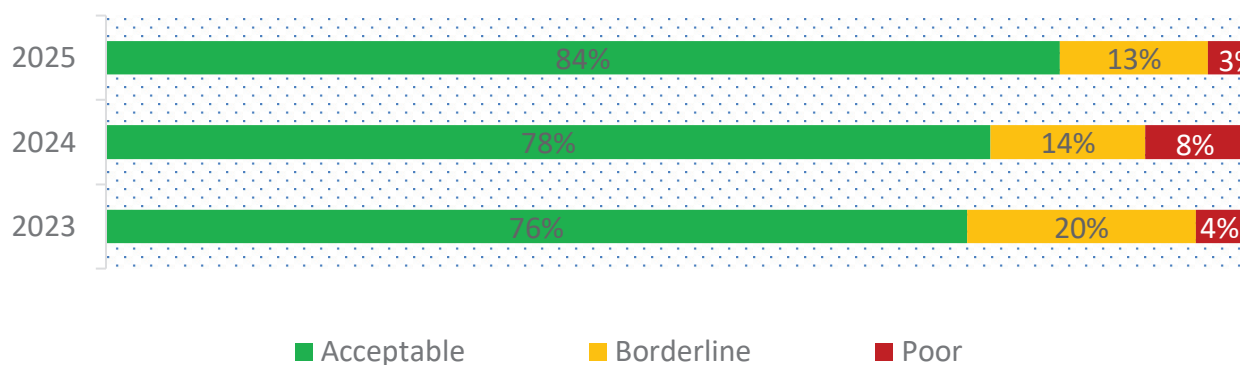
Although national indicators improved substantially in 2025, the proportion of households classified under borderline consumption (**13 percent**) remains considerable. This group represents a population at risk of slipping into poor food consumption should economic or seasonal pressures intensify.

This change can be associated with the post-harvest season dynamics, when increased availability of locally produced cereals, pulses, vegetables, and groundnuts lowers prices and raises consumption frequency across key food groups. Greater reliance on own-production stocks reduces market dependence at peak prices, supporting more regular intake of staples and nutrient-dense foods that drive higher FCS values. Concurrently, targeted agricultural support and social safety nets help stabilize household purchasing power and smooth consumption through lean-to-harvest transitions, reinforcing gains in dietary diversity and meal frequency.

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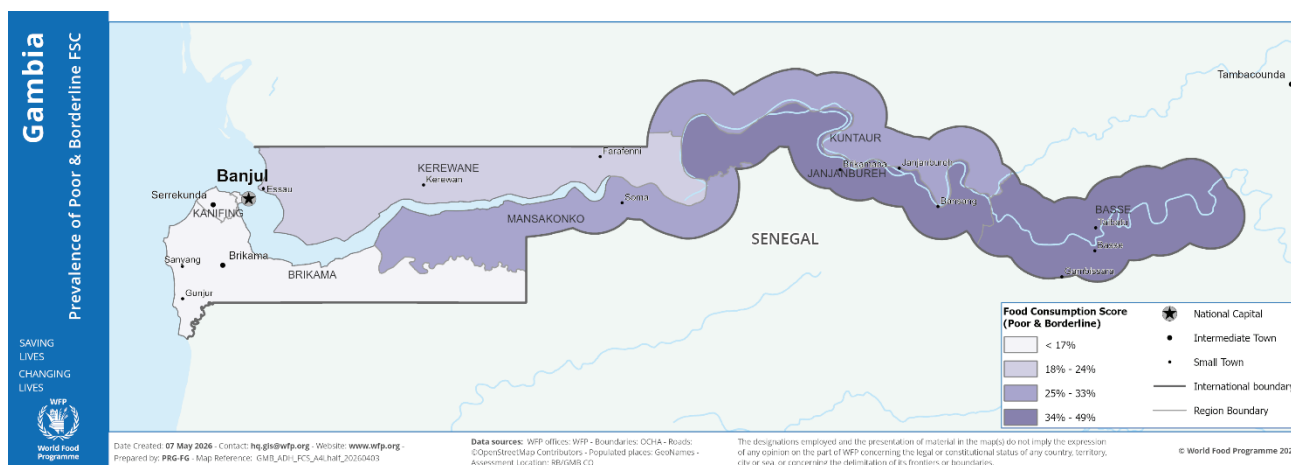
<sup>10</sup> <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2fefc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-gmb.pdf>

Figure 2: Annual trend 2023, 2024 and 2025 of Food Consumption Score



The Food Consumption Score distribution shows relatively small differences between female- and male-headed households, with both groups largely falling within the *acceptable* consumption category. Female-headed households have a slightly higher share with acceptable FCS (**86 percent**) compared to male-headed households (**84 percent**), indicating marginally better dietary diversity and meal frequency among these households. However, male-headed households record a slightly higher proportion in the *borderline* category (**14 percent**) compared to (**11 percent**), suggesting that they may face more constraints in consistently accessing diverse foods. The share of households with *poor* food consumption remains low and equal for both groups (**3 percent**). Overall, the results indicate that gender disparities in food consumption are limited, though male-headed households show slightly higher vulnerability reflected in the borderline category.

Map 3: Prevalence of Poor and Borderline FCS



Subnational analysis, however, reveals persistent geographic disparities in food consumption outcomes. In 2025, the highest levels of inadequate food consumption were recorded in **Mansakonko (30 percent)**, **Basse (29 percent)**, **Kerewan (28 percent)**, and **Kuntaur (23 percent)**. These regions also registered comparatively lower acceptable food consumption levels, ranging between **71** and **77 percent**. Such patterns highlight ongoing vulnerabilities

within predominantly rural areas, where livelihoods are more sensitive to seasonal shocks, market fluctuations, and agricultural performance.

In contrast, urban and peri-urban areas performed significantly better. **Banjul (98 percent acceptable), Kanifing (90 percent), Brikama (86 percent), and Janjanbureh (85 percent)** exhibited strong food consumption outcomes, reflecting more stable access to markets, diverse income opportunities, and improved food availability.

