



HUNGER AND COVID-19 IN LIBYA

A joint approach examining the food security situation of migrants

July 2021

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Photo (cover page): IOM and WFP have partnered together to help improve the food security situation among migrants, which has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Libya.

In May 2021, IOM's Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) mobile teams started the distribution of ready-to-eat kits to vulnerable migrants in Zwara, Bani Waleed and Sebha. © IOM 2021 / Moayad Zaghdani



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HIGHLIGHTS

Food insecurity in Libya remains a challenge for migrants and has been further exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, which include job loss. The use of coping mechanisms to mitigate food shortages remains extensive among migrants and is intensified by a lack of access to social safety nets. This also indicates that many migrants are facing stress and insecurity as their budgets for food and other essential needs are stretched, which may impair their future ability to provide for themselves and deal with potential shocks.

Food insecurity



Up to

1 in 5

migrants interviewed is food insecure* while more than half are considered marginally food secure.

* food security status was determined using key indicators including food consumption, economic vulnerability and asset depletion.

Unemployment

69%

of migrants interviewed face-to-face reported that it had been difficult to find work in the last seven days at the time of survey. While mobility restrictions have eased, the economic situation in Libya remains heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Use of coping strategies



The use of crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies, such as reducing essential expenditure on health care or education, or engaging in high risk jobs or activities to mitigate food consumption challenges increased compared to May 2020. This might signal that some migrants are further eroding their capacity to deal with future shocks, thereby increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

Livelihoods



3 in 4

migrants interviewed face-to-face reported that their income had been affected negatively since the start of the pandemic, particularly among daily wage workers.

Factors of vulnerability



Migrants who are younger, unemployed or daily wage workers, those with low levels of education and those who have arrived recently, and most specifically those who have been in Libya for less than six months, were particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. A greater proportion of single migrants had inadequate food consumption levels than those with a partner.

Remittances



Web surveys highlighted that a third of migrants (34%) were sending less money home or had stopped sending remittances altogether since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. A decrease in remittance may affect migrants' families who rely on this support that is an economic lifeline to many disadvantaged households.



Photo: IOM and WFP have partnered together to help improve the food security situation of migrants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Libya.

In May 2021, IOM's Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) mobile teams started the distribution of ready-to-eat kits to vulnerable migrants in Zwara, Bani Waleed and Sebha.

BACKGROUND

Nearly 10 years after the start of hostilities in Libya, the security situation has [improved](#)¹ following a ceasefire agreed in October 2020 between the warring parties. However, years of fighting – recently aggravated by COVID-19 restrictions – have further contributed to the [deterioration](#)² of the already weakened economic situation, with a negative impact on the population’s purchasing power and their ability to fulfil their basic needs. The humanitarian situation has also been impacted by the protracted conflict, including frequent power and water cuts.

As a result of the economic downturn and shrinking labour opportunities, the unemployment rate among migrants presents a significant [risk factor](#)³, which can lead to increased vulnerability and humanitarian needs, such as food security. Migrants’ unemployment rate rose from 17 percent in February 2020 to 27 percent in [August 2020](#)⁴. The cumulative impact of COVID-19 mobility restrictions has affected the [food security levels](#)⁵ of a large number of the more than [574,000 migrants](#)⁶ in Libya, particularly those relying on casual work found on a daily basis. In addition, the general security situation in Libya, despite having improved following the truce that was signed in [October](#)⁷ continues to be volatile.

In this context, this joint study by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) explores the impacts of COVID-19 and related restrictions on the food security situation of migrants in Libya.



574,176

migrants of over 43 nationalities were identified by IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) to be currently present in Libya as of October 2020.

1 ECHO (2021).
2 WFP (2021).
3 IOM (2019d).
4 IOM (2020e).
5 IOM (2020d).
6 IOM (2020f).
7 UNSMIL (2020).



PURPOSE

In light of recent [findings](#)⁸ that have highlighted the precarious food security situation of migrants in Libya, and building on previous assessments ([WFP/IOM Hunger, displacement and migration](#)⁹), IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and WFP’s Vulnerability Analysis and Monitoring (VAM) teams conducted a food security assessment with the aim to:

1. Provide an update on the food security situation of migrants, and identify the most vulnerable groups;
2. Assess the impact of COVID-19 related measures on migrants’ food security and livelihoods;
3. Inform development and humanitarian actors of the scale, duration and type of assistance required by migrants.

METHODOLOGY

In 2019, web-based and face-to-face surveys were used by WFP and IOM in a joint publication to explore the food security situation of migrants and host communities in Libya. As both methods used different types of questions and allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive picture of the current situation of migrants in Libya. These same tools were used for the purpose of this assessment: WFP’s web-based Migration Pulse and IOM’s in-person Migrant Survey.

	 Migrant survey	 Migration Pulse
WHO?	1,903 migrants from 31 countries	1,266 migrants from 30 countries
WHERE?	39 municipalities across all 22 regions	22 regions
HOW?	Face-to-face surveys	Web surveys
WHEN?	05 Oct - 04 Dec (8 weeks)	02 Nov - 08 Dec (4 weeks)

Note: Interviews were conducted while maintaining physical distancing and complying to WHO guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

8 IOM (2020d).
9 IOM & WFP (2019).

Limitations

The stratum for each region assessed was designed based on migrant stock figures identified through IOM's [Mobility Tracking](#)¹⁰ that provides data on migrant presence in Libya. The data collected in each location can therefore be considered to reflect the proportional distribution of migrant population at these locations. However it is a snapshot of a highly heterogeneous group of people on the move in a quickly evolving context, particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic and its significant impact on socio-economic conditions.

Migration Pulse

WFP's Migration Pulse captures the voices of affected populations using anonymous web-based surveys. It collects sex- and age-disaggregated data on the drivers of migration, movement intentions, challenges faced, needs and food security status of displaced populations in sensitive and hard-to-reach environments.

Migrant survey

IOM's migrant survey is the assessment tool through which DTM conducts face-to-face interviews with migrants at the individual level. The core questionnaire includes questions on migration dynamics, decision-making, routes and intentions. For the purpose of this assessment the Migrant survey was tailored to include additional questions on food security and health indicators as well as coping mechanisms and remittances.

The face-to-face interviews took place mainly in markets, public buildings, work recruitment points, collective accommodations and transit points along key migration routes, which means that the results of the assessment are representative of migrants who frequent these public places. Migrants who may not be able to frequent public places are less likely to have been included in the assessment. While this (purposive) sampling approach limits the assessed sample from being fully statistically representative of the demographic make-up of the entire migrant stock in Libya, it represents a large-scale assessment of migrants present in Libya.

To complement the face-to-face interview findings, web surveys - the [most economical remote data collection tool](#)¹¹ - were used to collect information rapidly from the population. However, the results of web surveys represent a relatively better-off population group compared to the general migrant population. The web survey come with some limitations related to over-representation of some population groups (e.g. male and younger people) who tend to have more access to technology in Libya, for

example. To mitigate against this, a weighting system was implemented at the analysis stage based on population stratum, disaggregated by sex of migrant groups. It is important to note that web-based methodology does not necessarily capture respondents who are transiting quickly through Libya.

Therefore, both methodologies complement each other in that they capture different sub-populations and together provide a clear picture of the situation of migrants in Libya. However, this exercise does not capture migrants living in detention centres and does not distinguish between migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees.

Despite these limitations, the assessment is aimed at providing an accurate picture of the situation of migrants in the assessed locations.

Vulnerability & Humanitarian Needs

This assessment uses IOM's Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability (DoMV) [model](#) as an analytical framework, which articulates vulnerability around risk and protective factors. Risk factors contribute to vulnerability, while protective factors improve capabilities to avoid, cope with, or recover from harm. The model considers risk and protective factors at different levels: individual, household, community and structural as well as the interactions between them. In this framework, vulnerability is therefore considered to be the net impact of the interaction of these factors at different levels.

Moreover, some factors may be considered risk or protective factors depending on the context. For example, being a member of a particular racialized group may be a protective factor in a context where the group is dominant or privileged, or a risk factor if the group is discriminated against or persecuted. Other factors are considered to always be risk or protective factors. For instance, literacy is in most contexts considered a protective factor while illiteracy would generally be considered a risk factor.

Humanitarian needs are understood as gaps between the assessed conditions of migrants with regards to their vulnerabilities (at individual, household/family, and community levels) and the acceptable conditions which would enable them to effectively enjoy their human rights.

10 IOM (2020e)
11 WFP (2017).

SECTION 1: MIGRANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationality

Migrants originating from 31 countries within West, East and North Africa, the Middle East as well as South Asia were interviewed face-to-face by DTM. The bulk of interviews were conducted with migrants from Niger (27%), Sudan (20%), Egypt (20%), Chad (10%) and Nigeria (8%), in line with the proportions of migrants from these countries identified by [DTM Libya](#)¹².

WFP, through its web-based surveys, interviewed migrants from 30 countries in West, East and North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. The bulk of interviews were conducted with migrants from Sudan (16%), Egypt (12%), Nigeria (9%), Chad (8%), Syria (7%) and Niger (6%).

Sex and age

The majority of both face-to-face and web surveys were conducted among male migrants (89% and 69%, respectively) while a minority of respondents were female (11% and 31%, respectively). The face-to-face survey ratio is on par with recent [DTM Libya migrant sex breakdown figures](#)¹³.

