

THE STATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN CUBA

VI REPORT 2023



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THE STATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS IN CUBA



Introduction

The island's authorities continue to demonstrate a lack of will to implement the critical structural changes that Cubans need two years after the historic protests of July 11, 2021, which included demands regarding political and social rights. The vast majority of the population is currently in a state of extreme poverty and exclusion, which has been made worse by the regime's inertia in the face of urgent problems, cumulative crises, and external circumstances like the passage of devastating hurricanes.

The findings of this sixth investigation into Cuba's social rights situation reflect all of this reality.

For the third consecutive year, the food crisis remains the main concern of respondents, followed by salaries and inflation. "Blackouts" are still common in the lives of the majority of those interviewed, as well as difficulties in the supply of drinking water. The percentage of those who say their home is in danger of collapse has increased. **Nearly nine in ten respondents say their household barely earns "enough to survive"; and 62% say they have problems "even to be able to buy the most essential things goods to survive."** These are just some notes on the reality that Cuban families deal with day after day.

Given the aforementioned, it is evident that respondents' perceptions of the regime's economic and social management are deteriorating: **almost seven out of ten consider it "very negative"; this rises to nearly nine out of 10 when those responding 'somewhat negative' are included. Those consulted have been especially critical regarding the government's social investment: more than 90% consider it insufficient in public health and hospitals, as well as in agriculture and food.**

At the same time, the study reflects the positive impact of family remittances (even in the current subsistence panorama) and confirms that the main problems on the island are internal, leaving the embargo, once again, outside the main problems that cause deep concern to respondents.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION



Methodology and technical data

For the fieldwork conducted by several teams of interviewers, we utilized Open Data Kit (ODK) technology, which is specially designed to function in areas with limited internet access. Data processing and statistical analysis were performed using the SPSS v10 and Gandia Barbwin v7 programs.

These computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) were distributed in 75 municipalities in all the country's provinces, in a representative sample (with provincial quotas according to age groups, and according to sex and racial group for the entire population), according to the latest official census information (September 2012). Cases from the province of Cienfuegos were weighted down to their national proportion due to an inadvertent sample overrepresentation in that region. Cited bases in this report are weighted.

SURVEY TECHNICAL DATA

Data Universe: Population residing in Cuba aged 18 and over, both sexes.

Sample: 1,354 (weighted).

Sampling method: Stratified cluster sample with respondent selection via intercept with age, sex, racial group and residence quotas.

Allocation: proportional by province.

Margin of error: +/- 2.53 for global data.

Confidence level: 95% with probability p/q=50%.

Methodology for field work: Personal survey with assisted data entry using mobile phones and tablets.

Field work dates: July 12 to August 7, 2023.

Organization responsible for field work: Cuban Observatory of Human Rights (OCDH).

Statistical analysis was performed by tabulating bivariate contingency tables. The report identifies as statistically *significant differences* those that are determined using *Student's t-tests* for median numerical differences and Chi-square coefficients for categorical variables or nominal for association tests.

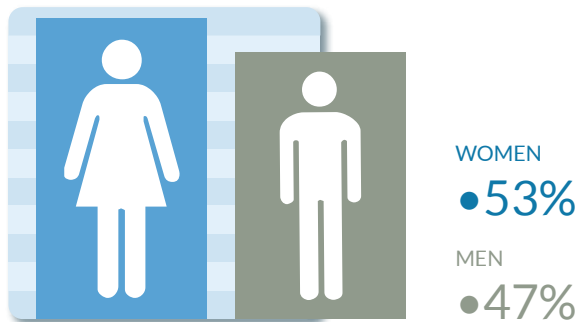
For data processing in this report, the percentage decimals referring to tables and graphs have been rounded to facilitate clarity of reading, without affecting statistical accuracy.

As noted in the previous report, the changes in the population since the 2012 Census are not known, since the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI) has not carried out a census since then.

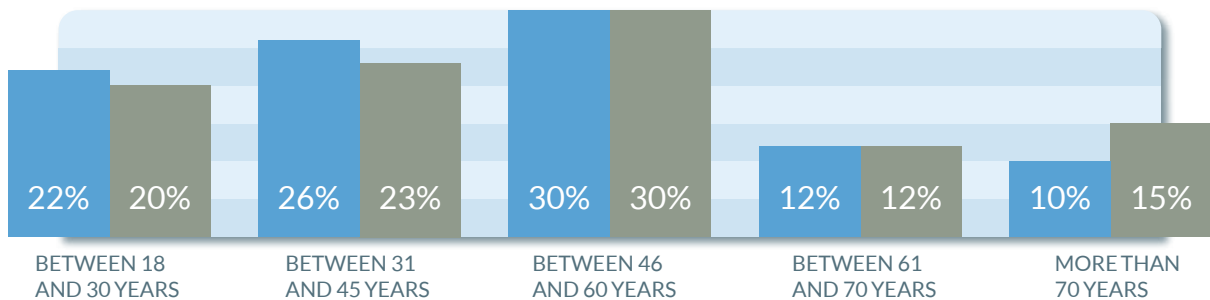


Distribution according to gender, age and racial groups

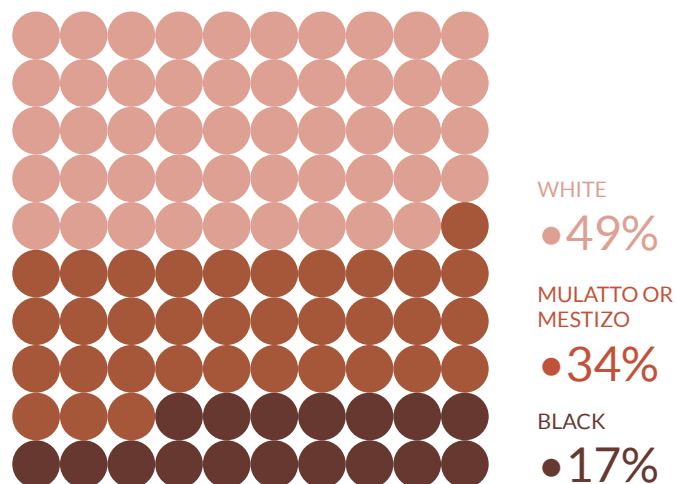
The distribution by sex and age remains proportional to the census data, with **a slightly higher proportion of women (53%)**, but without significant differences by sex in the different age groups. There are minimal variations in the distribution with respect to the previous survey, which affect only a smaller proportion of women over 70 years of age, maintaining great uniformity by age groups and sex in the entire sample.



DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO GENDER, AGE AND RACIAL GROUPS



DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO RACIAL GROUPS

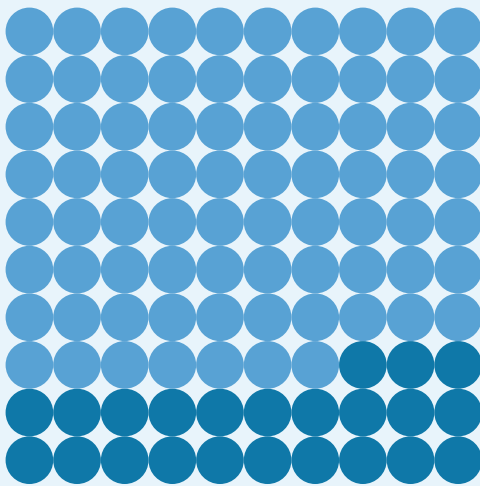




Educational level

In the educational level of the sample, a distribution is obtained in accordance with previous surveys, validating the methodology and the sample's representation, since it indicates that stable sociodemographic characteristics are being obtained.

Most of those interviewed have a baccalaureate education or less, while almost a quarter have a university education or higher (23%). Thirty-one percent of all respondents have completed secondary education. Secondary education is more common among men (35%) and less common among women (27%).