### **FOOD SECURITY | Reduced Coping Strategies (rCSI)**

The rCSI presents the average number of days (out of the last 7) that households adopted specific food-related coping strategies due to lack of food or money to buy food. The average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) was 6.5, indicating that households continue to rely on food-related coping strategies to meet daily food needs. The most frequent coping strategy used by the households is relying on preferred and less expensive food to cope with a lack of food or money to buy it. This simply means that, on average, households relied on the coping strategy for nearly 2 days in the past 7 days before the survey. Otherwise, households are adjusting diet quality before reducing quantities.

### **FOOD SECURITY | Coping Capacity**

The resilience of households to challenges and shocks is herein assessed through:

1. The economic vulnerability, translated by the share of household expenditures spent on food (FES); and
2. The livelihood coping strategies adopted during the 30 days prior to the survey.

#### **1. Share of household expenditures spent on food**

The Food Expenditure Share (FES) is an indicator used to measure households' economic vulnerability. It determines the economic vulnerability without the need of having a reference to a poverty line or minimum expenditure basket. The higher the share of households' consumption expenditures on food - out of the total consumption expenditure - the more vulnerable the households are to food insecurity.

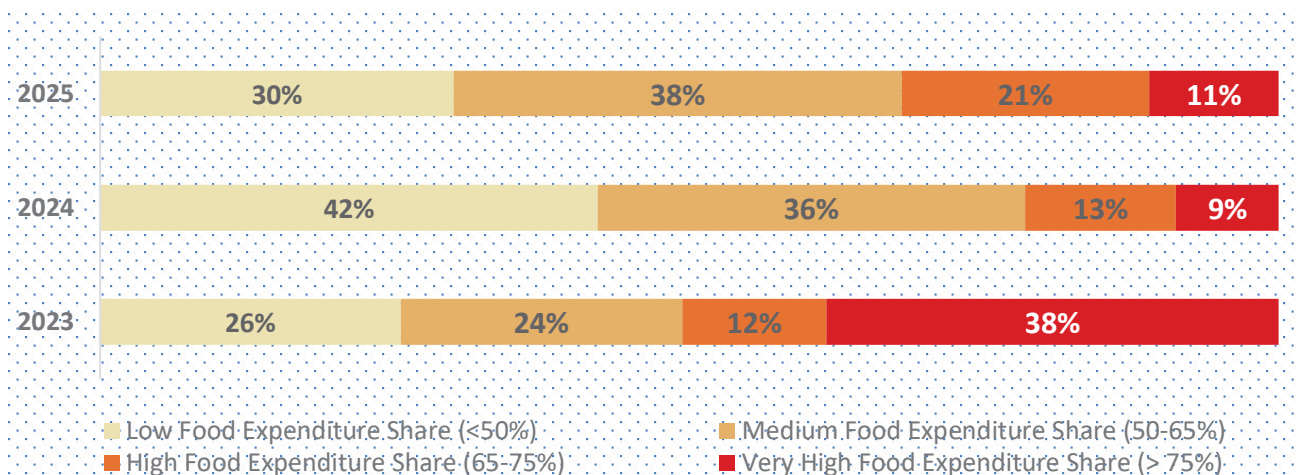
*Figure 6* (below) shows household spending patterns from 2023 to 2025 highlighting a significant and persistent economic vulnerability driven by high food prices. The 2025 findings illustrate that **32 percent of households** spent more than **65 percent of their total income on food**, placing them in the high and very high food expenditure categories. This level of spending limits their ability to afford essential non-food needs such as healthcare, education, and housing.

This situation was moderately reflected in the household's food basket particularly on the price of meat, milk, cheese and eggs, fruits and nuts, vegetables, and sugar. Notwithstanding, non-food inflation marginally took an upward trend from 6.3 percent in September to **6.6 percent** in October<sup>11</sup>.

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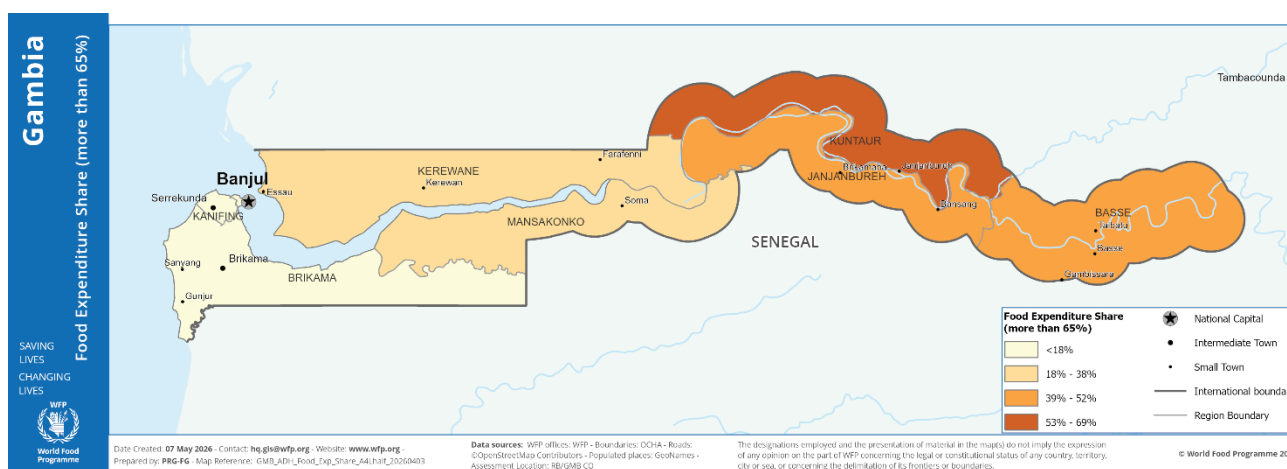
<sup>11</sup> Central Bank of the Gambia; Monetary Policy Committee Press; November 26, 2024; <https://www.cbg.gm/Monetary%20Policy%20Committee>

Figure 3: Trend of the household FES categories.



Furthermore, it has been shown that the allocation on food for male headed households is significantly higher than the female headed households by approximately 2.5 percentage points ( $p < 0.001$ ). The finding likely reflects underlying socioeconomic and structural vulnerability differences characterized by Lower overall incomes, limited access to services, low level of education amongst female-headed households.