Fig 2: Percentage of respondents by age group

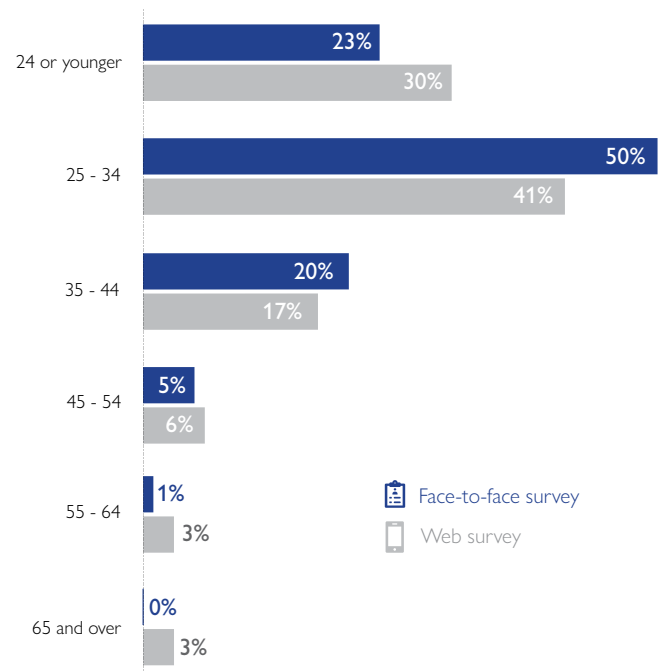
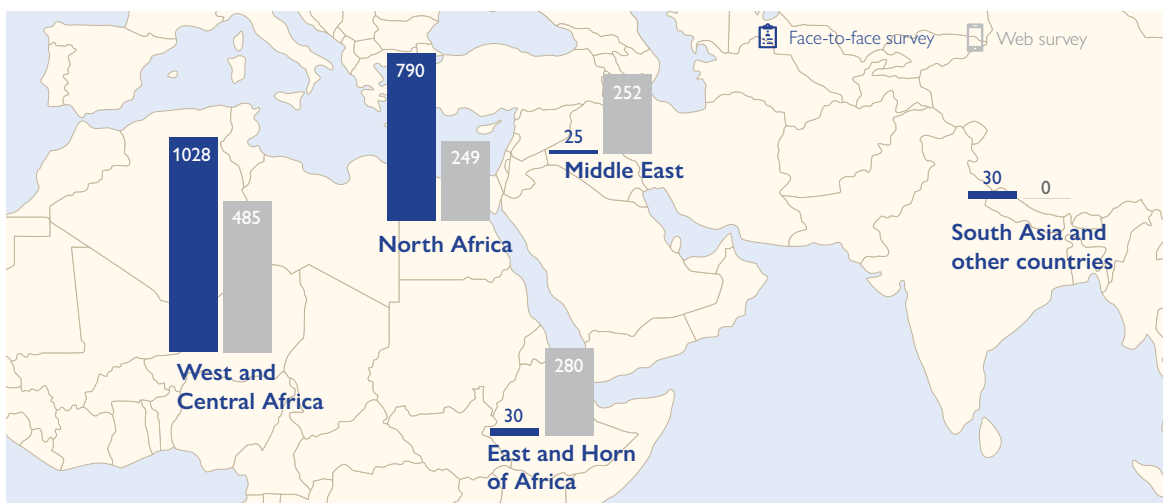


Fig 1: Number of respondents by region of origin



This map is for illustration only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

12 IOM (2020f).
13 Ibid.

A greater proportion of migrants interviewed face-to-face by DTM who were from the East and Horn of Africa were female (57%) compared to those from West and Central Africa (10%), North Africa (10%) or the Middle East (8%). All migrants from Southern Asia were male.

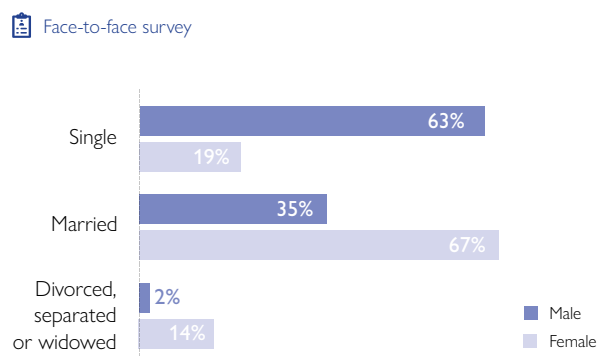
Interviewed migrants from West and Central as well as from the East and Horn of Africa were generally younger than migrants from other regions. A total of 86 and 83 percent of migrants from West and Central Africa as well as from the East and Horn of Africa, respectively, were between the ages of 18-35, compared to 57 percent of migrants from Asia, 68 percent of migrants from North Africa and 40 percent of migrants from the Middle East. A total of 62 percent of the Sub-Saharan population is under 25 making it the [youngest region in the world](#)¹⁴.

The largest proportion of migrants who were surveyed on the web were between the ages of 25 and 34 (41%) (Fig 2). A third were younger than 25 (30%) while nearly a fifth (17%) were between the ages of 35 and 44. A minority were 45 or older (12%), with only 3 percent of respondents older than 65.

Marital status

Amongst female respondents interviewed face-to-face, there was a greater proportion of migrants who reported being divorced, widowed or separated (14%), than male respondents (2%) (Fig 3). There were nearly twice as many female respondents who reported being married (67%) than male respondents (35%). A greater proportion of female respondents also reported they were traveling with their spouse (84%) compared to male respondents (19%). This is likely the result of a combination of factors including anticipated risks arising during migration journey or stay in Libya. Generally, migration is perceived as being more [risky](#)¹⁵ for women, and is [prohibited or discouraged](#)¹⁶ by some national laws or customs.

Fig 3: Respondents' marital status by gender



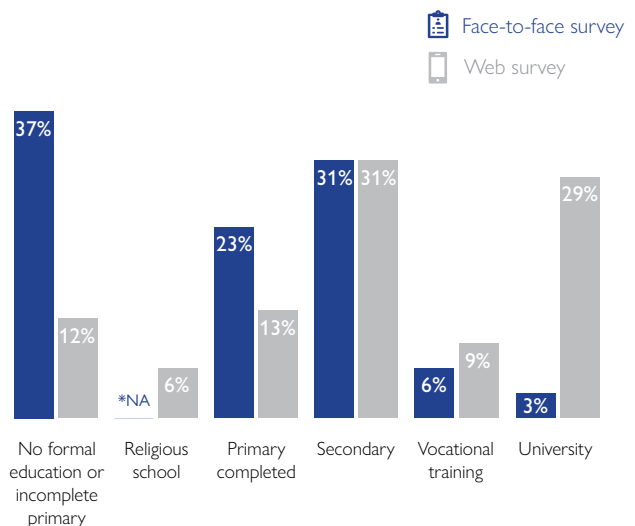
14 UNFPA (2019).
15 KNOMAD (2016).
16 OECD (2014).

Education levels

Consistent with [previous reports](#)¹⁷, there was a wide range of education levels amongst interviewed migrants. More than a third of migrants (37%) interviewed face-to-face had no formal education or had not completed primary school (Fig 4). A total of 31 percent had a secondary level education and had completed either middle school (18%) or high school (13%). Fewer migrants had completed vocational training (6%) or university level education (3%).

In comparison, the findings of the web surveys highlighted that nearly a third of respondents had achieved a university-level education (29%) or secondary school (31%). A minority of migrants had no formal education (12%) or had completed primary school education (13%) only. The remaining migrants reported having attended religious school (6%) or vocational education (9%). This is likely because while the majority of migrants have access to a functioning phone, internet access is [more sparse and less regular](#)¹⁸. Access to internet is also generally greater among migrants who are wealthier and [more literate](#)¹⁹.

Fig 4: Respondents' education levels



*Note: Option was not included in the face-to-face choice of answers

17 IOM (2020d).
18 UNHCR (2017).
19 IOM & WFP (2019).

Household size and profile

More than half of migrants (52%) interviewed face-to-face reported living in a household comprised of between four to seven individuals. Nearly a quarter of migrant households (24%) consisted of fewer than three individuals, amongst whom four percent lived alone, and more than two thirds of migrants (68%) lived with between 4 to 11 individuals. A minority of migrant households (8 percent) included 12 or more individuals.

The majority of migrants (79%) reported that they lived in a household without children. Migrants who reported that their household included children, lived, on average, with one child, the majority of whom were boys (70 %).

The results of the web surveys demonstrated that more than half of migrants (55%) lived in households comprised of fewer than three people, amongst whom 31 per cent lived alone. There were 22 percent of women who lived alone compared to 32 percent of men. Among migrants who lived alone, the majority were homeowners (25%) or lived in a rented apartment (24%) or room (21%). A minority lived on the street (11%), were housed in accommodation provided by their employer (12%) or were hosted rent-free (7%).

A minority of households (9%) were comprised of more than 12 individuals while a total of 36 percent of migrants lived with between 4 to 11 people.



The term “**household**” may refer to slightly different arrangements depending on the sociocultural background of migrants. While the term household usually refers to a group of individuals who are related by family ties and who ordinarily live in the same dwelling, it may also include some individuals who are not related but who share close affective bonds (such as close family friends) and who may share in the decision-making for the group and/or in contributing to or accessing the group’s resources.

The majority of migrants (67%) interviewed through web surveys either lived without their spouse or partner (15%) or did not have a partner (52%) while a third of respondents (33%) lived with their spouse or partner. Similarly, the majority of respondents either reported not having children (63%) or that their children did not live with them (11%). More than a quarter of respondents lived with children (26%).

Photo: In May 2021, WFP and IOM-Libya partnered IOM’s Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) mobile teams provided emergency food assistance kits to vulnerable migrants living in urban areas, such as Zwara (pictured); internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities who have lost their livelihoods due to COVID-19. Food kits contain essential ready-to-eat items such as canned beans, tuna, and halawa that will last over a month.

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SECTION 2: MIGRATION JOURNEY

Drivers of migration

The drivers of migration are [multiple, fluid and complex](#)²⁰. However, in line with previous reports of both [2019](#)²¹ and [2020](#)²², the majority of migrants interviewed face-to-face – regardless of their date of arrival or length of stay – cited the pursuit of economic opportunities as the reason that weighed more heavily in their decision to migrate. Amongst those economic reasons were insufficient income (46%), seeking employment abroad (25%) and the lack of opportunities in country of origin (14%).

Furthermore, a greater proportion of interviewed migrants (20%) through face-to-face surveys reported that the lack of job opportunities in their countries of origin had led them to migrate compared to those who arrived before the onset of the pandemic (14%). In the contrary, fewer migrants who arrived in Libya after the start of the pandemic reported that they had migrated to seek employment abroad (16%) than those who arrived before March 2020 (26%). The fact that a greater proportion of migrants reported that their situation at home rather than the conditions in Libya was the main factor in their decision-making may reflect on the significant [socio-economic impact](#)²³ of the pandemic in Libya and the countries from where migrants originate.

Slow or sudden onset of environmental degradation events were cited by two per cent of respondents as the first driver of migration. However, among migrants who stated that they were employed in agriculture, forestry or animal husbandry in their countries of origin, almost a quarter (22%) reported that they had experienced loss of production or animal deaths due to environmental events, such as droughts or floods. Three quarters of them were from Central or West Africa (75%) (an over-representation as they only constitute 54 percent of the overall sample).

A total of 30 percent of migrants cited the inability to access services, meet their food needs, violence or conflict as the main, second or third most important

factor in their decision to migrate. A recent [study](#)²⁴ conducted by IOM, found that migration drivers, such as war, conflict, violence, and insufficient access to services have been associated with higher probabilities of reporting challenges, such as financial issues, hunger or thirst, while travelling within West and Central Africa and through Libya.