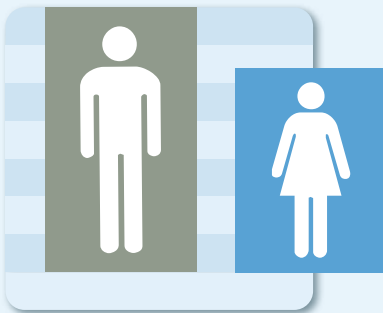


BACCALAUREATE
OR LESS

• 77%

UNIVERSITY
OR HIGHER

• 23%



PROPORTION OF SECONDARY
EDUCATION BETWEEN SEXES

MEN

• 35%

WOMEN

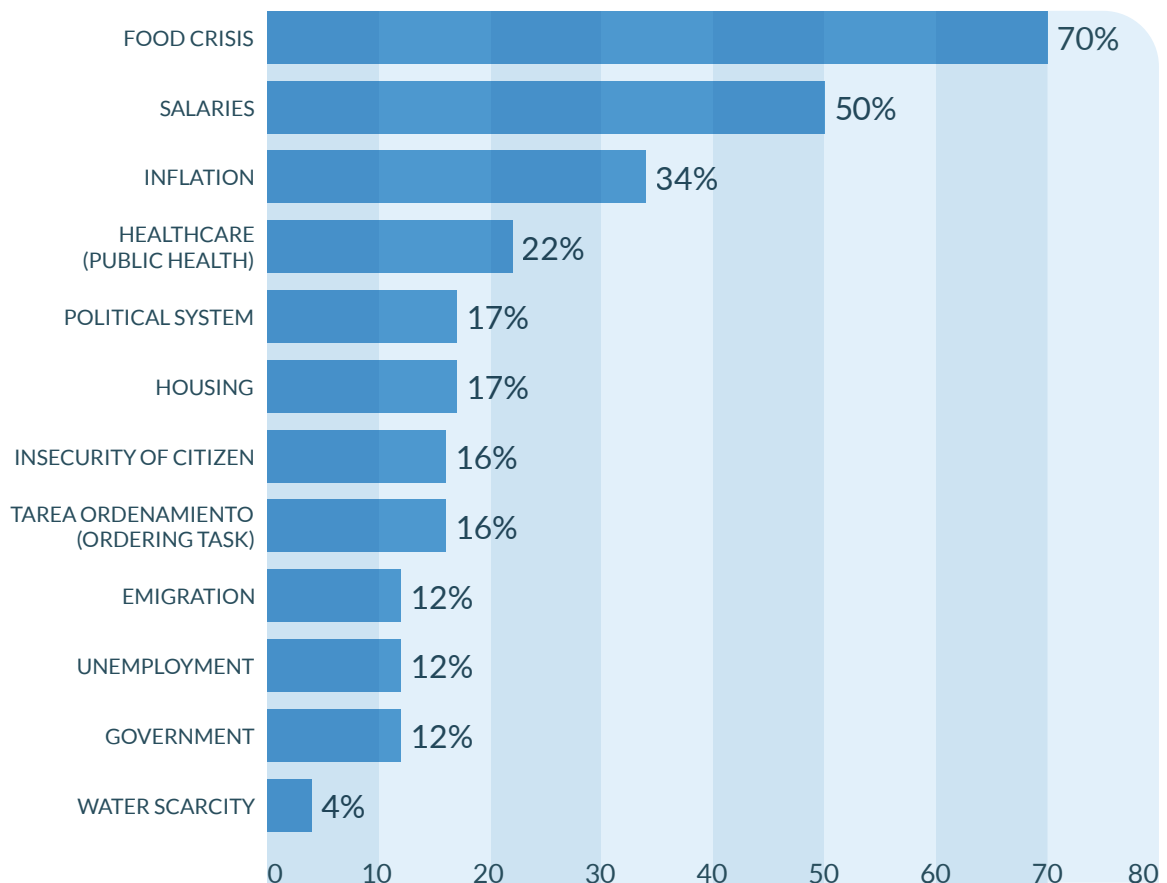
• 27%

1. MAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACING CUBA

Concern about food increased 5 points compared to the previous year, standing at 70%, followed issues related to salaries (50%) and inflation (34%).

MAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

(Multiple selection, maximum of 3 answers, first 12 most cited)



Concern about public health escalates again; increases due to unemployment and housing (with **an increase of almost six percentage points on housing**), while the reference to emigration decreases significantly (dropping almost five points), and citizen insecurity is at levels similar to those recorded a year ago.

Men tend to mention the problem of unemployment significantly more than women (16% and 9%). Mentions to the five main problems have some differences with respect to the age ranges, but they are almost always small. For example, people between the ages of 31 and 45 refer more to salaries, those over 70 refer less to inflation, and young people are the ones who refer the most to the problems caused by the political system.

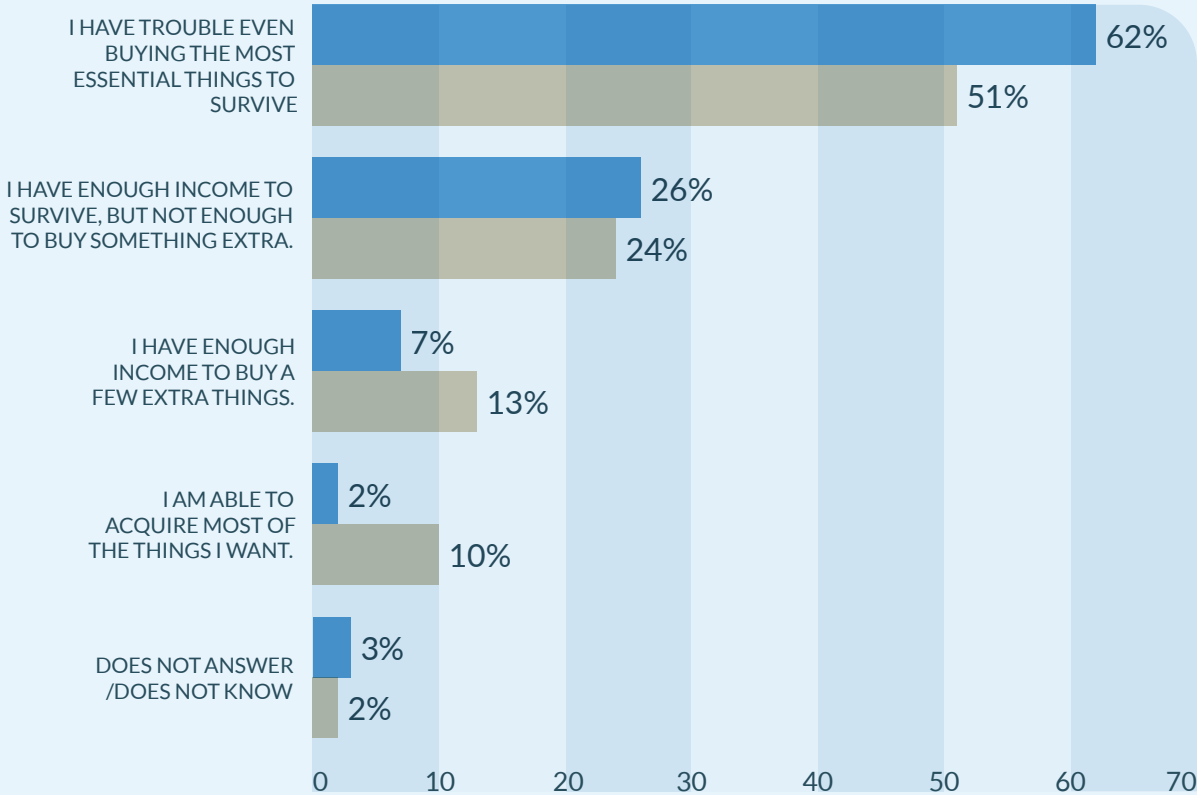
2. HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMIC SITUATION

The proportion of households with essential needs was 40% in 2021, reaching 51% in 2022; currently, these deficiencies affect 62% of households, rising almost another 11% in the last year.

The food crisis and inflation have impacted the economy of most households in this last year. If we add the households that suffer the most from deprivation and those that have “enough income to survive, but not enough to buy something extra”, 88% of households would be counted in this group (75% in 2022 and 74% in 2021).

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S ECONOMIC SITUATION (%)

VI SURVEY (2023)
V SURVEY (2022)