Map 4: Food expenditure share per LGA



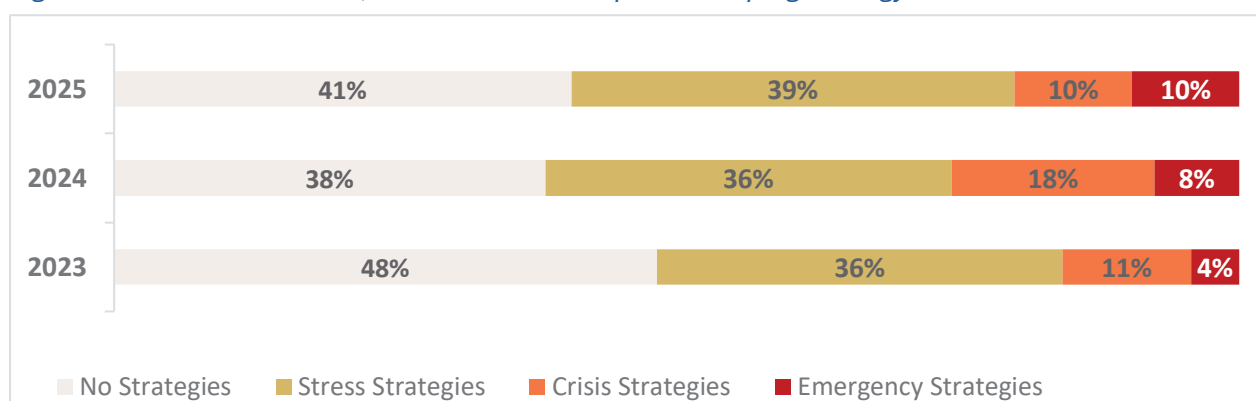
The regional perspective illustrates that a significant economic vulnerability across several regions, with a notable concentration in rural regions. Households in Kuntaur (**37 percent**), Basse (**30 percent**), and Janjanbureh (**24 percent**) spend more than **75 percent** of their total income on food, indicating severe financial strain and limited capacity to afford essential non-food needs such as healthcare, education, and housing. These regions therefore represent the highest priority for economic and food security interventions. In contrast, urban regions such as Brikama, Kanifing, and Banjul show a higher share of households with lower food expenditure levels, reflecting relatively stronger economic resilience and better market access. This signifies the existence of persistent structural inequalities, with rural households disproportionately affected by high food expenditure burdens.

## 2. Strategies

The mechanisms employed by households to cope with internal and external shocks offer insights into their medium and long-term capacity to produce asset and maintain food security. The strategies adopted are classified into three categories: stress, crisis, and emergency, based on their severity.

Households have continued to rely on negative livelihood coping strategies over the past two years with an increasing number of households (6 percent) adopting emergency coping strategies compared to 2023. In 2025, It can be observed that more than half of the households have used at least one coping strategy because there is no food or lack of money to buy food. Nationally, while **41 percent** of households did not use any coping strategy, a substantial share still relied on stress and crisis measures—such as reducing essential expenditures or selling assets—to meet food needs.

Figure 4: Annual trend 2023, 2024 and 2025 adoption of coping strategy

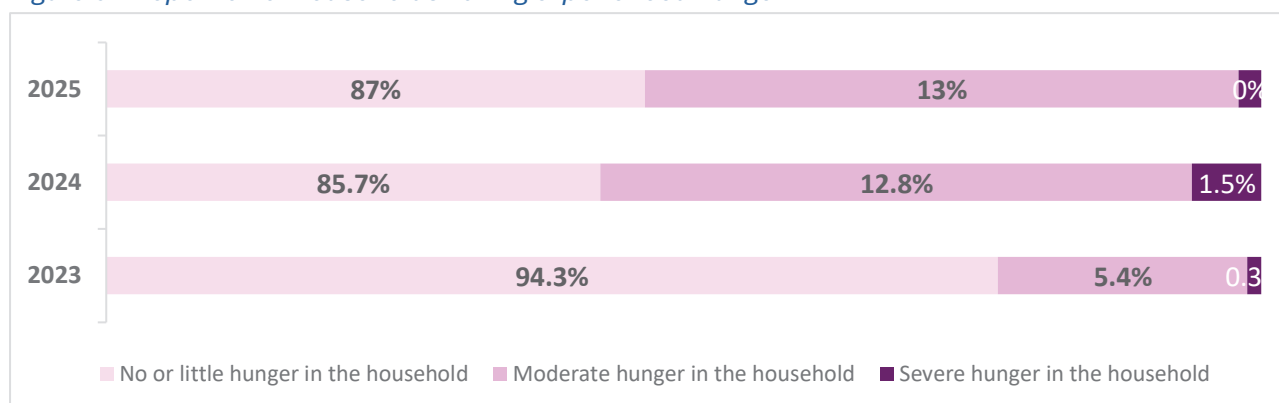


Relevant to observe in [figure 6](#) that the most common strategies remain spending **savings (34 percent)** and borrowing money for food (**31 percent**), indicating ongoing financial pressure. Additionally, **9 percent** of households reduced or delayed payments on essential utilities, reflecting heightened economic strain. Although the use of severe emergency strategies—such as withdrawing children from school or engaging in begging—remained relatively low, their continued presence signals persistent hardship among the most vulnerable households.



hunger declined from 94.3 percent in 2023 to **85.7 percent** in 2024, before improving slightly to **87 percent** in 2025. At the same time, moderate hunger increased significantly, rising from 5.4 percent in 2023 to **12.8 percent** in 2024, and remained elevated at **13 percent** in 2025, indicating sustained pressure on household food access. Severe hunger, though consistently low, peaked at **1.5 percent** in 2024 before returning to 0 percent in 2025. Overall, the results suggest that while severe deprivation has eased, moderate hunger persists at higher-than-previous levels, pointing to ongoing challenges in achieving full food security for all households.