Duration of stay in Libya

The majority of migrants interviewed face-to-face had been in Libya for longer than a year (83%). Amongst them the bulk had been in Libya for between 2 to 4 years (37%) while 28 and 19 percent had been in Libya for, respectively, more than four years or between one to two years.

The majority of web respondents reported having arrived prior to 2020. A total of 46 percent arrived in Libya between 2011 and 2019, while 41 percent arrived before 2011. A smaller proportion (13%) reported having arrived in Libya in 2020.

²⁴ IOM (2020b).

Web survey

87%

of migrants reported having been in Libya since 2019 or longer

Face-to-face survey

83%

of migrants interviewed reported having arrived in Libya more than a year ago

²⁰ IOM (2020g).
²¹ IOM & WFP (2019).
²² IOM (2020d).
²³ IOM (2020c).

Means to fund migration journey

Migrants reported relying on a range of means to finance their migration journey to Libya with over two thirds (37%) having relied on more than one means to finance their journey. Nearly two thirds of migrants (63%) reported having funded their journey to Libya with their savings, a slightly higher proportion compared to 2019 (57%) (Fig 5). Nearly a fifth (18%) reported having relied on support from family and friends, which is significantly less than in 2019 (32%). Similar to 2019, a minority cited having relied on the sale of assets (9%), their earnings during travel (5%) or support from relatives of friends abroad (2%). A total of 35 per cent of migrants reported having relied only on their savings to fund their journey to Libya.

A greater proportion of migrants surveyed in November-December 2020 reported having contracted debts to finance their journey (46%) compared to migrants surveyed in [2019](#)²⁵ (40%) but a similar proportion to those surveyed in [May 2020](#)²⁶ (46%).

On the one hand, migrants who incur debts may be at a higher risk of [vulnerability](#)²⁷, as it increases financial pressure to both repay the loan while meeting one's basic needs. Furthermore, when migration is used to improve the overall economic situation of the family in the country of origin, through remittances, the inability to repay a loan can also include [social pressure and the fear of stigma](#)²⁸.

On the other hand, while debt can create risks it can also [mediate](#)²⁹ them, particularly when the decision is proactive, when the objectives are to transition into decent work and where the terms of the loan are fair and transparent. In those cases, debt can allow individuals to migrate to access work opportunities abroad, which they would not be able to access without borrowing money.

Migrants from West and Central Africa (51 percent), North Africa (41%) and the East and Horn of Africa (37%) reported incurring debts to a greater extent than migrants from any other regions. A greater proportion of migrants from these regions also reported having hired migration facilitators to reach Libya (79%, 58% and 53%, respectively) compared to migrants from any other region.

Migrants from South Asia and the Middle East reported having relied on family and friends in the country of departure (30% and 24%, respectively) or having funded their journey through their savings (63% and 72%, respectively) to a greater extent than migrants from other regions.

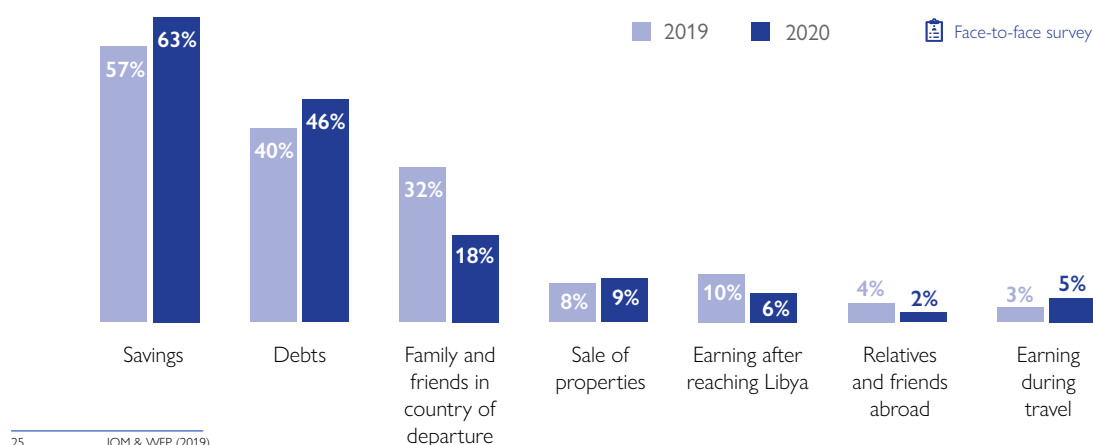
A greater proportion of migrants from South Asia also reported having funded their journey with their earnings while traveling (13%) and after having reached Libya (10%) than migrants from any other region, which could be linked to the high cost of traveling from South Asia to Libya. More migrants from South Asia also reported relying on a combination of financial strategies (47%) than migrants from any other regions.

Face-to-face survey

46%

of migrants reported having fallen into debt to finance their migration journey to Libya

Fig 5: Means of funding migration journey



25 IOM & WFP (2019).
 26 IOM (2020d).
 27 IOM (2019b).
 28 IOM (2020h).
 29 IOM (2019a).

Migration journey

A greater proportion of migrants from West and Central Africa (79%) – whether they arrived alone or in groups– reported having used the services of migration facilitators compared to migrants from any other region, in line with previous DTM [findings](#)³⁰.

Migrants travelled in groups including family members (41%), friends (54%) as well as with other individuals (89%). Migrants from the Middle East and South Asia generally travelled in smaller groups (of which the average size was 7 and 15 individuals, respectively) compared to others (Fig 6). Fewer migrants from the Middle East and South Asia also reported having travelled with migration facilitators (44% and 27%, respectively) - regardless of whether they arrived alone or in groups - than migrants from other regions. The majority of migrants from the Middle East and South Asia (58%) arrived in Libya by air.

Individuals from the East and Horn of Africa travelled in groups that were generally larger (comprising on average 47 individuals (median size: 38 individuals)) and fewer travelled with family members than migrants from any other regions. A greater proportion of respondents from the East and Horn of Africa region surveyed for this study reported their intention to migrate to another country (63%) compared to migrants from any other regions (12%).

Fig 6: Average size of the group migrants travelled with on their journey to Libya

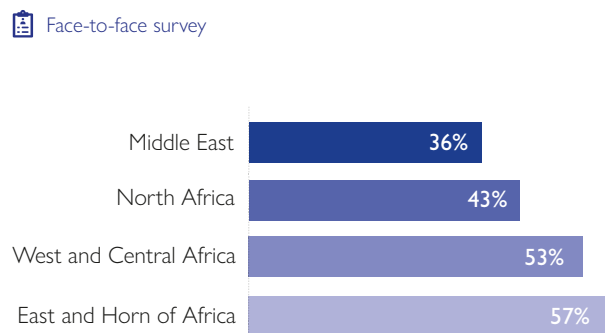


Similarly, a smaller proportion of migrants from the East and Horn of Africa (13%) reported their intention to stay in Libya compared to migrants from any other region (47%).

Risk awareness

Fewer than half of interviewed migrants (48%) through face-to-face surveys reported being aware of the risks they could face on their journey to reach Libya. A greater proportion of migrants from the East and Horn of Africa (57%), West and Central Africa (53%) and North Africa (43%) reported being aware of the risks than migrants from other regions (Fig 7). Migrants from the East and Horn of Africa have been found to generally have a [higher awareness](#)³¹ of risks as a result of their social networks and heightened vulnerability to protection incidents, amongst other factors. Migrants from neighbouring countries from Northern and West and Central Africa have also been found to generally be [better informed](#)³² as a result of circular migration and the strong linkages that developed over time.

Fig 7: Proportion of migrants who reported having been aware of the risks involved during their migration journey to Libya prior to departure



SECTION 3: LIVELIHOOD & REMITTANCES

Since the onset of the pandemic, the impact of COVID-19 on economic opportunities has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of migrants, particularly for those relying on daily casual work and those who have suffered a loss of income, thus weakening their ability to meet their daily needs. The impact on livelihoods has been severe in various ways, as many have witnessed negative changes, such as job loss and reduced income while there has been a substantial [drop](#)³³ in casual labour opportunities available to migrants compared to pre-COVID-19 outbreak.

Source and level of income affected by COVID-19

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, nearly three quarters of migrants (73%) interviewed face-to-face stated that their income had been affected negatively. Out of those, the majority reported a decrease in their income (80%) and more difficulty finding work (51%) compared to prior to the pandemic while a minority stated having experienced delays in receiving compensation for their work (13%). Only two and one percent of migrants, respectively, reported an increase in their income or that it was easier to find work. A greater proportion of daily wage workers (88%) reported that their income had been affected negatively because of containment measures compared to migrants who are employed or self-employed (65%).

Overall, 40 percent of migrants interviewed through web surveys reported having suffered a recent decrease or total loss of income. The situation was worst among migrants who reported that informal activities or daily work were their main source of income: among them, 58 and 45 percent of migrants reported a decrease or a total loss of income, respectively.

Out of web survey respondents who reported a loss or a reduction in income levels (47%) those from the Middle East region recorded the highest decrease compared to other migrant groups (Fig 8). More than three-quarters of Middle Eastern migrants related this negative change to either escalation of conflict or COVID-19 containment measures, or a combination of both (Fig 9). North Africans witnessed the smallest negative change to

their income levels and reported that their income had been affected the least by the conflict and containment measures.