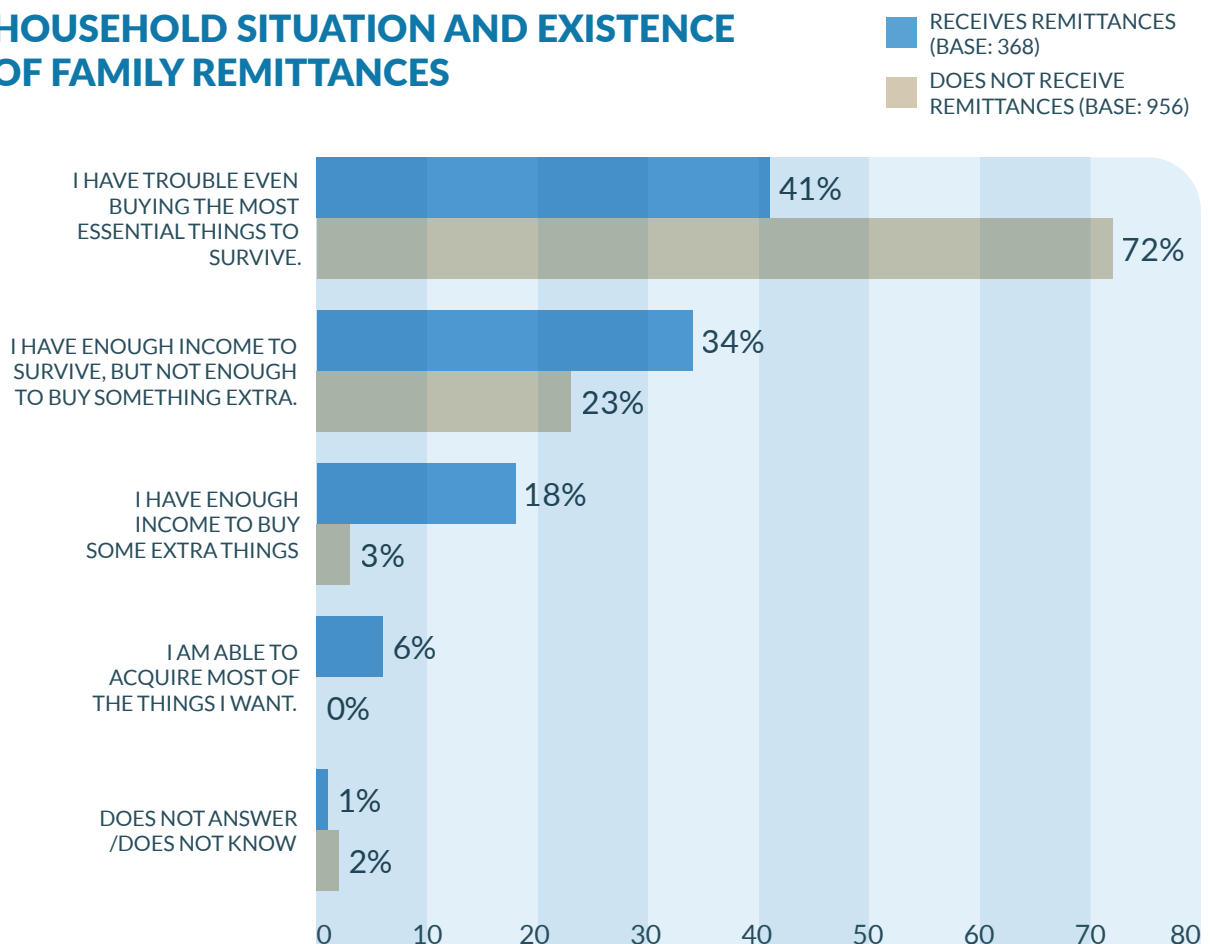


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79% of those over 70 have problems buying basic or essential products.

The situation improves relatively in **households that receive family remittances**, although **more than 41%** of them continue to be among those who **have problems even buying the most basic products**. In contrast, **the precarious situation rises to 71% for those who do not have access to remittances**.

HOUSEHOLD SITUATION AND EXISTENCE OF FAMILY REMITTANCES



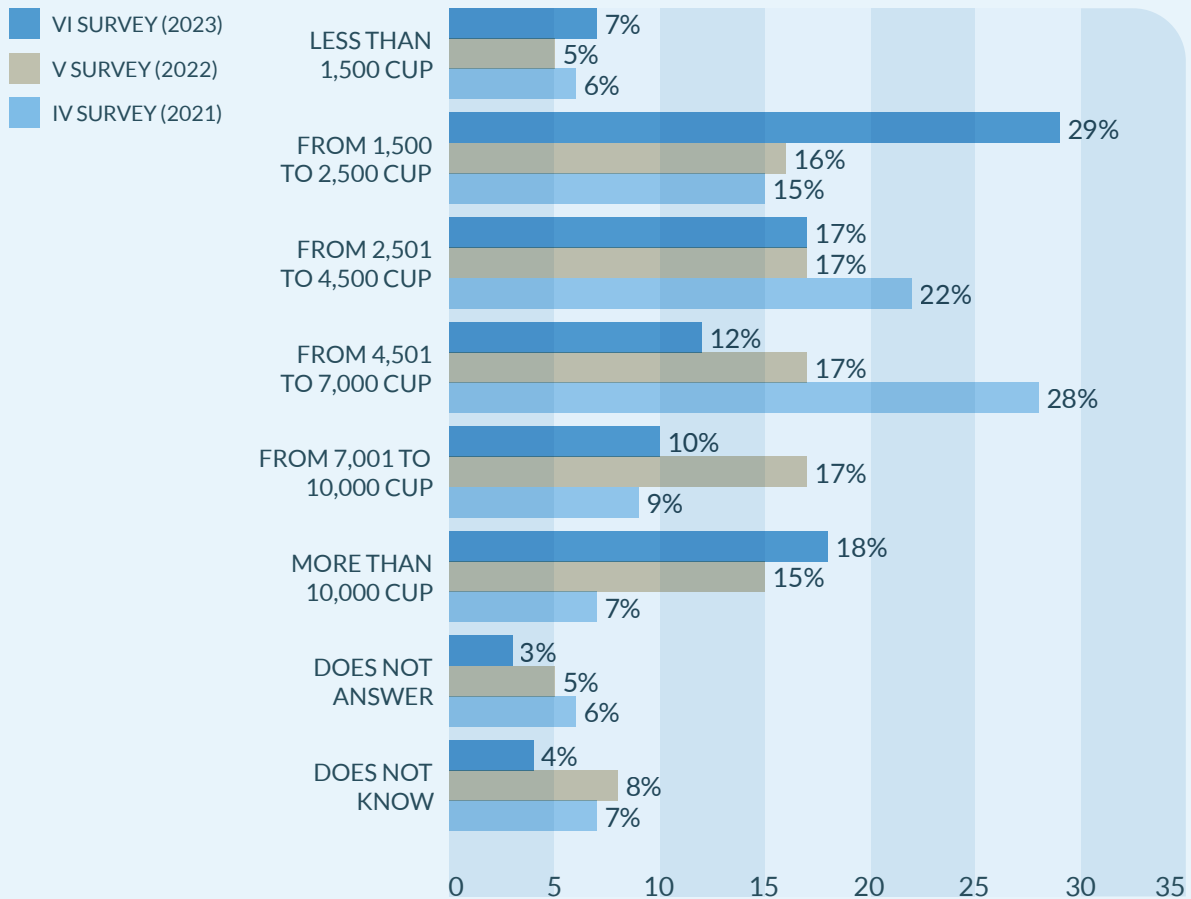


Household income



This year the proportion of households with monthly income in the range of 1,500 to 2,500 cup increases significantly; In contrast, it decreases significantly in the income range of 4,501 to 7,000 cup (up to 10 percentage points, which appears to be a downward shift to the immediate lower range).

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME (%)



For better monitoring, the “more than 10,000 cup” section in this VI Survey has been subdivided.

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME BRACKETS ABOVE 10.000 CUP	% OF TOTAL
From 10.001 to 15.000 cup	8
From 15.001 to 23.000 cup	5
From 23.001 to 35.000 cup	3
From 35.001 to 47.000 cup	1
More than 47.000 cup	1



Significant poverty rise in Cuba



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Placing the poverty threshold at \$1.90 per day per person, for a household of 3 members and according to the total income reported per household,

88% of those interviewed live below the poverty threshold.

The incidence of the few subsidized products and services, due to their short duration, intermittency, or scarcity, have increasingly less impact on households, unlike other elements such market prices not under state control, including the black market, or remittances. The value of the Cuban currency in the non-state market, which is the usual reference for Cubans, has been very unstable in this period (from August 2022 to August 2023). In this context, we take the median of the monthly data that has been compiled by the Economic Observatory, a service of the OCDH, to establish the exchange rate from the dollar to the cup: 1 dollar to 180 cup.

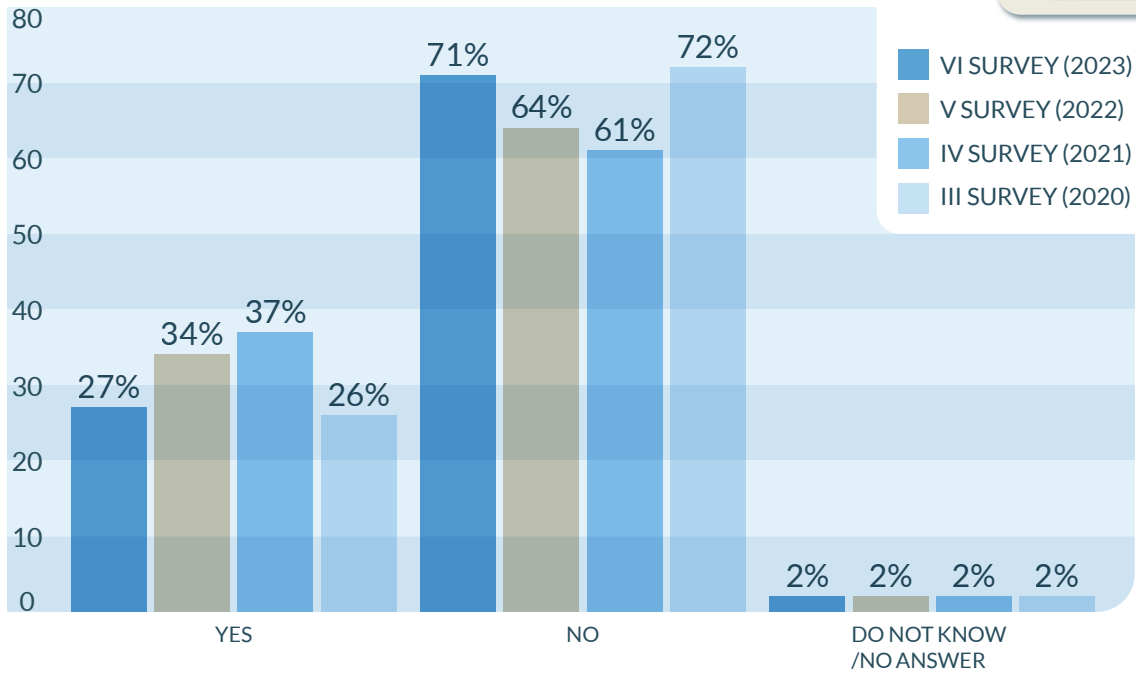
Considering this rate, interviewed households that earn less than 30,780 cups per month would be at the poverty level. Given that 14% of households interviewed located in the income bracket between 23,001 and 35,000 cup have problems purchasing the most essential products, we can also consider that such a proportion of households in said range would be in a situation of poverty.