Figure 6: Proportion of households having experienced hunger



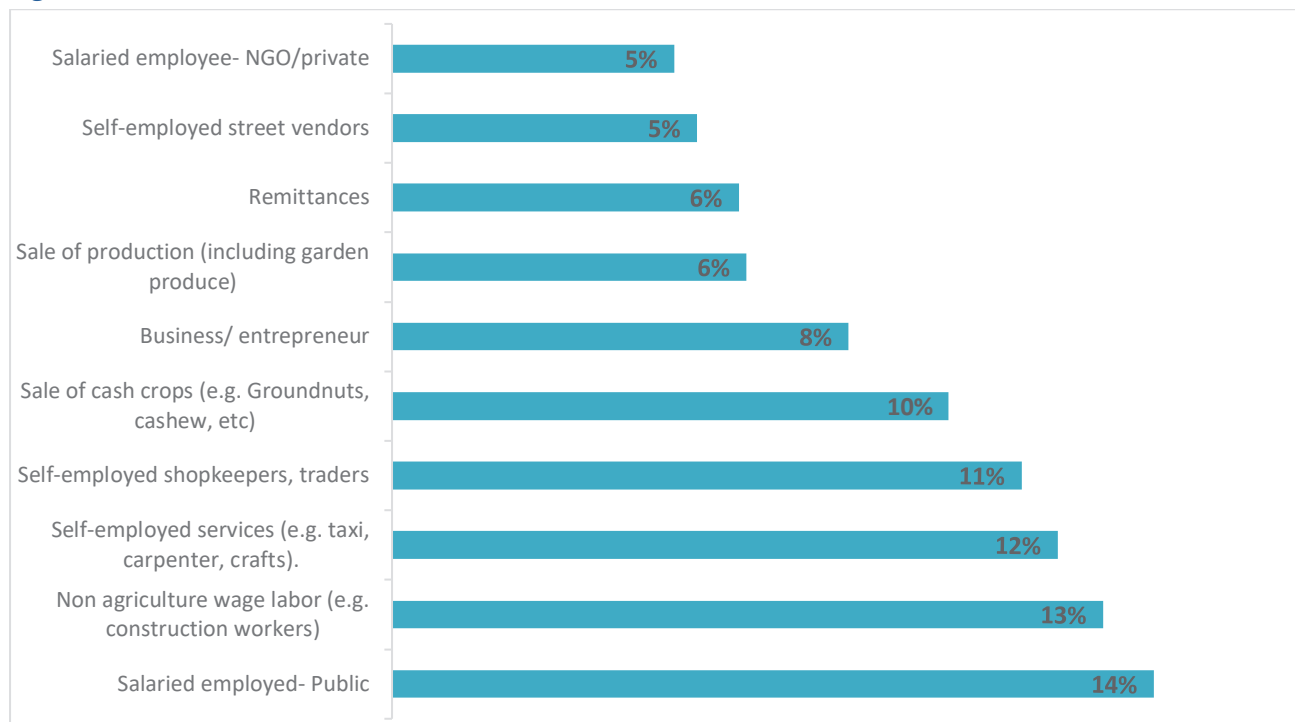
### LIVELIHOOD | Sources of Income

Although households report a range of income sources, low-income livelihoods remain predominant. The largest share of households relies on salaried public-sector employment (**14 percent**), followed closely by non-agricultural wage labor (**13 percent**) such as construction and other daily labor activities. Self-employment plays a significant role in livelihoods, with services (**12 percent**) including transport, carpentry, and crafts and small shopkeeping or petty trading (**11 percent**) forming key income streams.

Agricultural and related activities also contribute meaningfully, with cash crop **sales (10 percent)** and the sale of own production including garden produce (**6 percent**) indicating continued dependence on seasonal and climate-sensitive sources. Entrepreneurial activities account for 8 percent, while remittances provide income for **6 percent** of households, offering an important safety net for some.

Lower-contributing income sources include street vending (**5 percent**) and salaried employment in NGOs or the private sector (**5 percent**).

Figure 7: Main source of income

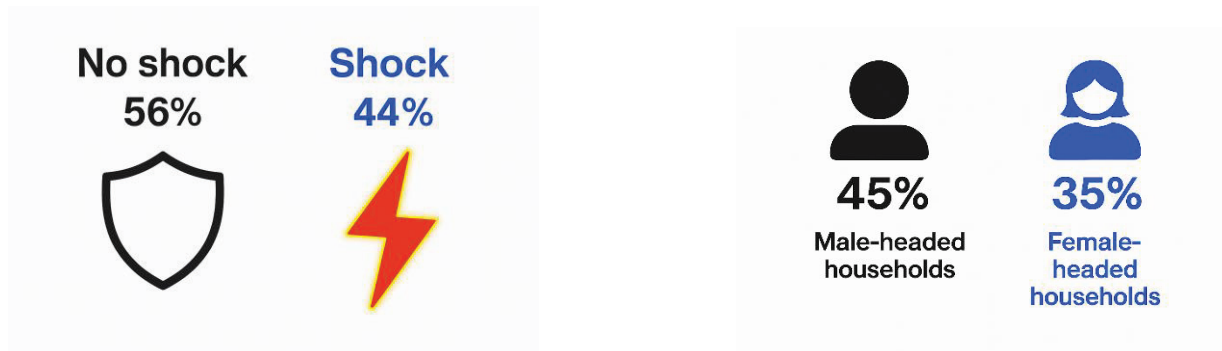


Overall, the income landscape is characterized by a mix of formal employment, informal labor, and small-scale self-employment. The significant reliance on wage labor, petty trade, and agriculture underscores household exposure to economic shocks, seasonality, and market fluctuations. This structure suggests the importance of livelihood diversification and strengthening informal-sector resilience to improve household economic stability.

## DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY | Shocks

The finding highlights that nearly half of the total population (**44 percent**) had experienced at least one shock in the six months prior to the survey and shocks are alarming within both male (**45 percent**) and female (**35 percent**) groups. Among the households that declared experiencing a shock, **55 percent** reside in urban areas, while **45 percent** in rural areas.

Figure 8: Households having experienced shocks in the past 6 months.



These shocks are characterized by economic instability, limited access to employment, and environmental stressor.