Fig 8: Changes in migrants' income in Libya in the last year

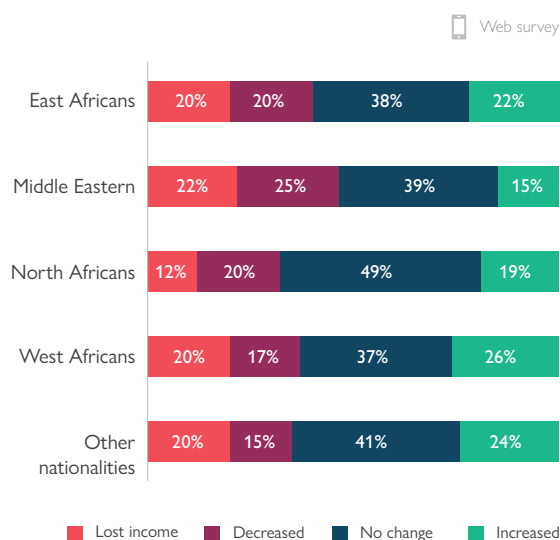
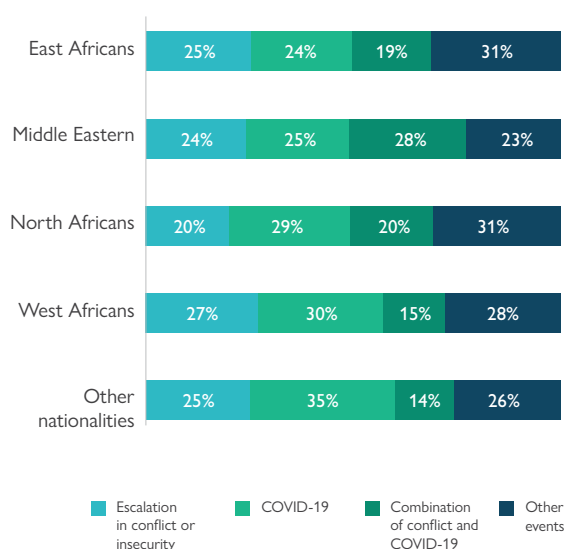
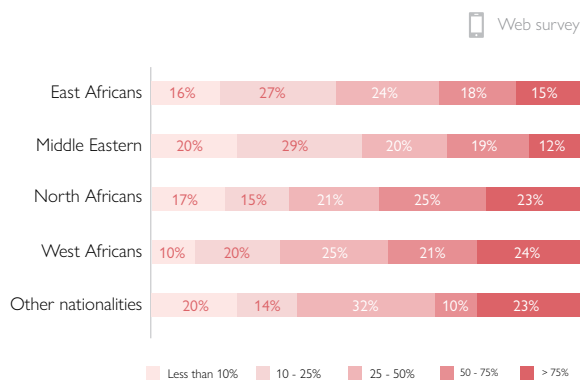


Fig 9: Nature of the causes of change to migrants' income in Libya by region of origin in the last year



Overall, 32 percent of migrants reported the loss of more than half of their earnings in the last year (at the time of survey). This affected North Africans and West Africans respondents to a greater extent with 48 and 45 percent, respectively, who reported having lost half or more of their income due to the pandemic (Fig 10). Middle Eastern migrants witnessed the smallest reduction in income levels which is possibly due to the type of economic activities they are involved in (31% were employed in jobs for which they received wages on a regular basis).

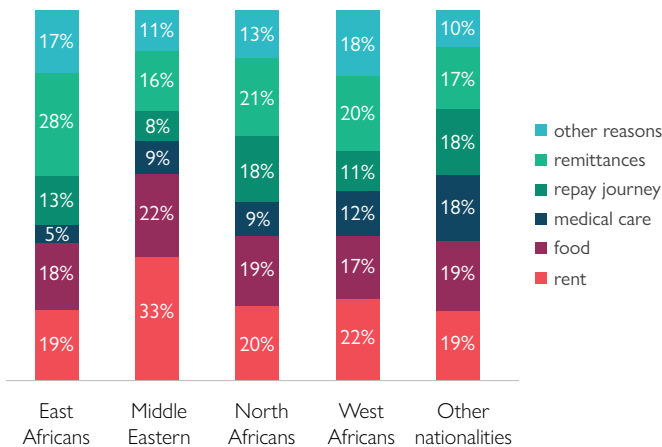
Fig 10: Percentage of change in the income of migrant groups who reported a reduction in income



Debt and reliance on credit by migrants

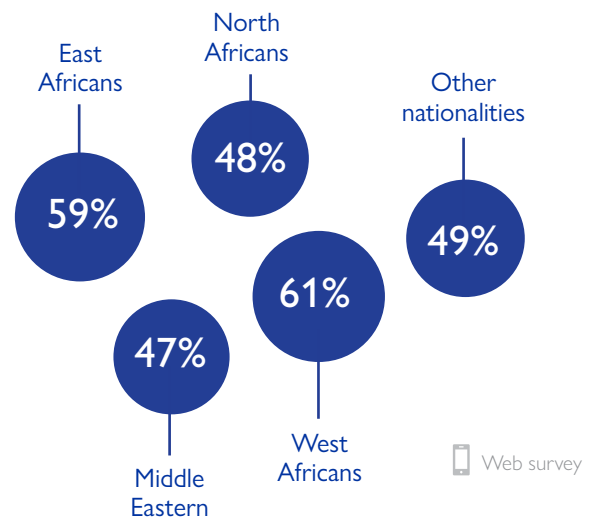
One of the ways used to cope with economic crises and lack of income is to rely on debt or purchase on credit. The results from the web surveys show that a similar proportion of migrants regardless of region of origin, reported relying on credit to cover their food needs (Fig 11). However, higher percentages of West and East African migrants reported being in debt or having bought on credit in the last 30 days.

Fig 11: Distribution of needs covered by migrants who resort to incurring debt and purchasing on credit



Middle Eastern migrants reported relying on debt to cover essential needs the least compared to migrants from any other region (Fig 12). However, a third of Middle Eastern migrants borrowed money or fell into debt to cover rental costs. This could indicate that respondents from the Middle East were more established in Libya and more involved in stable economic activities compared to other migrants. However, nearly a third of Middle Eastern migrants (32%) reported a decline or loss in income.

Fig 12: Percentage of migrants who fell into debt or purchased on credit in the past 30 days



Remittances

Around one third of migrants interviewed via web surveys (34%) reported sending less money home or having stopped sending remittances altogether since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Among these migrant workers, 46 percent estimated that the amount of money they send home has decreased by more than 50 percent. A quarter (25%) reported sending between 25 to 50 percent less than before, while 28 percent estimated a decrease of less than 25 percent.

Among migrants sending remittances, almost half (49%) reported sending less or having stopped sending remittances altogether (Fig 13). Nearly a third of migrants (29%) reported no change while around a fifth (22%) reported having sent more remittances since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. Among those who reported sending more money home, the majority (75%) reported an increase of less than 50 percent.

These findings are in line with a recent DTM Libya [study](#)³⁴ on remittances, which highlighted that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and armed conflict led to a decrease in the number of migrants sending remittances as well as a reduction in the amount of money sent home by those still sending remittances.

A decrease in remittance may affect migrants' families who rely on this money. Remittances are an [economic lifeline](#)³⁵ to many disadvantaged households. [Remittances](#) may enable people to avoid resorting to coping mechanisms that could further impede them in future, such as selling property, possessions, or productive assets. For example, when other sources of income are lost, remittances may help sustain adequate food consumption levels without having to sell livestock or other valuable assets. Moreover, in lower- and middle-income countries the flows of remittances have been associated with poverty alleviation as well as improved nutritional outcomes, higher education spending and reduced child labour. On average, individuals who receive remittances tend to have [better food security outcomes](#)³⁶ than those who do not.

Web survey

1 in 3

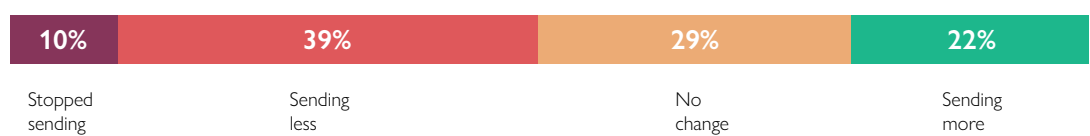
migrants reported sending less money home or having stopped sending remittances altogether since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020

46%

of migrants who are sending less money home estimate that the amount of remittances they send has dropped by more than 50 percent

Fig 13: Changes in remittances sent by migrants (for those sending remittances only)

Web survey



34 IOM Libya (2021b).
 35 World Bank (2020).
 36 IOM & WFP (2021).

Photo: In May 2021, WFP and IOM Libya partnered IOM's Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) mobile teams provided emergency food assistance kits to vulnerable migrants living in urban areas, such as Zwara (pictured), internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities who have lost their livelihoods due to COVID-19. Food kits contain essential ready-to-eat items such as canned beans, tuna, and halawa that will last over a month.

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SECTION 4: FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

This section presents the findings of the food security indicators assessed: concerns over food, food consumption levels, food-based coping strategies, livelihood coping strategies and food expenditure share.

CONCERNS OF MIGRANTS OVER FOOD

Overall, the proportion of respondents who reported concerns over not having enough food to eat reduced slightly by six-percentage points compared to [2019 results](#)³⁷ (Fig 14). This improvement could be linked to the 2019 escalation of conflict and ease of COVID-19 containment measures in late 2020.

Web surveys showed that West Africans and Middle Eastern migrants were the most concerned about not having enough to eat, followed by East Africans. Nevertheless, over time comparisons (2019-2020) demonstrate a clear reduction in the proportions of migrants who are worried about not having enough food (Fig 16).

Fig 14: Proportion of migrants concerned about not having enough food to eat in the last month, over time

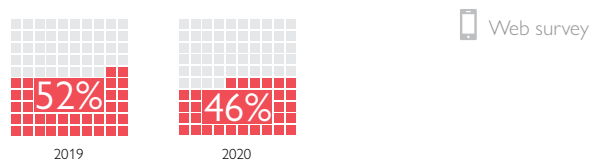
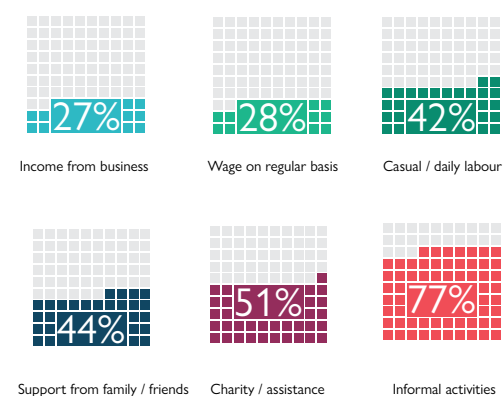


Fig 15: Proportion of migrants concerned about food by main source of income



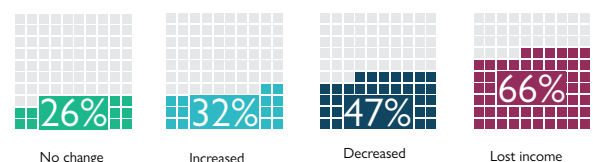
37 IOM & WFP (2019).

More migrants relying on informal activities, charity or support from relatives as their main source of income reported feeling worried about not having enough food to eat than those employed and receiving regular wages (Fig 15). This confirms that the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly difficult for migrant workers who have suffered a loss of income and have limited access to social safety nets. Furthermore, disaggregated results of respondents feeling concerned about not having enough food by change in income status highlights the linkages between partial or total loss of income and concerns over not having enough to eat (Fig 17).