Access to family remittances



ACCESS TO FAMILY REMITTANCES. In the last three months.
Was any family remittance received in your home? (%)



As it was observed in other years, *the age groups of 31 to 45 years and 46 to 60 years are the ones who most frequently receive family remittances (29% and 31%, respectively); and those who get them less frequently are those over 70 years of age (17%). When considering racial groups, 31% of individuals in the white group received remittances, which is only two percentage points higher than the sample as a whole. In the mestizo or mulatto group, 25% received remittances, while in the black group, the percentage was 21%.*

There is a greater presence of family remittances in households with larger monthly income brackets.

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME BRACKETS	% OF TOTAL	RECEIVE REMITTANCES ON EACH INCOME BRACKET
Less than 1.500 cup	7	4
From 1.500 to 2.500 cup	29	6
From 2.501 to 4.500 cup	17	26
From 4.501 to 7.000 cup	12	31
From 7.001 a 10.000 cup	10	30
From 10.001 to 15.000 cup	8	50
From 15.001 to 23.000 cup	5	60
From 23.001 to 35.000 cup	3	79
From 35.001 to 47.000 cup	1	83
More than 47.000 cup	1	87
Does not answer	3	
Does not know	4	

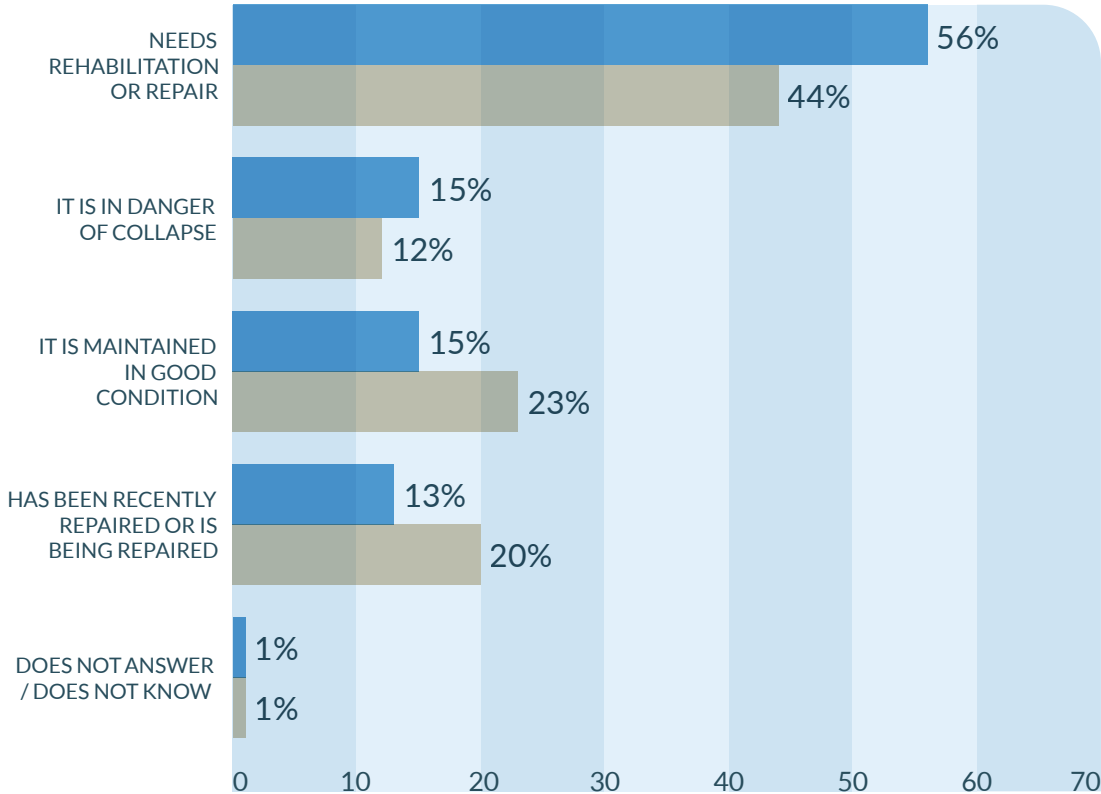
3. HOUSING, LIVING CONDITIONS AND SUPPLIES



Housing quality

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN RELATION TO THE QUALITY OF YOUR HOME? (%)

VI SURVEY (2023)
V SURVEY (2022)



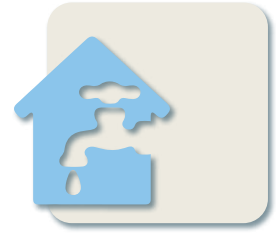
The number of homes at risk of collapsing has increased to 15%. This risk is even higher for individuals over 70, with nearly a quarter of cases (24%) in this age group facing potential collapse. Additionally, it is more pronounced among black respondents, with 21% facing a similar risk.

In the case of households that receive remittances, the number of homes in danger of collapsing decreases and those that have recently been repaired and those that are in good condition increase.

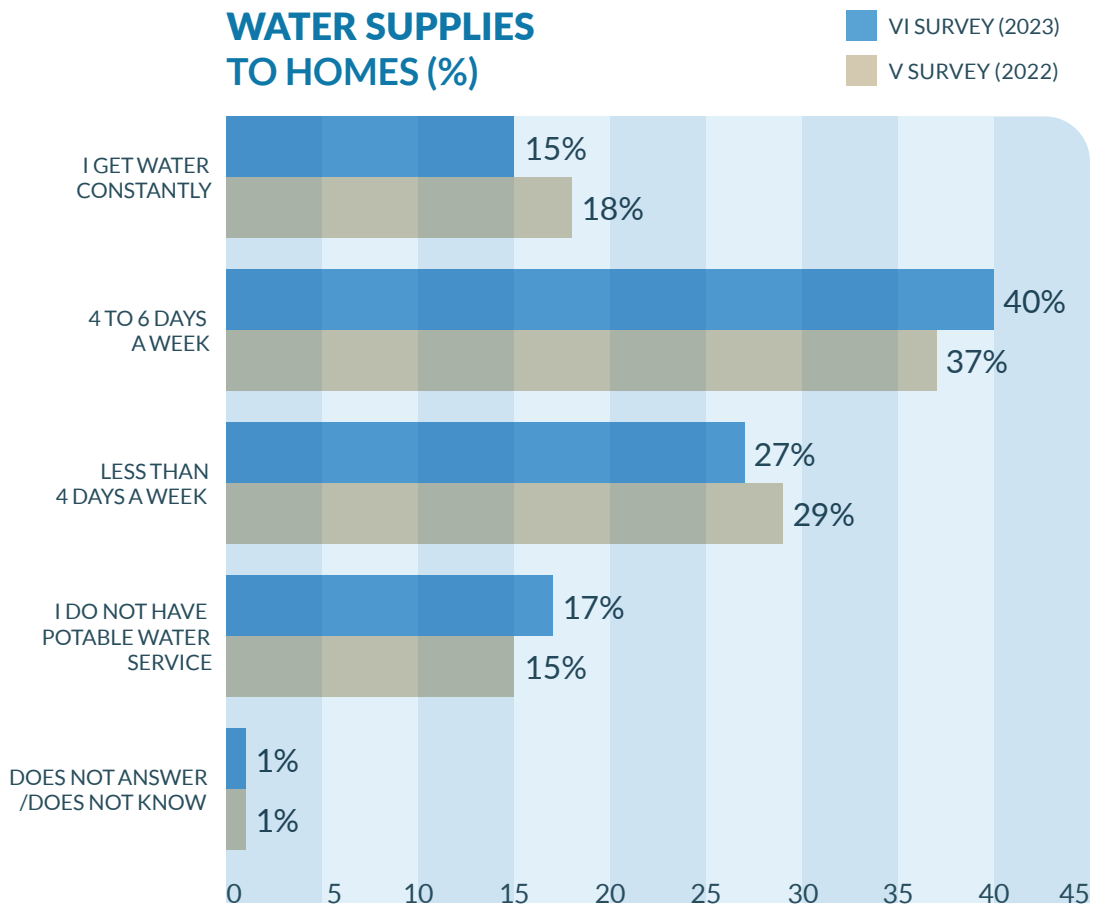
In Pinar del Río, the number of homes that need rehabilitation or repair increases significantly (84%), making it the province with the highest percentage of cases in this dire situation. A continuous increase from the 48% in 2021, which, after the passage of Hurricane Ian in September 2022, reached 73%, according to our data.