Figure 9: Main shocks experienced by HHs



Furthermore, households' vulnerability is characterized by five major shocks dominated by economic and health-related stressors. The most frequently reported shock is **high food prices**, affecting **33 percent** of the Gambian households. Rising food costs are placing substantial pressure on household budgets, likely limiting purchasing power and increasing vulnerability, especially among lower-income families.

**Loss of employment or reduced income** is reported by **23 percent** of the households. This suggests significant financial insecurity and instability in livelihoods, which may result from limited job opportunities, seasonal work patterns, or broader economic disruptions.

**Sickness of a household member** reported by **13 percent** of households has the potential to reduce household productivity and increase medical expenses, further straining financial resources. Reported by **10 percent** of households, **Crop failure** appears more critical in the rural areas than urban with a direct consequence on households heavily depending on agriculture.

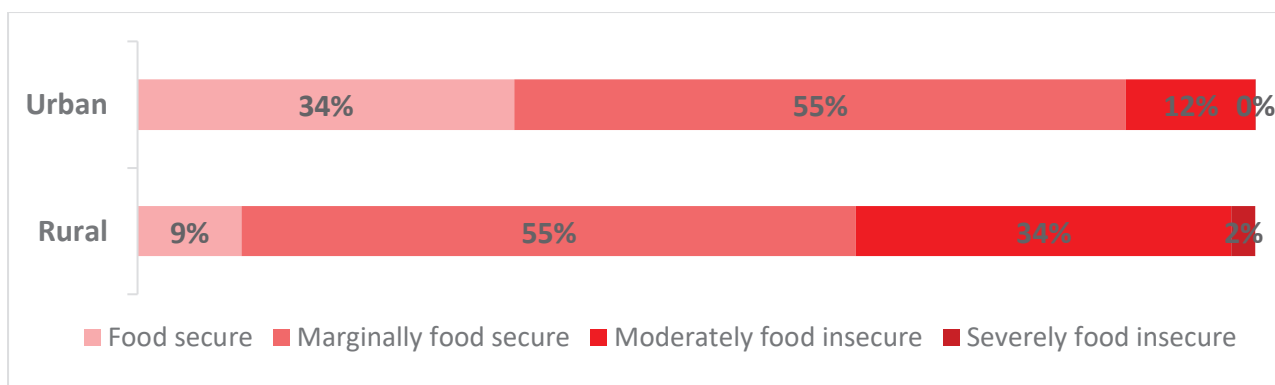
**Debts** undermine households’ ability to daily access to diverse and nutritious diets, limit their capacity to absorb future shocks, reduce resilience and limits investment in agricultural productivity, worsening food availability.

### FOOD INSECURITY | Profile of food insecure households

#### Residential areas of household head:

Food insecurity remains persistent in the rural areas for the past five years exacerbated by structural poverty and mainly characterised by low income, high unemployment rate, limited access to basic goods and services, and low level of education.

Figure 10: Residential Area of the household head by food security categories



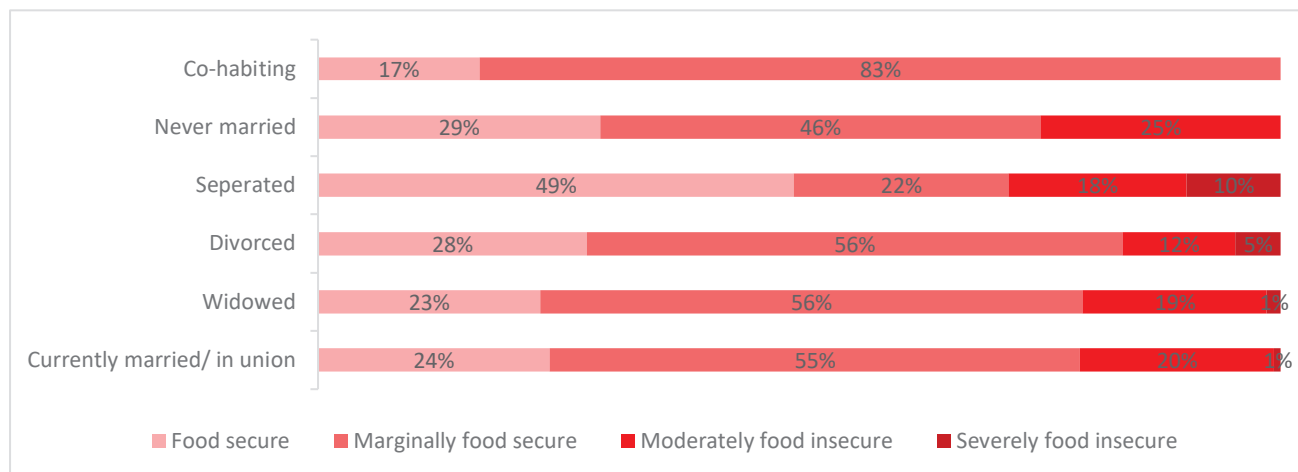
In 2025, **36 percent** of the population in the rural areas is classified as food insecure, compared to **16 percent** in urban areas. Although the gap persists, the findings indicate a slight improvement in rural food security compared to 2024, when **39 percent** of rural households were food insecure versus **14 percent** in urban areas.

#### Marital Status of head of household head:

Marital status appears as one of the essential variables in establishing the profile of the households in the Gambia. It plays a pivotal role in supporting households to acquire food and maintain resilience to economic and climatic shocks.

Thus, [figure 11](#) shows that Households headed by widow, separated or never-married individuals have the highest levels of moderate and severe food insecurity because single-headed households have fewer financial buffers, more exposed to economic shocks.