Fig 16: Change in concerns over having enough to eat by migrant groups over time



Fig 17: Proportion of migrants concerned about not having enough food to eat by nature of change in income in past year



FOOD CONSUMPTION LEVELS

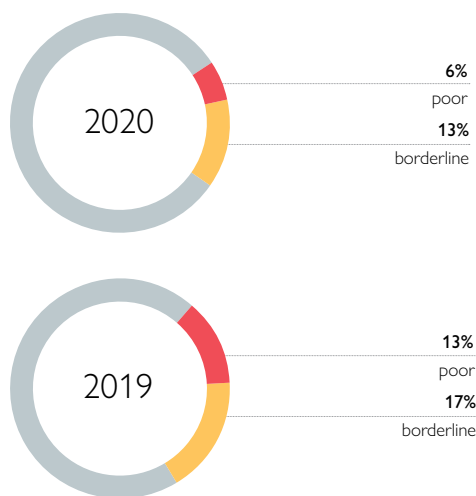
While not inherently³⁸ vulnerable, migrants may be faced with intersecting forms of risks which may increase their level of vulnerability. According to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)³⁹, low food consumption levels among migrants is linked to underlying vulnerabilities⁴⁰ – such as gender, length of stay in Libya and employment status - coupled with the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, particularly on livelihoods and movement restrictions.

The analysis of face-to-face surveys showed that 19 percent of migrants had poor or borderline food consumption levels, a reduction compared to 2019 (30%) (Fig 18).

Comparisons between 2020 and 2019 continue to demonstrate that East Africans tend to have the highest proportions of poor and borderline food consumption levels compared to others. Individuals of East African origin have been found⁴¹ to generally have higher levels of inadequate food consumption. Among the factors that may explain this trend are employment status, access to services and safety concerns. For example, according to the 2021 HNO, 46 percent of East Africans reported to be unemployed and not searching for employment opportunities, which is in line with the findings of face-to-face surveys (40%). A total of 35 percent of East Africans interviewed face-to-face reported their intention to move to another country which indicates that they are likely not necessarily seeking long-term employment that could potentially afford them a more stable source of income.

East Africans represent a small percentage of the overall migrant population in Libya (2% as of Round 36⁴²) and a small sample were surveyed for the purpose of this exercise (30 individuals).

Fig 18: Comparisons of migrants with poor and borderline FCS over time



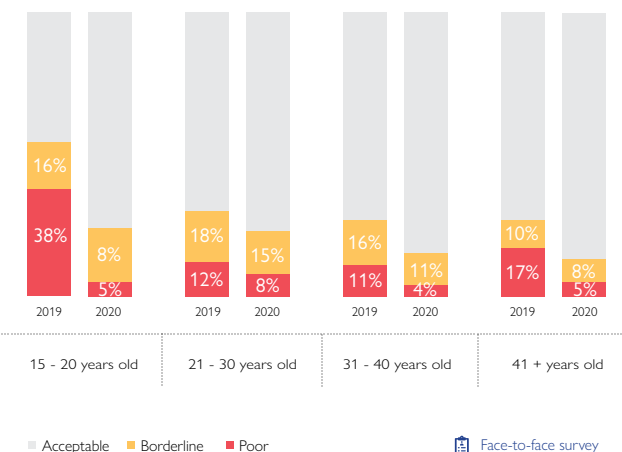
Face-to-face survey

Migrants from West Africa were the second group with the highest levels of inadequate food consumption (24%). A greater proportion of migrants interviewed from West Africa and the East and Horn of Africa were younger, less educated, had incurred debt to fund their migration journey and fewer were employed than migrants from other regions.

Age

A greater proportion of migrants between the ages of 15-20 (24%) and 21-30 (22%) had inadequate food consumption levels compared to older migrants (Fig 19). These findings are in line with the May 2020 DTM Migrant Emergency Food Security report⁴³ which highlighted that migrants under the age of 30 were most susceptible to employ coping strategies frequently to mitigate food shortages.

Fig 19: Food consumption scores by age groups



Face-to-face survey

43 IOM (2020d).

FOOD CONSUMPTION LEVELS

- **Acceptable** Households that consume staples and vegetables every day, frequently accompanied by oil and pulses, and occasionally meat, fish and dairy.
- **Borderline** Households or individuals that consume staples and vegetables every day, accompanied by oil and pulses a few times a week.
- **Poor** Households or individuals that are not consuming staples and vegetables every day and never or very seldom consume protein-rich food such as meat and dairy.

38 OHCHR (2017).
 39 OCHA (2021).
 40 IOM (2019c).
 41 WFP (2019).
 42 IOM (2021d).

Gender and marital status

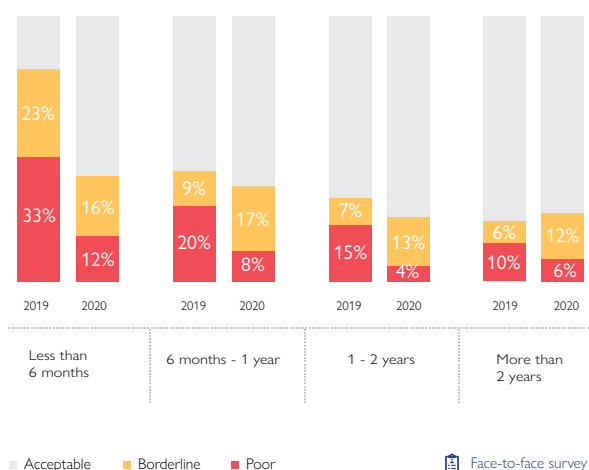
The food consumption levels of male and female migrants were similar (81 and 82 percent, respectively). However, from the survey, there was a relationship between marital status and food consumption levels. Higher levels of inadequate food consumption were reported by migrants who were widowed (27%), separated (27%) and those that had never been married (23%) than those who were married (12%). However, the limited size of the sample does not allow to draw conclusions with certainty.

Length of stay

Similar to the results of the 2019 [report](#)⁴⁴, the length of stay in Libya appears to have an influence on migrants' vulnerabilities. Those who are recent arrivals suffer from greater levels of inadequate food consumption, particularly among migrants who arrived in Libya less than six months ago, as they tend to be less established in the country.

Migrants who have arrived more recently in Libya are generally amongst those who are most [vulnerable](#)⁴⁵, to a variety of risks, including lack of access to [adequate housing](#)⁴⁶ and [food insecurity](#)⁴⁷. Migrants who have arrived more recently are generally less settled and may struggle to find sustainable livelihoods more than migrants who have been in Libya for a longer period of time. In line with previous reports, findings of this survey show that migrants who have arrived more recently are more likely to be unemployed. Moreover, amongst those who are employed, a smaller proportion are working in contractual types of jobs, where they receive regular wages, compared to migrants who have been in Libya for a longer period of time.

Fig 20: Food consumption scores by length of stay



44 IOM & WFP (2019).
45 Ibid.
46 IOM (2020a).
47 IOM (2020d).

It is worth noting that a higher proportion of migrants who have been in Libya for longer than two years were surveyed in 2020 for this assessment (65%) than in 2019 (30%) while fewer had been in Libya for less than six months (7% in 2020 compared to 21% in 2019). This may influence the results of this food security assessment and partially explain the improvements noticed.

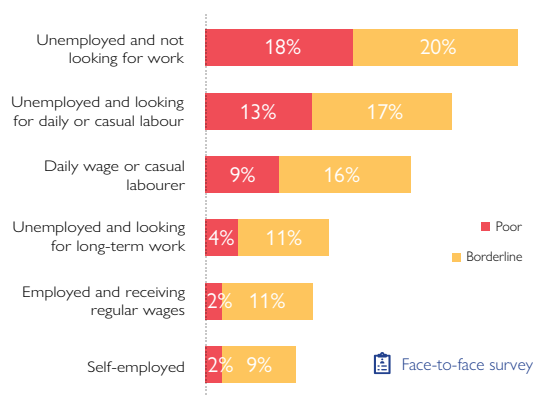
The results of the web surveys show that 44 percent of newly arrived migrants (those who have lived in Libya for less than six months) were unemployed while 30 percent were casual workers. This indicates that newly arrived migrants may not yet be well established and still be searching for (better) employment opportunities.

These findings are in line with recent DTM Libya [study](#)⁴⁸ on social networks that found that migrants who have arrived more recently also rely on finding casual daily labour at work recruitment points to a greater extent than those who have been in Libya for longer.

Employment status

A greater proportion of migrants who were unemployed or found casual labour on a daily basis had inadequate levels of food consumption than those who were employed or self-employed (Fig 21).

Fig 21: Food consumption scores by employment status



About 57 percent of migrants who were currently searching for employment in Libya reported having fallen into debt to fund their travel to Libya. Of the migrants who had fallen into debt, 24 percent reported inadequate food consumption, compared to 19 percent of the general migrant population surveyed. Debt may exacerbate migrants' inability to meet their food needs as it increases the pressure to repay loans while meeting their essential needs. When debt is used to fund migration as a [last resort or coping strategy](#)⁴⁹ or when the terms of the loan are abusive or lenders behave in a predatory way, debt could result in significant protection risks.

48 IOM (2021a).
49 IOM (2019a).

The results also revealed that migrants who were unemployed both in Libya and in their countries of origin had the highest levels of inadequate food consumption.

Among employed migrants, comparisons by employment types show that a greater proportion of respondents who did not possess a written and signed work contract (14%) or only had an oral agreement (12%) had inadequate food consumption levels compared to migrants who held a contract (2%).

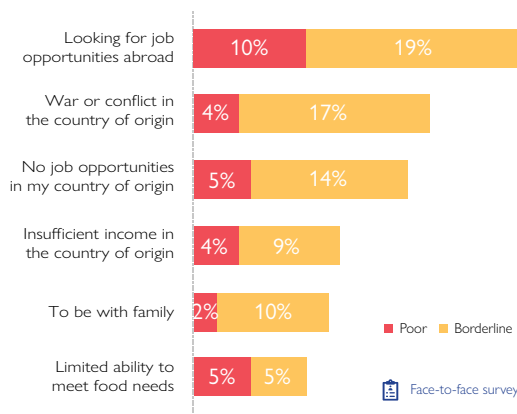
Education

There was also a clear link between educational attainment and levels of food consumption. For example, the highest levels of inadequate food consumption were among migrants who had never attended school (42%), followed by those who did not complete primary education (19%). Migrants from the latter group were most likely to be employed in the informal sector, which is characterized by a lack of social protection coverage and is associated with job loss and pay cuts because of the pandemic.

Migration drivers

Migrants who reported that seeking employment abroad was the main driver behind their decision to migrate to Libya recorded the highest proportion of inadequate food consumption levels (29%). The search of income-generating opportunities abroad was the second most frequently quoted migration driver (39%) after insufficient income in migrants' countries of origin (46%).