Drinking water quality and supply



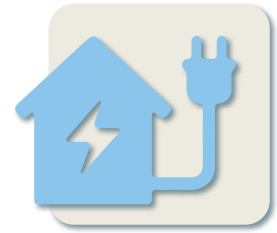
WATER SUPPLIES TO HOMES (%)



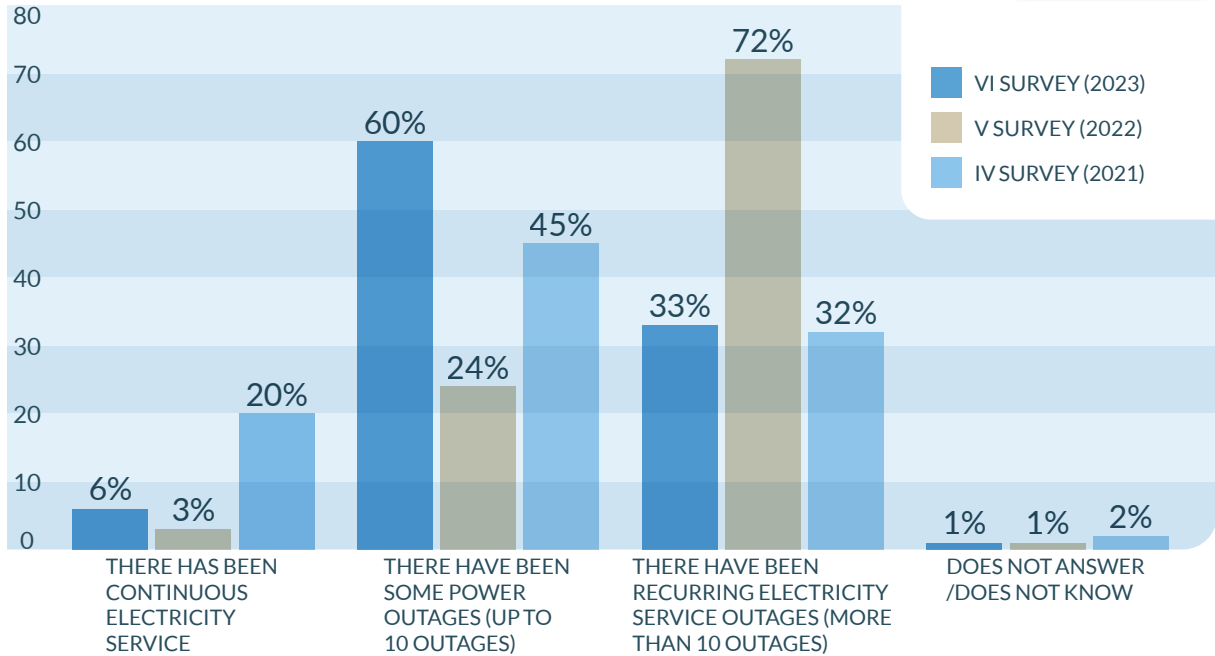
There are disparities among racial groups when it comes to access to potable water. 23% of black Cubans surveyed said that they do not have access to potable water, compared to 15% of mulatto respondents and 16% of white respondents. A plurality of mulattos (46%) said that they had access to water four to six days a week, compared to 35% of whites and 41% of blacks. 20% of whites enjoy a permanent supply of potable water, compared to just 11% among mulattos and blacks. Access to potable water also varies by age. A concerning situation emerges among the elderly, as 23% those aged 70 and older do not have access to potable water - almost one in four cases. This compares to roughly 16% among those aged 60 or younger.



Electrical power supply



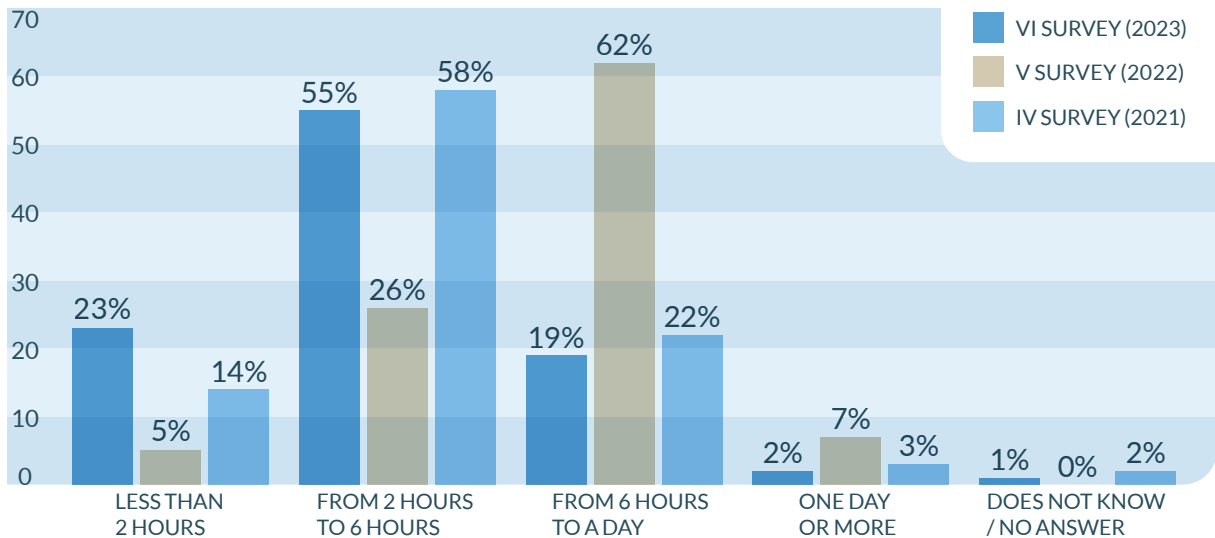
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY (%)



Power outages continue to affect a majority of those interviewed. However, in 2023, a decrease in the frequency of outages is observed if we compare with what was reported in the summer of 2022, when the country was immersed in a deep energy crisis, which was later worsened by the explosion of the Matanzas Supertanker Base in August 2022.

DURATION OF POWER OUTAGES, ON AVERAGE

(% / Among those who had experienced some outage, n=1,259)



4. FOOD AND NUTRITION



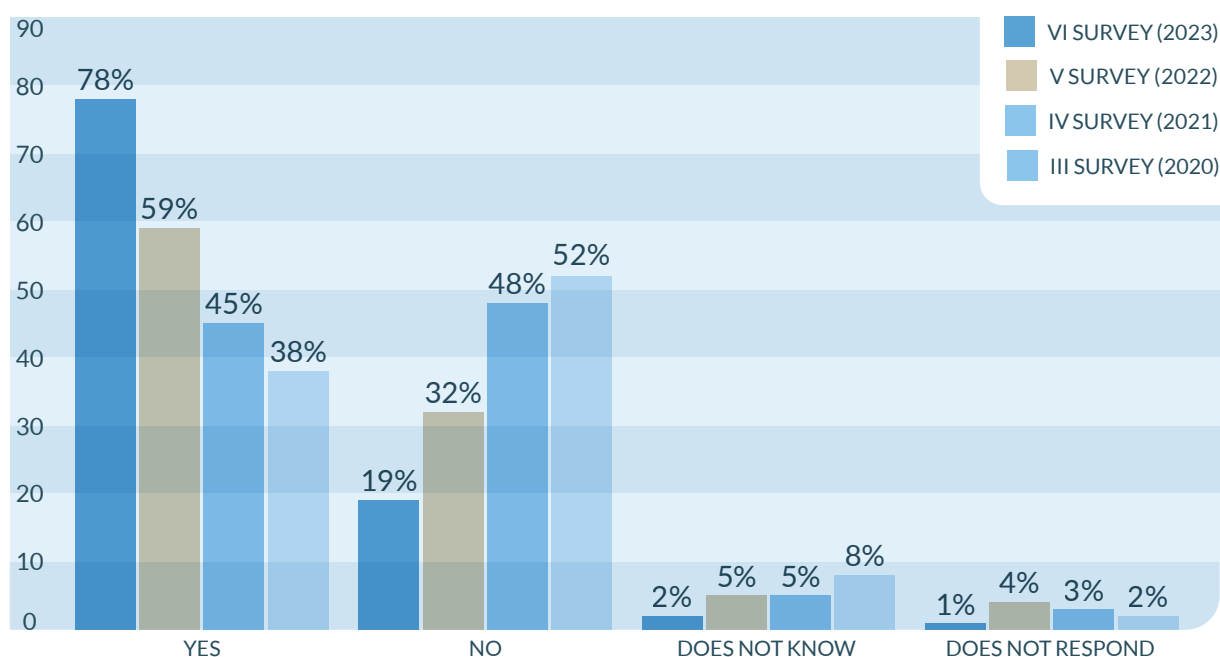
Quality of family nutrition

The food crisis is a problem that continues to worsen, both because of the nutritional deficiency, which almost 90% of those interviewed already pointed out to a greater or lesser extent in 2022, and because of their toil to access basic foods.