*Figure 11: Marital Status of household head by food security categories*

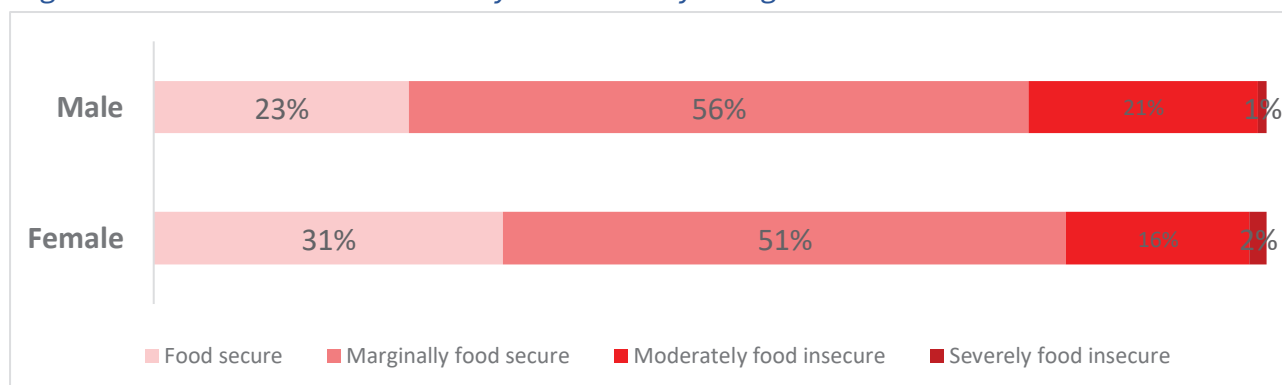


To statistically prove that there is a relationship between household marital status and food security, a chi-square test was performed, therefore showing a strong association between the two variables ( $\chi^2 = 4,146.67$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

#### Sex of head of household:

The distribution of male and female differ across the food security categories. Otherwise, the prevalence of food security remains higher amongst female-headed households (**31 percent**) compared to male-headed households (**23 percent**). Parallely, this female-headed households shows a slightly higher share of severely food insecure households (**2 percent** versus **1 percent**).

*Figure 12: Sex of household head by food security categories*

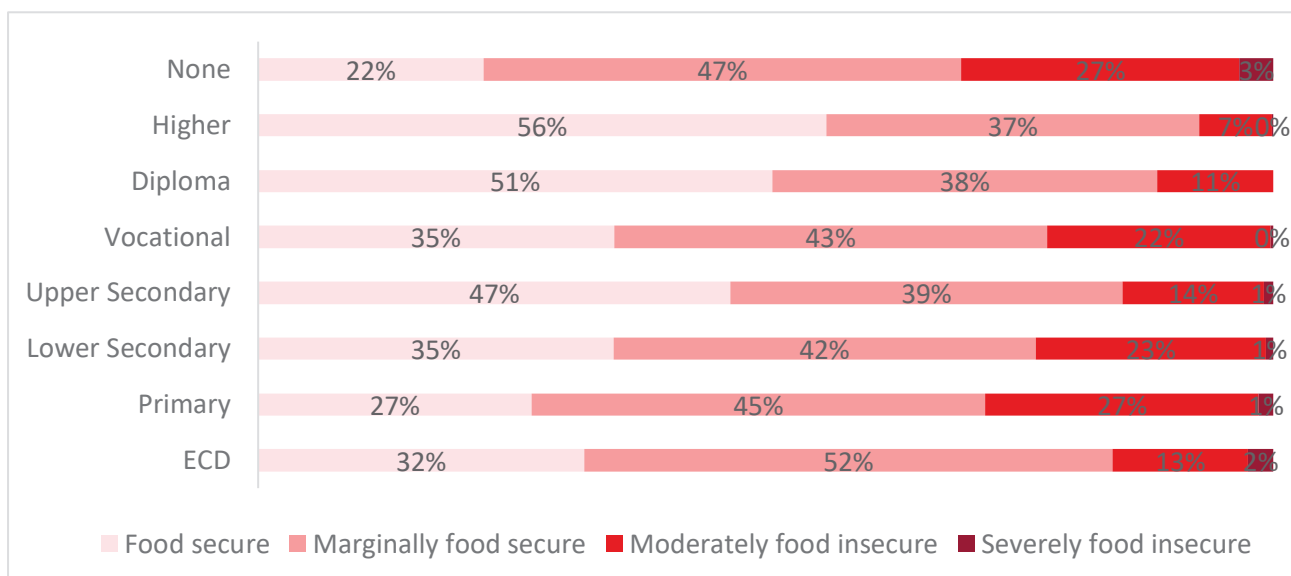


The statistical analysis (Chi Square test of association) highlights that food security is associated with the sex and the distribution across food security categories is different ( $\chi^2 = 2,198.37$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Several structural and behavioral factors such as polygamous family structure, extended family, assistance effects explain this difference.

### Education of the head of household:

Education significantly contributes to food security as this is relatively associated with the household income. The chi-square test of association performed in this context has proven that higher is the household’s education, higher is his/her income and more food secure he/she is. The test reveals a statistically significant association between the household’s education and her/his food security status ( $\chi^2 = 14,274.19, p < .001$ ).

Figure 13: education status by food security categories



Moreover, results show that amongst the households that have no education **30 percent** experiences food insecurity compared to those who completed at least the Early Childhood Development level accounting for **15 percent**.

A photograph of a lush green rice field. The rice plants are in various stages of growth, with some showing developing panicles. A solid blue horizontal bar is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text. The background shows a blurred horizon with some trees and a building.

# **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite persistent macroeconomic and structural challenges, household food security conditions in The Gambia improved slightly in 2025-2026 compared to the previous two years. This is the result of a moderate inflationary pressure observed in 2024 coupled with the low frequency and severity of climate shocks. Through remittance, households were able to have access to sufficient and nutritious food which is reflected in the total number of households with adequate food consumption otherwise, identified within the acceptable food consumption group compared to last year.

This study, which entailed quantitative data collection from **2,439 households** across all eight LGAs, aimed to assess the food security of Gambian households and to compare the situation with the last two years.

Consequently, the survey findings indicate that the overall food security situation shows gradual national progress but continued regional disparities. Household food consumption improved in 2025, with inadequate consumption falling to **16 percent** and severe hunger dropping to zero. However, moderate hunger remains elevated compared to 2023, signaling ongoing pressure on food access. Rural regions such as Mansakonko, Basse, Kerewan, and Kuntaur continue to experience higher levels of inadequate consumption and hunger, reflecting deeper structural vulnerabilities.