Fig 22: Food consumption scores by migration drivers



Region

The results from the face-to-face survey show that migrants interviewed in the West of Libya had the highest levels of inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline) (22%) followed by those in the South (20%). There were 15 percent of migrants who had inadequate food consumption levels in the East.

The regions (mantika) of Aljbara in the West had the highest proportion of migrants with inadequate food consumption (78%) followed by Alkufra in the East (55%) and Wadi Ashshati in the South (50%) (Fig 24).

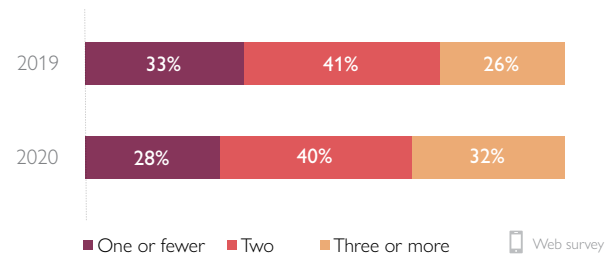
Almost two-thirds of migrants residing in Aljbara reported being engaged in casual work while 35 percent were employed in regularly paid jobs. In Alkufra, eight percent of migrants reported being unemployed. A total of 46 percent of migrants reported being employed in jobs where they received regular pay while 31 percent were casual labourers. Moreover, there is a major migration route for migrants coming or transiting via Sudan and Chad and crossing desertic areas in the region of Alkufra, where levels of food insecurity are generally high as highlighted in WFP and IOM's 2019 Hunger, Displacement and Migration [report](#)⁵⁰ and DTM's May 2020 Migrant Emergency Food Security [report](#)⁵¹.

A recent [DTM assessment](#)⁵² found that the extensive movement restrictions and curfews in the municipality (baladiya) of Alkufra had led to reduced access to livelihoods, particularly daily work opportunities. In addition, REACH [reported](#)⁵³ that there was an increase of prices of food and other essential items in the period November to December 2020. In general, the price of essential food and non-food items was highest in the South (and above the national average) compared to the East or West.

NUMBER OF MEALS CONSUMED

Respondents were asked about the number of meals they had consumed the previous day. A smaller proportion of migrants reported eating one meal or fewer in 2020 (28%) compared to 2019 (33%) (Fig 23).

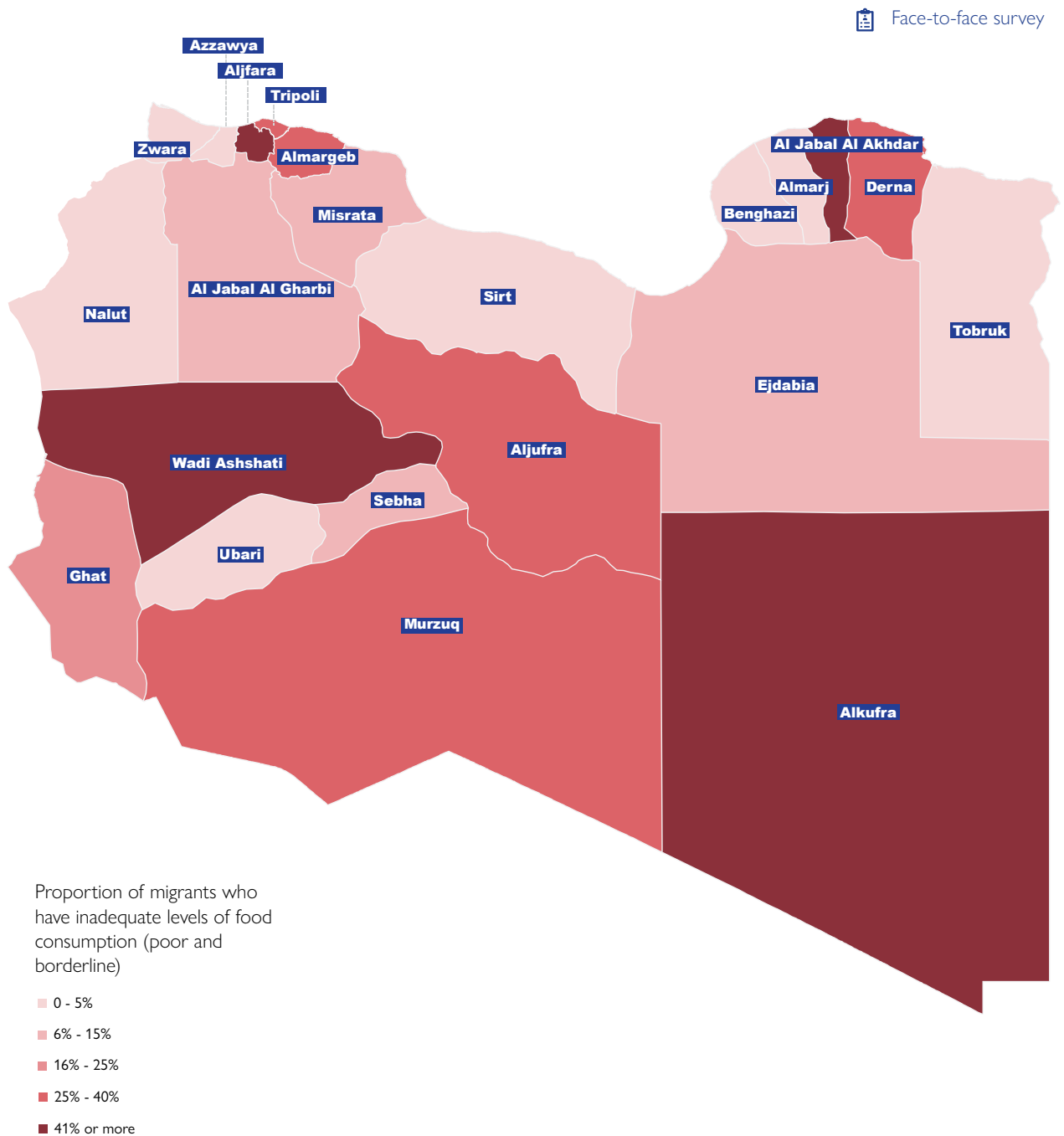
Fig 23: Number of meals consumed in the previous day



The proportion of East Africans who consumed one meal or fewer a day decreased by 13 percentage points in 2020 from 35 percent in 2019 (Fig 25). However, East Africans interviewed reported the highest proportion of inadequate food consumption, and almost half (46%) reported to be unemployed and not looking for a job

50 IOM & WFP (2019).
 51 IOM (2020d).
 52 IOM (2020c).
 53 REACH (2020).

Fig 24: Proportion of migrants with inadequate (poor and borderline) food consumption levels by region (mantika)



while 12 percent were casual labourers. The number of West Africans (of whom 41% were employed in casual labour and 28% in regular employment) who reported consuming one or fewer meal also noticeably improved as shown in Fig 25.

FOOD-BASED COPING MECHANISMS

Although there has been a general improvement in the number of meals consumed by migrants in the day prior to the survey between 2019 and 2020, a total of 45 percent of migrants reported adopting food coping strategies due to lack of food or means to buy food compared to 57 percent in 2019⁵⁴ (Fig 26). The analysis of the adoption of food-based coping mechanisms is an [indicator](#)⁵⁵ of the hardship migrants face as it measures the frequency and severity of food consumption behaviours they adopt to mitigate food shortages.

The most frequently adopted strategy by migrants interviewed was eating less expensive or preferred foods (23%) which was also the most commonly adopted strategy in [May 2020](#)⁵⁶ by nearly half of respondents (49%) (Fig 26).

Nearly a quarter of East Africans (24%) reported relying on the two most severe food coping strategies in the last month (going without eating for a whole day and skipping meals) similarly to West Africans (23%) (Fig 27).

In comparison, in 2019, 45 percent of East Africans and 42 percent of West Africans reported having to resort to those two coping strategies to mitigate food shortages.

Fig 26: Adoption of food-based coping strategies

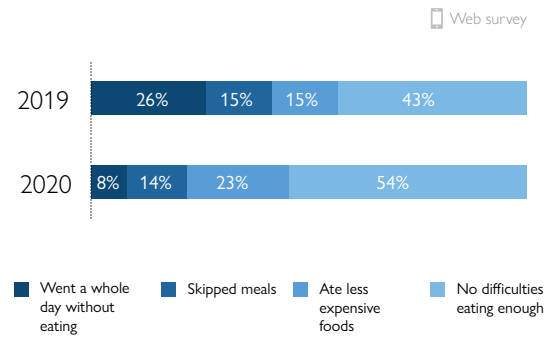


Fig 27: Food-based coping strategies by regions of origin

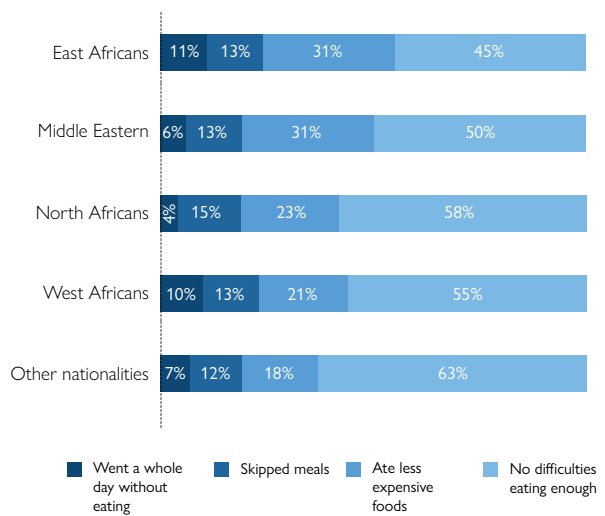
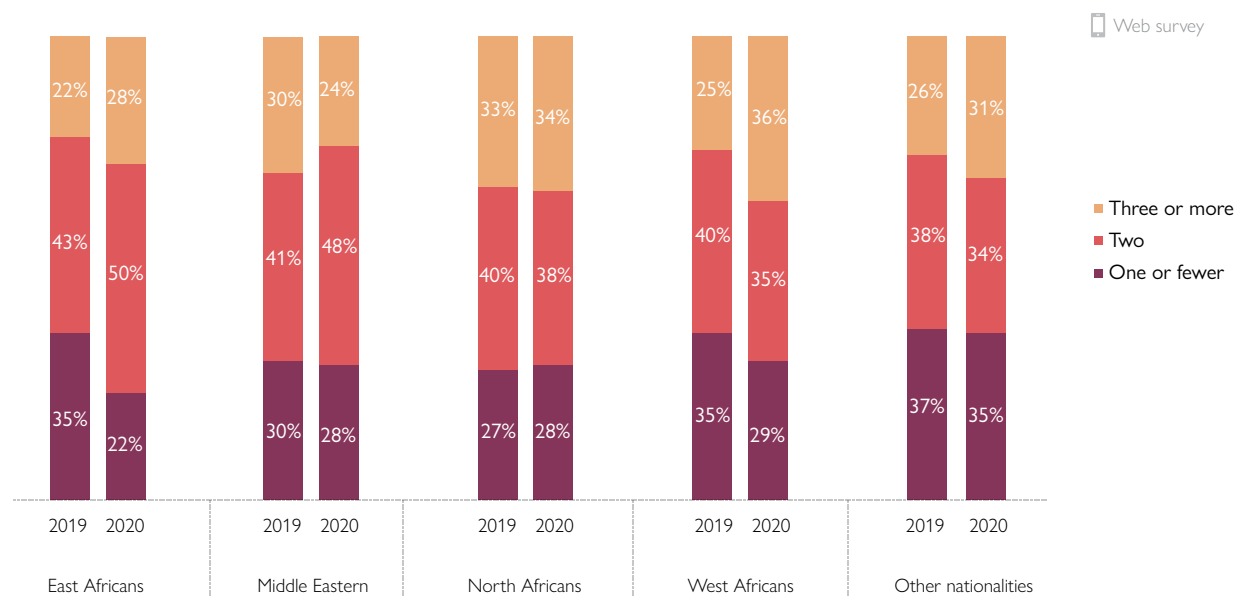