The food precariousness existing in the country is confirmed by the number of people who have had to stop eating some of their daily meals due to a lack of money or resources in the last three months. Compared to the previous year, there was nearly a 20-point increase in those who suffer from this type of shortage: in recent months rose to 78% the percentage who have stopped eating some of the three meals a day recommended for a healthy diet.



IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, DUE TO A LACK OF MONEY OR RESOURCES, DID YOU OR ANY MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY STOP EATING BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR DINNER? (%)



A 78% of those surveyed said that they stopped eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner due to a lack of money or resources. Of these, almost half (48%) affirm that they have skipped a meal due to a lack of money or resources to get food. 39% of those interviewed skipped a meal due to a scarcity of food to get or buy. 17% of cases reported yes without specifying a reason.

For those over 70 years of age, 60% skipped a meal due to a lack of money or resources. Even among people who received financial help through family remittances, only the 28% declared not had to skip a meal. A greater proportion of those from the black and mulatto or mestizo racial groups (56% and 58% respectively) report they skipped eating due to a lack of money or resources in comparison to whites (37%).

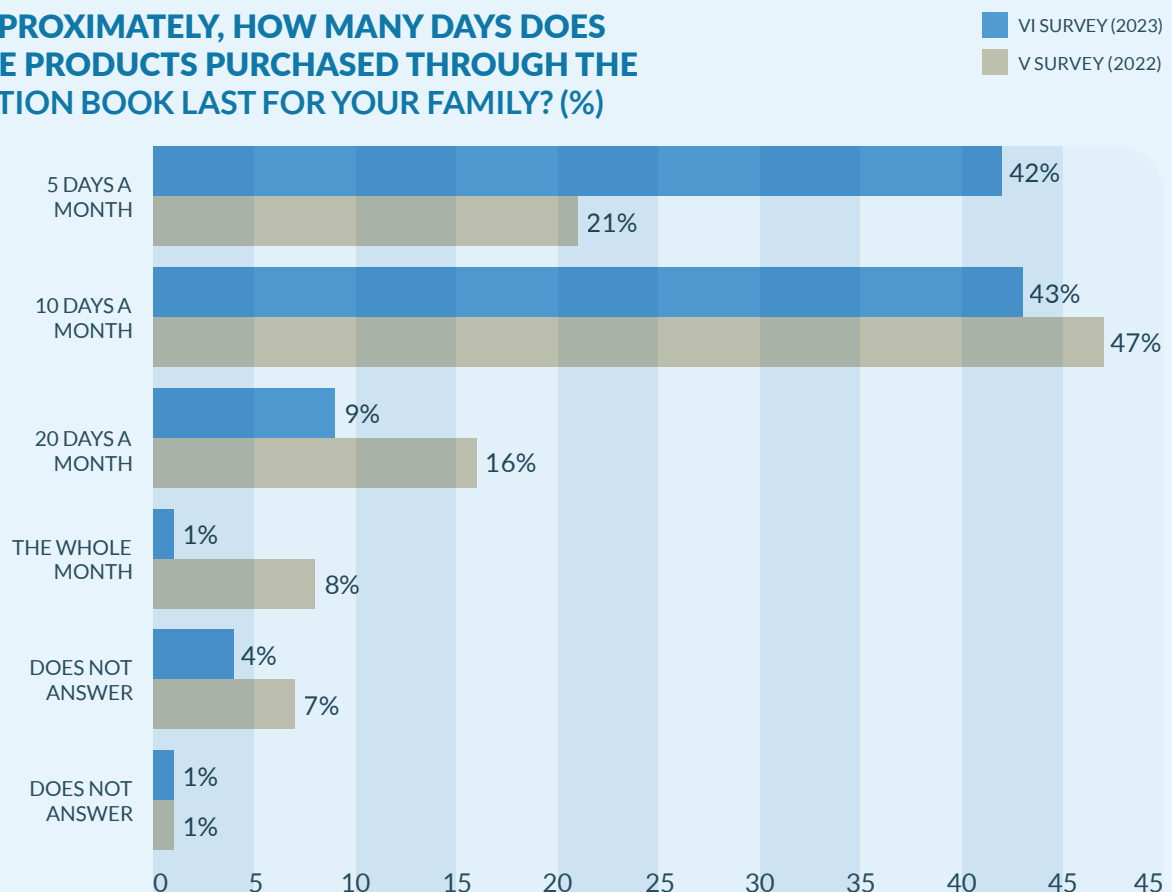


Access to basic foods with a State ration book



Access to food through the State booklet, which experienced a precarious situation in previous surveys, worsens with the data from the latest study. **The percentage of cases where the ration book only covers five days a month has doubled compared to the previous year, now exceeding 40%. Furthermore, 85% of those interviewed reported that state-controlled food supplies last for ten days or less.**

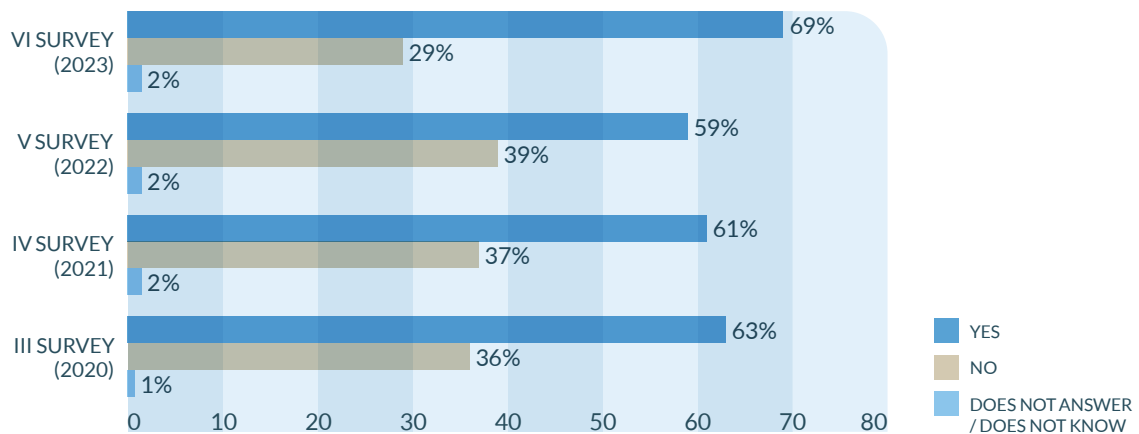
APPROXIMATELY, HOW MANY DAYS DOES THE PRODUCTS PURCHASED THROUGH THE RATION BOOK LAST FOR YOUR FAMILY? (%)



5. PUBLIC HEALTH AND ACCESS TO MEDICINES

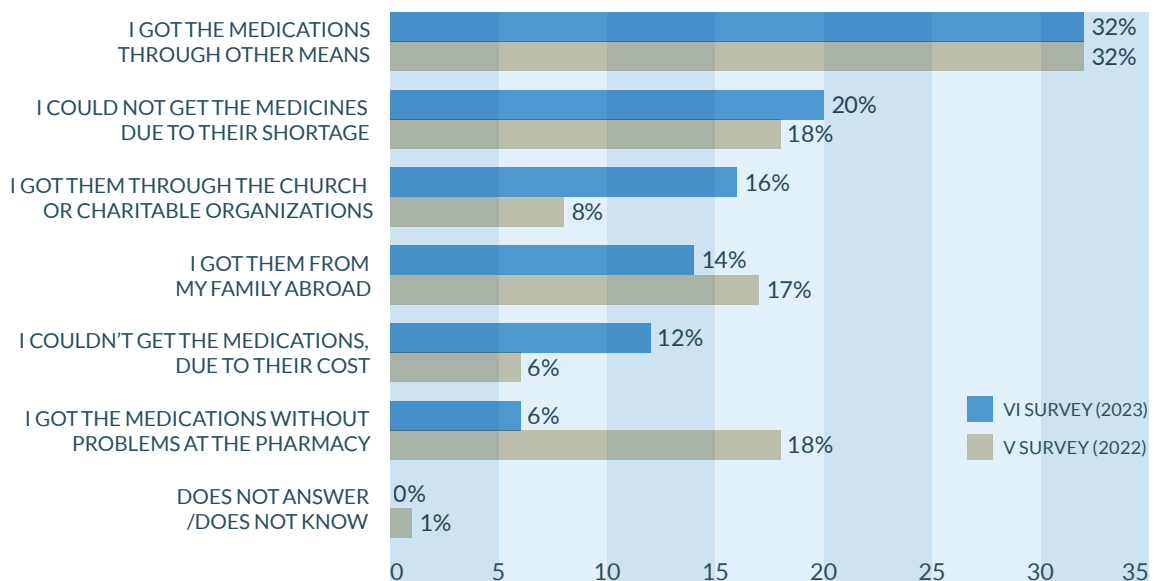
Survey results indicate a notable public health decline and one of the main indicators is the lack of proper access to medicines.

IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, DID YOU NEED TO PURCHASE MEDICATIONS? (%)



32% of those who needed medicines could not get them, either due to their cost (12%) or their scarcity (20%). Those who could obtain them did so through churches or charitable organizations, through their relatives abroad, or through other means. Only 6% got the medication they needed in the health system's pharmacies.

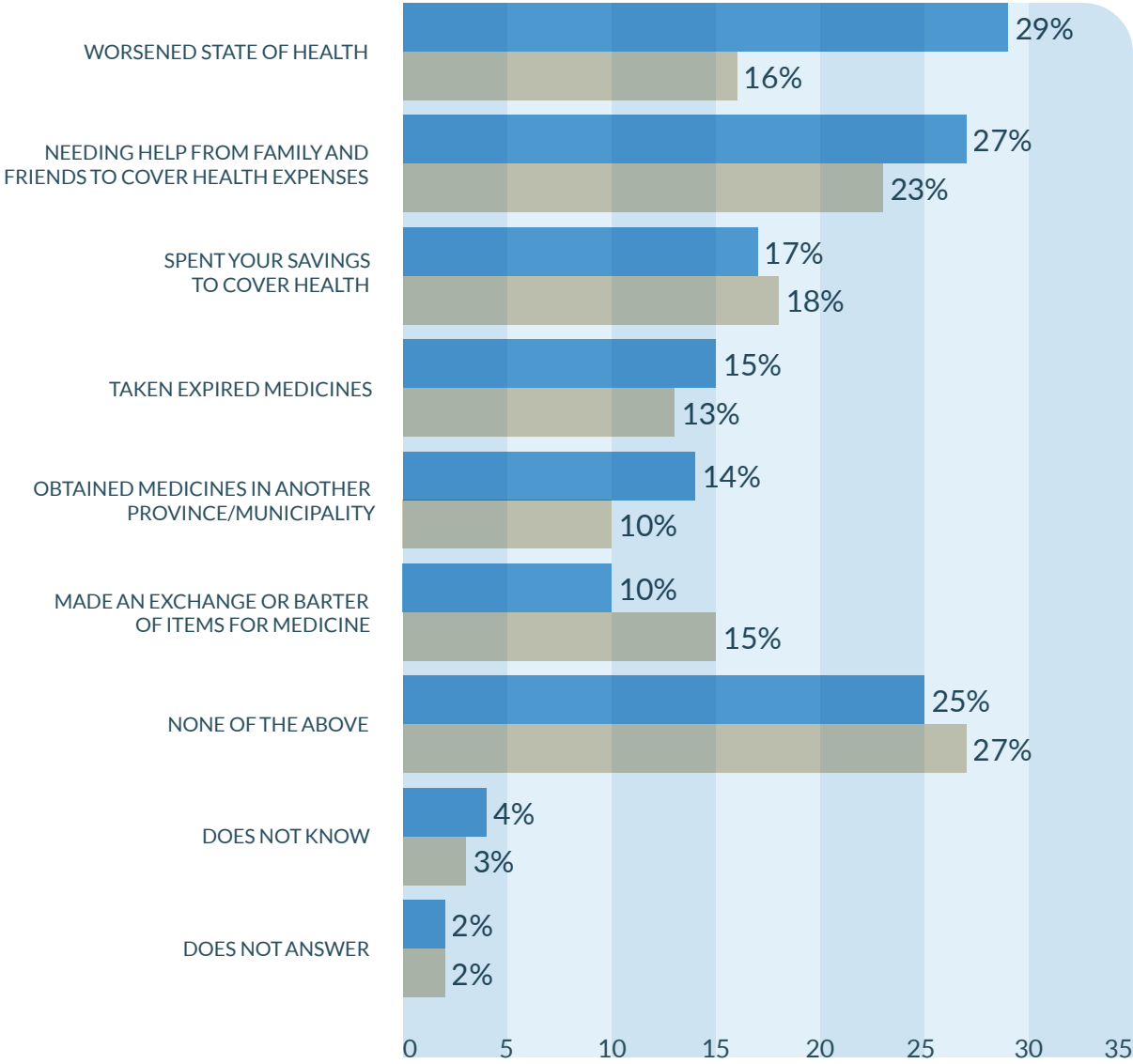
IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS, HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE ACQUIRING MEDICATIONS BEEN? (% / Among those who needed to purchase medications, n=929)



The shortage of medicines mainly affects the elderly, above average: 24% for those between 61 and 70 years old, and 23% for those over 70. Almost a third of those interviewed (29%) indicate that their health status has worsened, which represents +13 percentage points compared to the previous year.

IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, DUE TO A LACK OF MEDICINE OR A LACK OF MONEY, YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY HAS... (% multiple response)

VI SURVEY (2023)
V SURVEY (2022)



Of those interviewed, 15% said that they or someone in their family has used expired medicines. This practice is less common among young people aged 30 and under (10%), but more prevalent among older individuals, with 21% of those between 61 and 70 years old and 21% of those over 70 years old. Furthermore, individuals over 70 are more likely to report needing assistance from family and friends to cover their health expenses, with 38% indicating this need.

These recorded trends are fairly uniform across the sample, regardless of age and other sociodemographic characteristics, with some exceptions.

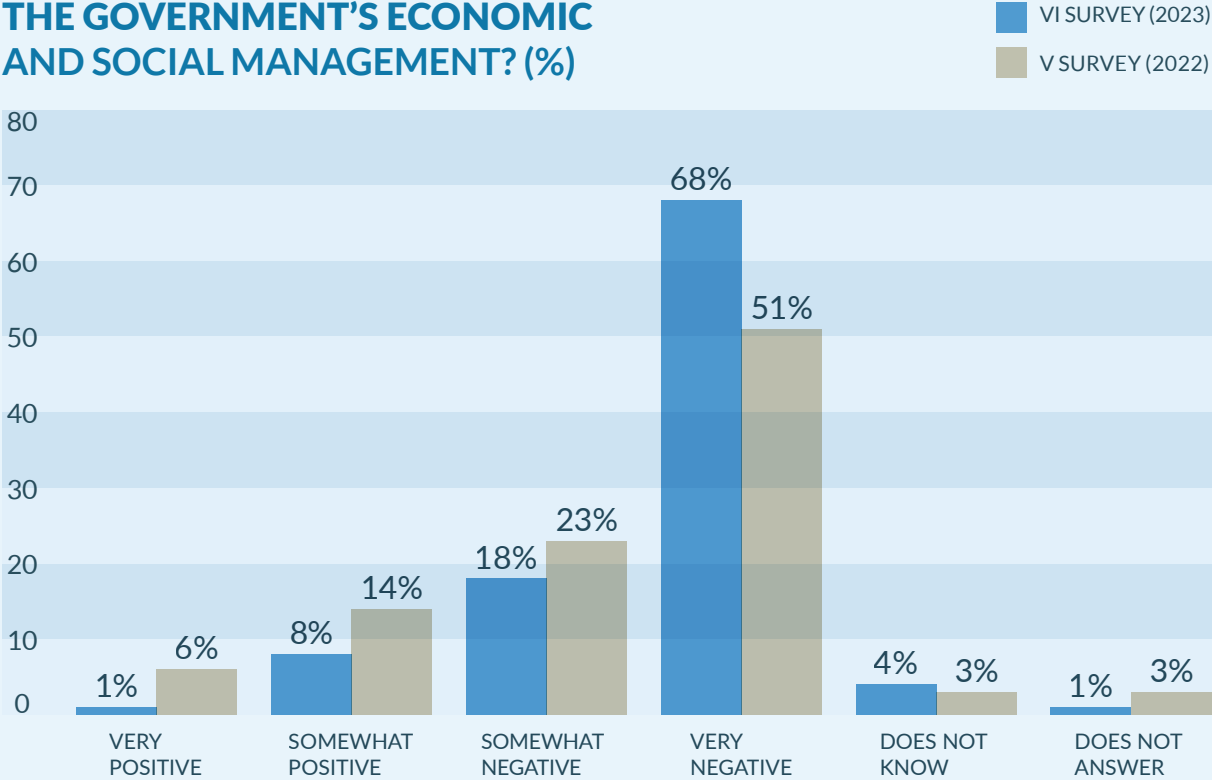
6. ASSESSMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT’S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

The weight of economic, health and housing problems, among others (in addition to the low investment in these social issues), has increased significantly in the last year. Considering all the negative evaluations, **almost nine out of ten of those interviewed (86%) are critical of the government’s economic and social management.**

In this context, **68% rate the government’s management as “very negative”** (a considerable increase of **+17 points compared to the previous year**).

As for racial groups, **the rating of “very negative” increases to 71% in mulattos or mestizos and 73% in the blacks group, adding more than five points over the whites group (65%).**

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE GOVERNMENT’S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT? (%)



75% of those who do not receive remittances and 54% among those who receive them consider the government’s management “very negative”.