Economic indicators reinforce this picture. In 2025, **32 percent** of households spent more than **65 percent** of their income on food, with the highest burden recorded in Kuntaur, Basse, and Janjanbureh. This financial strain drives households to rely on negative livelihood coping strategies, including spending savings (**34 percent**), borrowing money (**31 percent**), and delaying essential payments. With livelihoods dominated by informal wage labor, petty trade, self-employment, and agriculture, many households remain highly exposed to shocks. Together, these findings highlight modest improvements in resilience but persistent fragility across rural communities, where targeted support remains essential.

Moreover, urban households are more prone to high-food prices, **market fluctuation** and employment loss, whereas rural households are more frequently impacted by **climate shocks** leading to **crop failure**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the **2025–2026 National Food Security Survey**, recommendations are structured using a **prioritized, evidence-based approach**, aligned with observed food security drivers, geographic disparities, and population vulnerabilities. Actions are organized by **urgency (immediate vs. medium-term)** and linked to **specific regions and responsible stakeholders**.

### □ **Priority 1: Immediate Food Security and Livelihood Protection**

*(High urgency – next 6–12 months)*

#### **1. Scale up targeted food and livelihood assistance in high-burden LGAs**

**Geographic focus:** Kuntaur, Basse, Janjanbureh, Kerewan, Mansakonko

**Rationale:** These LGAs consistently record food insecurity levels above the national average, high food expenditure shares (>65%), and increased reliance on crisis and emergency coping strategies.

**Recommended actions:**

- Expand targeted food assistance and/or cash-based transfers for severely food-insecure households
- Prioritize households with limited coping capacity, including female-headed households, large households, and households dependent on agriculture

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia (NDMA, NaNA, NSPA, Department of Social Welfare), WFP

**Supporting partners:** NGOs, UN agencies

#### **2. Strengthen and expand social safety nets targeting vulnerable households**

**Geographic focus:** National, with emphasis on rural LGAs

**Rationale:** Although food consumption improved post-harvest, 55 percent of households remain marginally food secure and highly vulnerable to shocks.

**Recommended actions:**

- Scale up school feeding programmes, particularly in food-insecure rural areas
- Expand predictable cash or food support for vulnerable households during seasonal stress periods

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia

**Supporting partners:** WFP, UNICEF, development partners

### □ **Priority 2: Market and Price Stabilization**

*(High to medium urgency – next 12 months)*

#### **3. Mitigate the impact of high food prices on household purchasing power**

**Geographic focus:** Urban and peri-urban areas (Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama), and rural markets

**Rationale:**

High food prices were the most frequently reported shock, affecting 33 percent of households, particularly market-dependent urban populations.

**Recommended actions:**

- Strengthen market price monitoring and early warning mechanisms
- Maintain temporary tax or tariff relief on key imported staple foods
- Enhance coordination with private sector actors to stabilize food supply chains

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia (Ministry of Trade, MoA/LF)

**Supporting partners:** WFP, private sector

**□ Priority 3: Livelihood Recovery and Resilience Building**

*(Medium-term – 12 to 36 months)*

**4. Support livelihood diversification and income-generating activities**

**Geographic focus:** Rural LGAs with chronic food insecurity

**Rationale:**

Livelihoods remain dominated by informal wage labour and low-productivity agriculture, exposing households to recurrent income shocks.

**Recommended actions:**

- Support income-generating activities, petty trade, and small enterprises
- Improve access to productive assets, skills training, and micro-finance
- Integrate livelihood support with existing social protection programmes

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia

**Supporting partners:** WFP, NGOs, development partners

**5. Reinforce climate-resilient agricultural production**

**Geographic focus:** Agriculturally dependent regions (Kuntaur, Basse, Janjanbureh, Kerewan, Mansakonko)

**Rationale:**

Climate shocks and crop failure continue to undermine food availability and household income.

**Recommended actions:**

- Promote climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land management practices
- Support access to quality inputs, irrigation, and extension services
- Strengthen early warning and preparedness for climate-related shocks

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia (MoA/LF)

**Supporting partners:** WFP, FAO, NGOs

**□ Priority 4: Strengthening Coordination, Monitoring, and Evidence Use**

*(Cross-cutting – ongoing)*

**6. Enhance food security coordination and evidence-based planning**

**Rationale:**

Persistent regional disparities and fragile gains highlight the need for improved coordination and use of evidence in policy and programming.

**Recommended actions:**

- Strengthen or establish a **National Food Security and Nutrition Coordination Platform**
- Ensure regular monitoring of food security trends, markets, and shocks
- Integrate survey findings into national planning, social protection, and resilience frameworks

**Lead actors:** Government of The Gambia

**Supporting partners:** WFP, UN agencies, development partners.

In summary, while food security outcomes have improved modestly in 2025, the persistence of marginal food security and chronic regional vulnerabilities necessitates **prioritized, geographically targeted, and coordinated action**. Immediate measures should focus on protecting vulnerable households in high-burden LGAs, while medium-term investments should strengthen livelihoods, resilience, and market stability to secure sustainable food security gains.

## ACRONYMS

CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security
CBG	Central Bank of the Gambia
EA	Enumeration Area
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FES	Food Expenditure Share
LGA	Local Government Area
LCS	Livelihood Coping Strategy
r-CSI	reduced-Coping Strategy Index
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

# ANNEXES



## ANNEXE 1: SAMPLING- DISTRIBUTION OF EAs AND HOUSEHOLDS

LGA	Estimated prevalence of stunting	Number of clusters	Number of households per EA/Cluster	Census frame 2024			Survey Sample	
				Urban EAs	Rural EAs	Total	Urban EAs	Rural EAs
Banjul	10.3	18	20	149	-	149	9	-
Kanifing	11.7	11	20	336	-	336	21	-
Brikama	17.0	28	20	384	117	501	19	8
Mansakonko	17.8	35	20	86	157	243	5	16
Kerewan	23.1	16	20	94	196	290	5	16
Kuntaur	25.0	22	20	197	108	305	4	17
Janjanbureh	20.7	29	20	153	153	306	4	21
Basse	21.5	16	20	153	156	309	4	17
<b>The Gambia</b>		<b>178</b>				<b>2,439</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>95</b>