Fig 25: Number of meals consumed by migrant groups in the previous day



54 IOM & WFP (2019).
 55 WFP (2015).
 56 IOM (2020d).



Photo: In May 2021, WFP and IOM Libya partnered IOM's Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) mobile teams provided emergency food assistance kits to vulnerable migrants living in urban areas, such as Zwara (pictured), internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities who have lost their livelihoods due to COVID-19. Food kits contain essential ready-to-eat items such as canned beans, tuna, and halawa that will last over a month.

LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGIES

The use of livelihood coping mechanisms includes the longer-term alteration of income earning or food production patterns, and one-off responses, such as the sale of assets. By gauging how migrants have adapted to the recent situation in the last 30 days before the survey, livelihood-based coping strategies help to assess longer-term household coping and productive capacities and their future impact on access to essential needs, including food. The strategies are grouped under three categories depending on their severity:

- **Stress** Strategies indicate a reduced ability to deal with future shocks because of a current reduction in resources or an increase in debts.
- **Crisis** Strategies directly reduce future productivity, including human capital formation.
- **Emergency** Strategies that affect future productivity or the human dignity of household members and are more difficult to reverse.

The results show that 53 percent of migrants adopted severe coping strategies (crisis or emergency) in the month prior to the date they were surveyed. Over half (60%) of migrants were also found to be marginally food secure. This implies that while these migrants are categorized as food secure, they are possibly maintaining adequate food consumption through the adoption of livelihood coping strategies, such as the sale of assets, borrowing money to buy food and reducing expenditure on essential non-food items or medicines.

Migrants who resort to such coping mechanisms are more susceptible to future shocks, which means they are more vulnerable and may need to adopt more extreme forms of coping strategies. Results show that 73 percent of migrants interviewed through face-to-face interviews adopted coping strategies to overcome food consumption challenges, compared to 65 percent in [May 2020](#)⁵⁷.

Age

Migrants who were younger reported having to resort to livelihood coping strategies to a greater extent than any other groups. In order to cope with the lack of food or lack of money to buy food, the results revealed that 70 percent of migrants below the age of 20 adopted either crisis or emergency coping strategies. This was followed by migrants above 41 years of age with 57 percent.

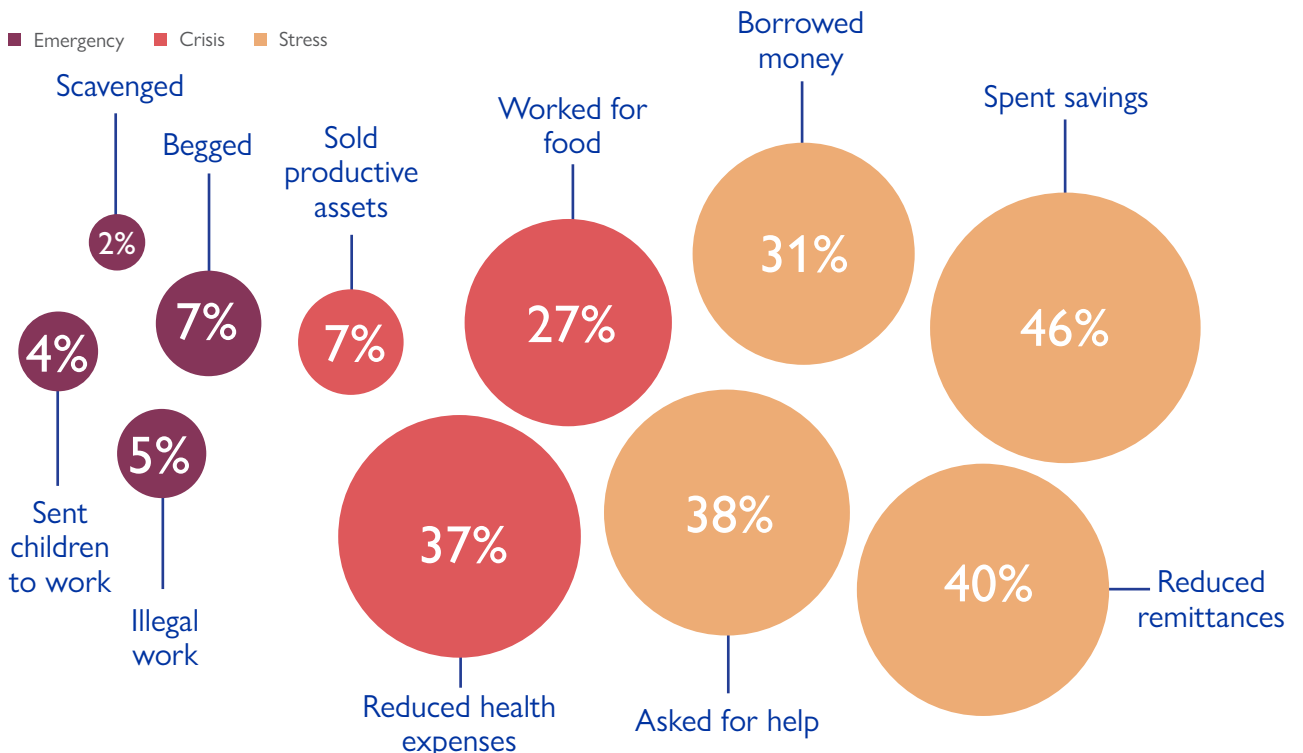
Education

The results also point to the heightened vulnerability of migrants with low levels of education. The extensive use of crisis and emergency coping strategies was reported among migrants with incomplete primary education (51%), lower secondary (57%) or those without formal education (67%). Migrants with the lowest educational attainment were mainly employed as daily or casual labourers, especially in the case of those who had no formal education (55%).

⁵⁷ IOM (2020d).

Fig 28: Adoption of livelihood coping strategies in the last 30 days

Face-to-face survey



*weights were not applied to this analysis

Employment status

On the one hand, face-to-face survey results show that migrants who are employed and receive regular wages were less likely to adopt coping strategies. On the other hand, unemployed migrants reported widely adopting crisis or emergency level coping strategies, such as depending on illegal activities and scavenging in order to maintain food consumption. Having a more stable income is generally [associated](#)⁵⁸ with greater resilience, enhanced well-being and improved food security. A total of 42 percent of migrants reported finding casual work on a daily basis. Among those, the majority (69%) stated that it had been difficult to find work in the last seven days at the time of survey, a similar proportion to May 2020 (72%).

Region of origin

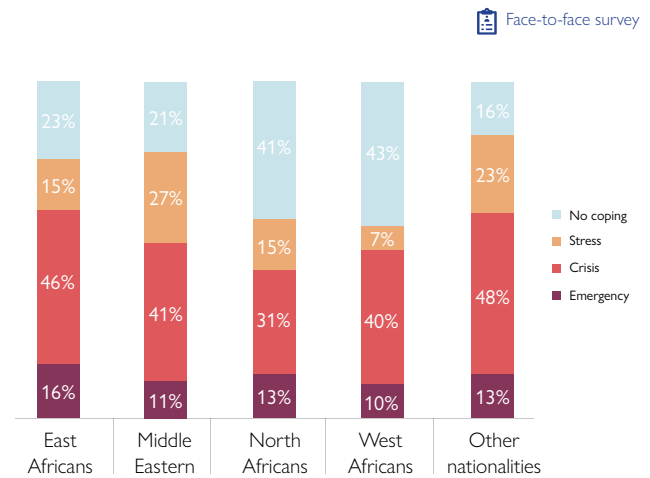
Adoption of crisis and emergency coping strategies was highest among migrants from East Africa (62%) (Fig 30). In order for migrants from East Africa to maintain adequate food consumption, they mainly asked for help, borrowed money and reduced food expenditure.

Migrants from other regions reported mainly spending their savings and reducing remittances to overcome food challenges. This could imply that East African migrants have little to no savings. Furthermore, East African migrants have also reported using strategies such as scavenging for food and asking strangers for money to a greater extent than any other groups (Fig 29).

Gender

Among respondents who reported having adopted livelihood coping strategies, male migrants most frequently asked strangers for money (41%) while male migrants frequently spent savings (46%) and reduced remittances (41%) as a means to meet adequate food consumption. Male migrants reported having saved more on average (863 LDY) over the last six months than their female counterparts (706 LDY).

Fig 30: Adoption of livelihood coping strategies by severity and by migrants' regions of origin



Region (mantika)

Analysis of the face-to-face interviews by regions in Libya highlighted that the adoption of crisis and emergency coping strategies was highest in the Southern region of Libya (71%) and in the West (53%) compared to the East (40%). All migrants in the mantika of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in the East and Aljufra in the South reported having adopted either crisis or emergency coping strategies. Crisis and emergency coping strategies were also widely adopted in the West, in the regions of Azzawya (94%) and Nalut (71%), in the South, in the region of Ubari (93%), and in Derna (70%) in the East.