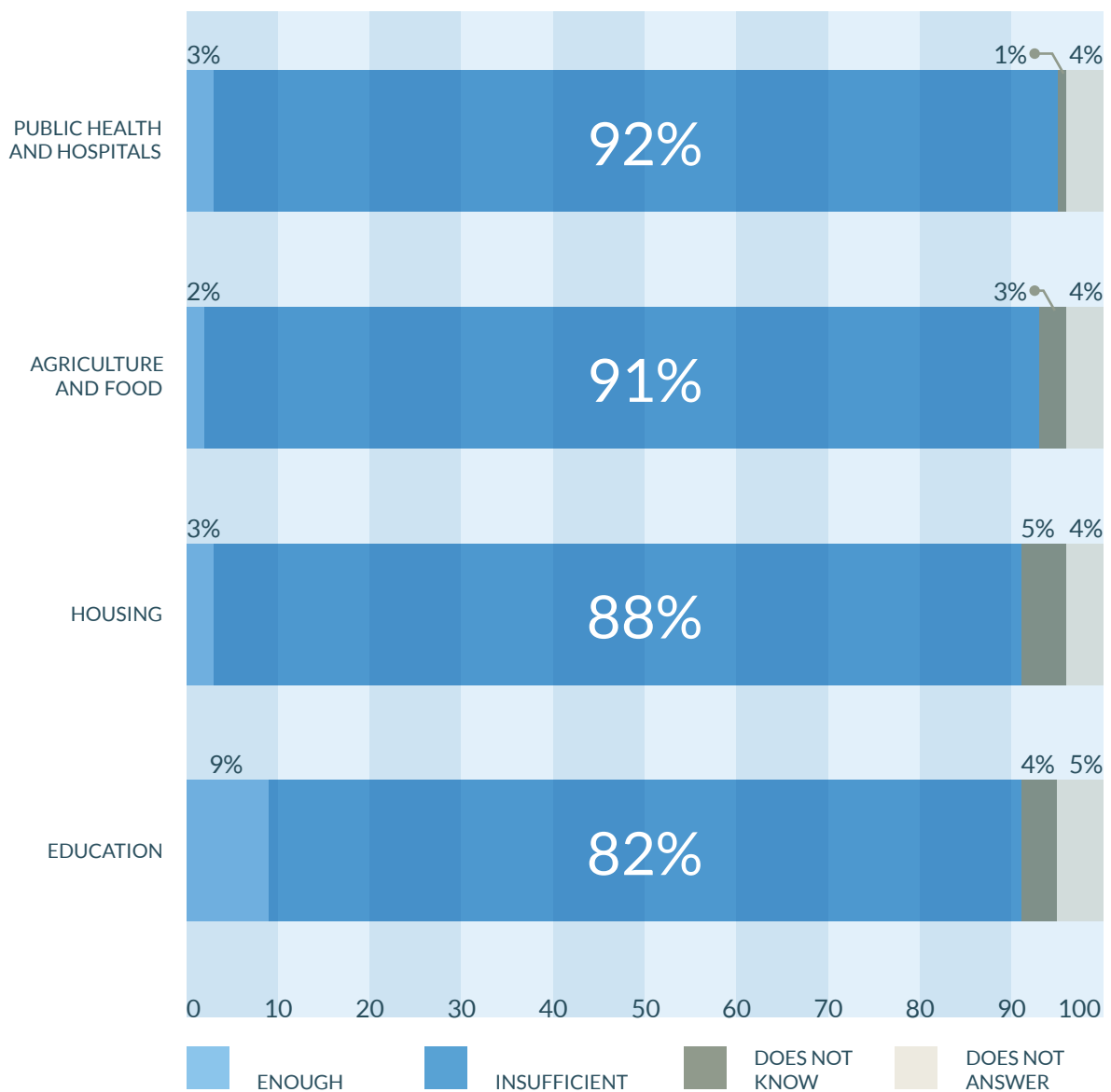


Public investments

More than 77% of those interviewed said that investment in all areas (housing, agriculture and food, education, and public health and hospitals) was insufficient. This perception serves as a new indicator for the assessment of the government's handling of economic and social concerns.

Over 90% of those interviewed believe that investments in public health, hospitals, agriculture, and food are insufficient. Only in the case of education does the perception of sufficient investment increase slightly by 9%, but it still falls short of a moderately positive assessment.

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTMENT IN THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL ISSUES? (%)



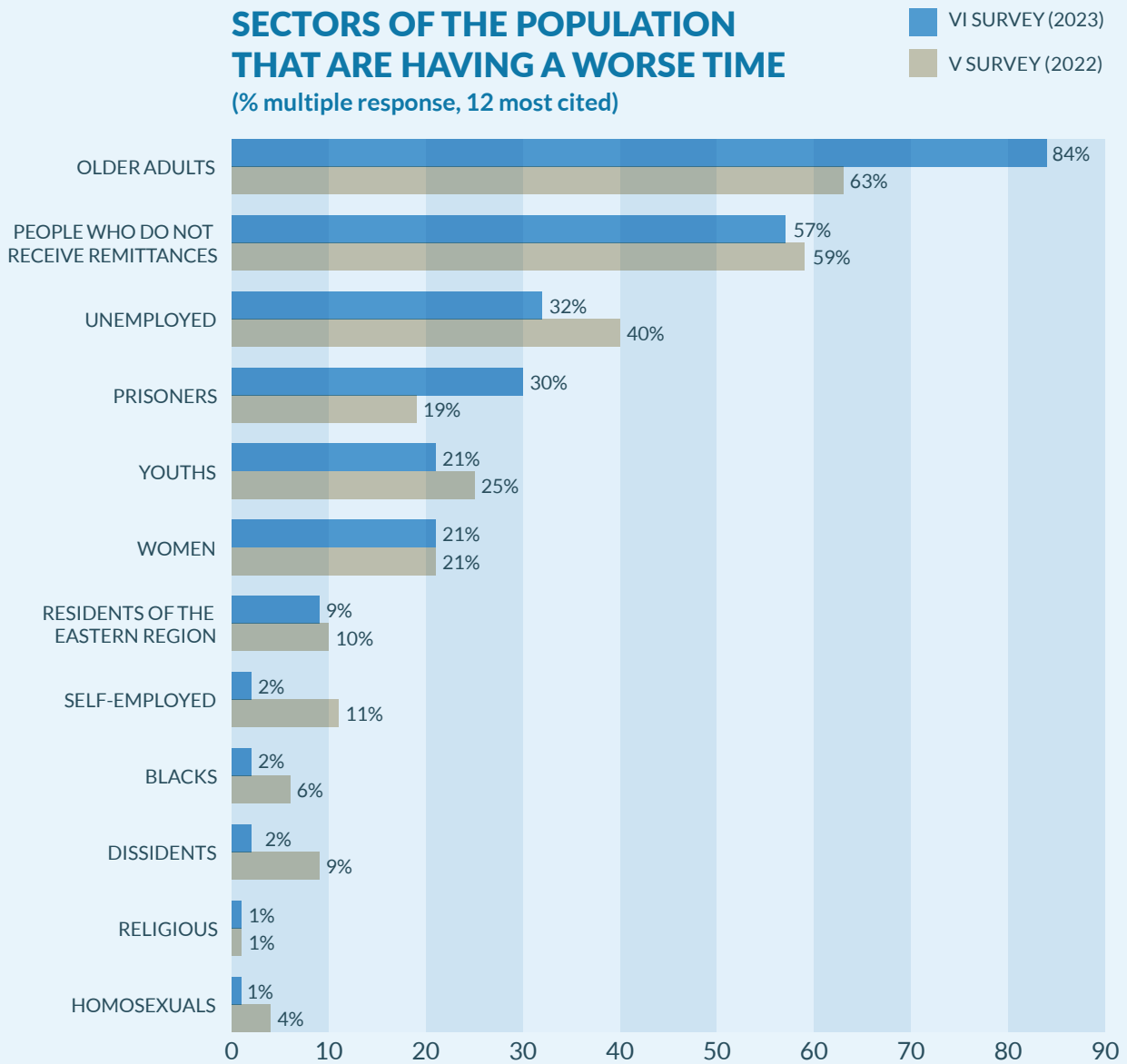


Population sectors most affected by social problems

In this persistent context of questioning the government’s political, economic, and social management, the opinion about the sectors of the population that are experiencing their worst coincides to a large extent with the previous survey. **The majority of those interviewed point to older adults (with a notable increase of +22 points compared to 2022) and to individuals or families who do not receive remittances as the most affected sectors.**

Compared to the previous survey, **the consideration of prisoners as one of the most affected sectors has increased (11 points more).** Around a third of those interviewed consider that the most affected are those unemployed or prisoners. The reference to women, as a sector highly affected by social problems, remains at similar high levels as well, fifth of those surveyed.

SECTORS OF THE POPULATION THAT ARE HAVING A WORSE TIME (% multiple response, 12 most cited)



Note: percentages of the total weighted sample. The response allowed a maximum of three mentions.



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