## ANNEXE 2: ACCESS TO LAND

		No	Yes
SEX	Female	81%	19%
	Male	81%	19%
LGA	Basse	65%	35%
	Brikama	91%	9%
	Janjanbureh	48%	52%
	Kanifing	96%	4%
	Kerewan	52%	48%
	Kuntaur	35%	65%
	Mansakonko	50%	50%
AREA	Rural	59%	41%
	Urban	94%	6%

### ANNEXE 3: TYPE OF DWELLING OF HHs

		Apartment	House	Hut	Tent	Worksite/Unfinished Home/Abandoned Building	School, mosque, church or other religious building	Garage, shop, workshop, or structure not meant as residence	No shelter (open air)	Other
<b>AREA</b>	Rural	19%	77%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Urban	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>LGA</b>	Banjul	42%	56%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
	Basse	24%	71%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Brikama	26%	73%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Janjanbureh	12%	82%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Kanifing	49%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
	Kerewan	11%	89%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Kuntaur	9%	83%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	LGA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Mansakonko	15%	82%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>sex</b>	Female	29%	71%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Male	27%	71%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## ANNEXE 4: HHs MAJOR PROBLEMS

		Drinking water	Food	Place to live in	Income or livelihood	Physical health	Health care	Safety	Education for your children	The way aid is provided	Law and justice in your community	Alcohol or drug use in your community	Mental illness in your community	Care for people in your community who are on their own	
<b>AREAS</b>	Rural	15%	40%	0%	34%	4%	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
	Urban	12%	32%	4%	34%	4%	5%	1%	1%	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%	
<b>LGA</b>	Banjul	1%	21%	2%	20%	12%	9%	1%	5%	2%	0%	25%	2%	0%	
	Basse	3%	56%	1%	29%	2%	7%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	
	Brikama	14%	31%	3%	40%	5%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	
	Janjanbureh	15%	39%	0%	30%	3%	7%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	
	Kanifing	22%	28%	7%	20%	2%	5%	3%	3%	1%	2%	7%	0%	0%	
	Kerewan	15%	49%	0%	22%	2%	9%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
	Kuntaur	9%	38%	0%	47%	3%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
	LGA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Mansakonko	1%	44%	1%	41%	11%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	<b>SEX</b>	Female	17%	32%	3%	30%	6%	5%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%
Male		13%	36%	3%	35%	4%	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	

## ANNEXE 5: HOUSEHOLD DIETARY DIVERSITY

		0 - 2 food groups	3 - 4 food groups	5 food groups	6-12 food groups
<b>AREA</b>					
	Rural	0%	1%	4%	95%
	Urban	0%	0%	4%	96%
<b>LGA</b>	Banjul	0%	1%	2%	97%
	Basse	0%	1%	6%	93%
	Brikama	0%	0%	5%	95%
	Janjanbureh	0%	1%	4%	95%
	Kanifing	0%	0%	3%	97%
	Kerewan	0%	0%	5%	95%
	Kuntaur	2%	2%	5%	91%
	LGA	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Mansakonko	0%	9%	1%	90%
	<b>SEX</b>	Female	0%	0%	6%
Male		0%	0%	4%	96%

## ANNEXE 6: THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY SURVEY TEAM

Responsibilities	Institutions/staff
<b>OVERALL SUPERVISION</b>	MoALF – Francis Mendy, <b>Director of Department Planning</b> GBoS- Nyakassi M.B. Sanyang, <b>Statistician General</b> WFP – Dr. Malick Ndiaye, <b>DCD/Head of programme</b>
<b>LEAD COORDINATION</b>	MoALF – Sabina K mendy, <b>Principal Statistician</b> GBoS–Sanna Manjang, <b>Director of Coordination, Statistical Methods, Quality Assurance &amp; Dissemination</b> WFP – Salifu Jaiteh, <b>Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer</b> GBoS-Ebrima manneh, <b>Head of GIS</b>
<b>CONCEPT, PLANNING AND DESIGN</b>	WFP – Salifu Jaiteh, <b>Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer</b> GBoS – Sanna Manjang, <b>Director of Coordination, Statistical Methods, Quality Assurance &amp; Dissemination.</b> MoALF – Sabina K mendy, <b>Senior Planner</b> WFP – Saikou Jawo, <b>RAM Associate</b>
<b>SAMPLING</b>	GBoS - Sanna Manjang, <b>Director of Coordination, Statistical Methods, Quality Assurance &amp; Dissemination</b> MoA – Sabina Mendy, <b>Principal Statistician</b> GBoS – Kutub Hydara, <b>Sampling Expert</b>
<b>TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION</b>	<b>FIELD AND</b> WFP – Saikou Jawo, <b>RAM Associate</b> WFP – Salifu Jaiteh, <b>Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer</b>

	<p>GBoS – Sanna Manjang, <b>Director of Coordination, Statistical Methods, Quality Assurance &amp; Dissemination</b></p> <p>MoA – Sabina Mendy, <b>Principal Statistician</b></p> <p>MoA – Musa Jallow,</p> <p>WFP – Burama Jacob Mendy, <b>Senior Programme Associate</b></p> <p>GBoS – Ebrima Manneh, Head of GIS</p>
<b>DATA PROCESSING</b>	<p>WFP – Saikou Jawo, <b>RAM Associate</b></p> <p>WFP – Salifu Jaiteh, <b>Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer</b></p> <p>MoA – Sabina Mendy, <b>Principal Statistician</b></p>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS &amp; REPORT WRITING</b>	<p>WFP – Salifu Jaiteh, <b>Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer</b></p>
<b>REVIEWED</b>	<p>The National Technical Working Group, WFP – Dr. Malick Ndiaye, <b>DCD/Head of programme, WFP</b></p>
<b>MAPS and PHOTOS</b>	<p>WFP- Mattia PINZONE - <b>Head Quarter, Credit Line: © WFP/Richard Mbouet</b></p>