An [assessment](#)⁵⁹ conducted by DTM between July and September 2020 highlighted that in the municipalities of Gharb Azzawya and Janoub Azzawya in the region of Azzawya, migrants were reportedly absent from roadside work recruitment points. According to field observers, there were no livelihood opportunities for migrants seeking casual labour and migrants were unable to freely move within or between municipalities, which made access to workplaces and markets difficult for all population groups.

59 IOM (2020).

Fig 29: Adoption of emergency livelihood coping strategies among migrants by region of origin



58 Ibid.

In Ubari, key informants interviews [conducted](#)⁶⁰ by DTM revealed that between July and September, migrants in the municipality of Ubari faced challenges in accessing workplaces and livelihoods opportunities due to mobility restrictions. According to field observers, in the municipality of Ubari, during the months of November and December, migrants still faced a lack of livelihood opportunities despite mobility restrictions having been lifted.

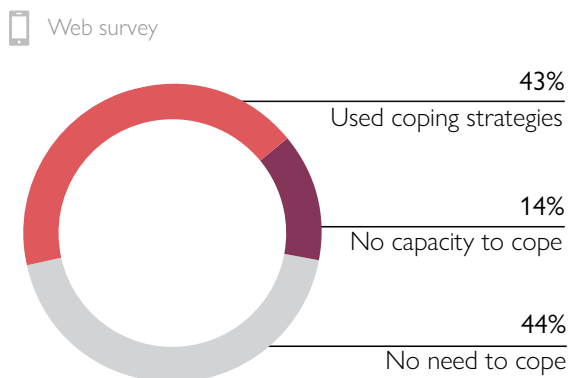
In Aljufra, key informants [interviewed](#)⁶¹ by DTM reported that residents faced challenges in accessing livelihoods opportunities and workplaces because of movement restrictions between July and September. Aljufra is a major transit point for migrants traveling from Chad and Sudan on their way to the Western coast of Libya and a region where there are [generally high levels](#)⁶² of food insecurity.

The unemployment rate in December 2020 was [highest](#)⁶³ in the South (36%) compared to the East (25%) and West (9%). The results revealed that of the migrants in the South, 64 percent were unemployed and were looking for work. A total of 66 percent of males and 42 percent females, in the South were unemployed. Among migrants interviewed in the South, two-thirds of West Africans and half of East Africans were unemployed.

Web surveys

Nearly half of the web respondents indicated having relied on livelihood coping strategies in the previous month due to lack of food (Fig 31). Meanwhile, 14 percent reported no longer having the capacity to resort to using the coping strategies mentioned in the survey as they have already exhausted them in the past, meaning that they may need to rely on different ones.

Fig 31: Use of livelihood coping strategies



60 Ibid.
61 IOM (2021c).
62 IOM & WFP (2019)
63 IOM (2021b).

FOOD EXPENDITURE SHARE

Migrants interviewed face-to-face reported having spent 48 percent of their total monthly expenditures on food. Respondents in Benghazi (in the East) were among those who reported spending the highest share of their monthly expenditure on food (75%) (Fig 32).

Overall, a total of 30 percent of migrants spent more than 65 percent of their total expenditure on food, meaning that they are [classified](#)⁶⁴ as food insecure. A household's food expenditure share can be a proxy for income level which can help assess the capacity to sustain food consumption in the future. Among migrants who were qualified as food insecure, 22 percent were severely food insecure, meaning that they spent more than 75 percent of their total expenditure on food.

A total of 78 percent of migrants in Benghazi, spent more than 65 percent of their total expenditure on food. This could be attributed to the high prices reported in the eastern region of Libya.

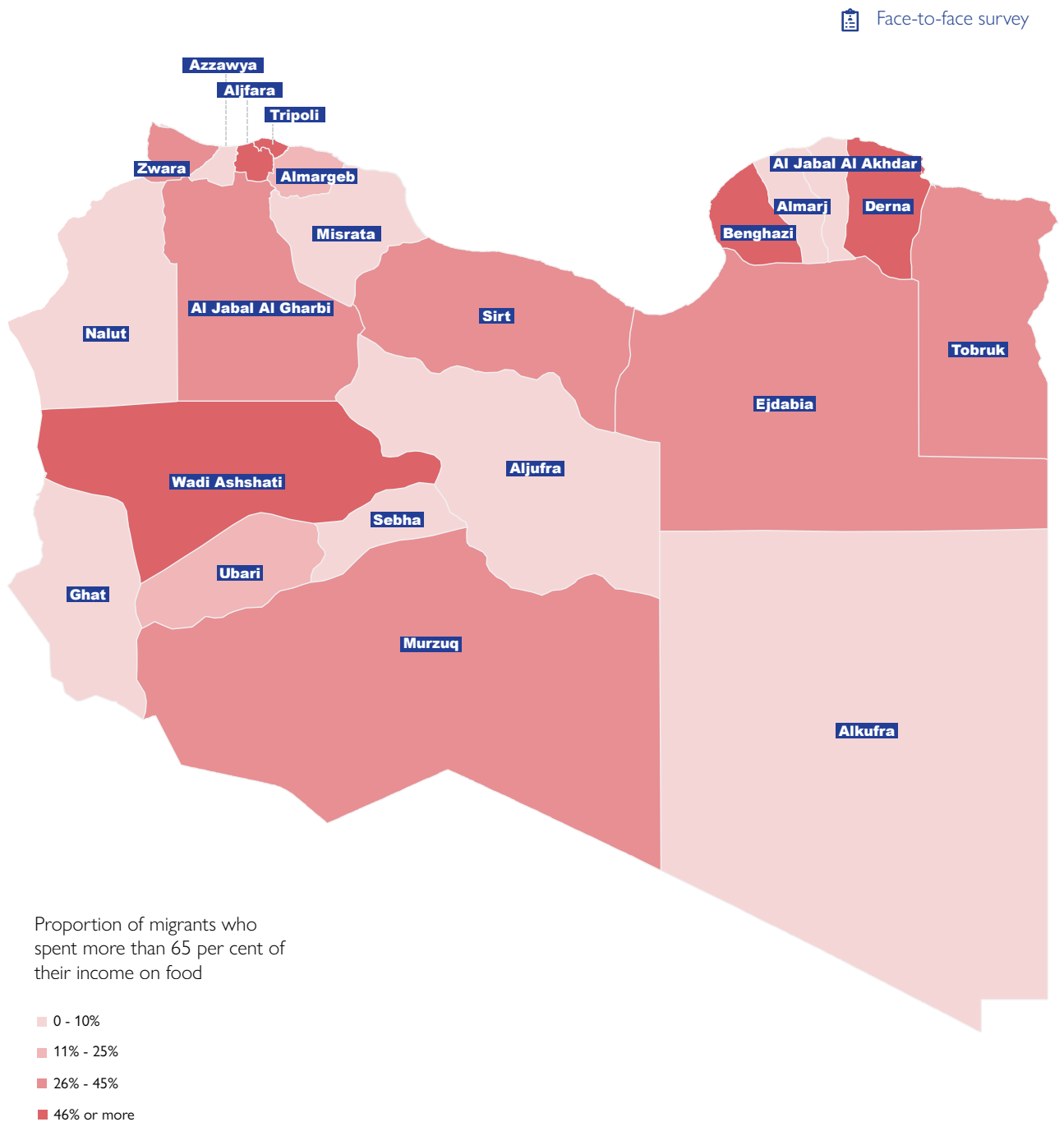
The World Bank [reported](#)⁶⁵ that the high prices in the East in the second half of 2020 were due to the increased demand for essential goods from internally displaced persons.

According to [field observers](#)⁶⁶, in December, in the municipality of Benghazi, economic uncertainty persisted mainly caused by the fluctuating exchange rate of the Libyan dinar against the US dollar.

Savings were the second highest expenditure reported by migrants after food (17% of the total), followed by rent (9% of total). Employment status also greatly determined the amount of savings. Migrants who were self-employed or those who reported to be in regularly paid employment reported to have more savings than those who were unemployed.

64 WFP (2015).
65 World Bank (2021).
66 IOM (2021b).

Fig 32: Food expenditure share of migrants by region (mantika)



SECTION 5: FOOD SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

The food security indexes below outline the food security situation of migrants surveyed face-to-face and by web (Fig 33). In the indexes, the overall food security status of each individual is classified using a simple averaging process using the 4-point scale scores it attained for each indicator (food consumption group, economic vulnerability and asset depletion).

Results from data collected through face-to-face interviews found that 17 percent of migrants were food insecure, meaning that they are unable to meet their basic food needs.

Furthermore, 60 percent were found to be marginally food secure, which means that while they might be capable of meeting their food needs, they do so by adopting coping mechanisms putting them at risk of falling into food insecurity if their situation deteriorates.

Fig 33: Food security index (face-to-face surveys)

FACE-TO-FACE SURVEYS	Food security dimension	Food security indicator	Food secure	Marginally food secure	Food insecure	
					Moderately food insecure	Severely food insecure
	Current status (food-related behaviours)	Food Consumption Score (group)	81% Acceptable consumption	-	13% Borderline consumption	6% Poor consumption
		Coping capacity	Asset depletion (Livelihood Coping Strategies)	27% No coping	30% Stress coping	40% Crisis coping
	Economic vulnerability (food expenditure share)		55% Share <50%	15% 50-65%	8% 65-75%	22% Share >75%
Food security index			23%	60%	13%	4%

WEB SURVEYS	Food security dimension	Food security indicator	Food secure	Marginally food secure	Food insecure	
					Moderately food insecure	Severely food insecure
	Current status (food-related behaviours)	Food consumption (# of meals consumed)	32% 3 meals	40% 2 meals	18% 1 meal	10% no meal
		Food consumption (concern over food)	61% Not concerned	25% Concerned	8% Concerned + skipping meals	6% Concerned + going a whole day without eating
	Coping capacity	Economic vulnerability (main income source and change in income)	28% Regular employment (formal or self-employed) and no change in income	40% Regular employment but reduced income or informal labour or remittances and no change or no decrease	20% Informal labour or remittances and reduced income	12% No income, dependent on assistance or informal labour with complete loss of income
		Asset depletion (Livelihood Coping Strategies)	58% No coping	17% Stress	16% Crisis	9% Emergency
Food security index			35%	47%	17%	2%

Overall, nearly one in five web respondents (19%) were found to be food insecure. Food insecure individuals typically have significant food consumption gaps and/or resort to severe coping mechanisms to be able to access food. Additionally, the high proportion of marginally food secure migrants (47%) is of concern as it means that they have achieved minimal adequate food consumption through the adoption of livelihood coping strategies and could easily fall into the severely food insecure group.

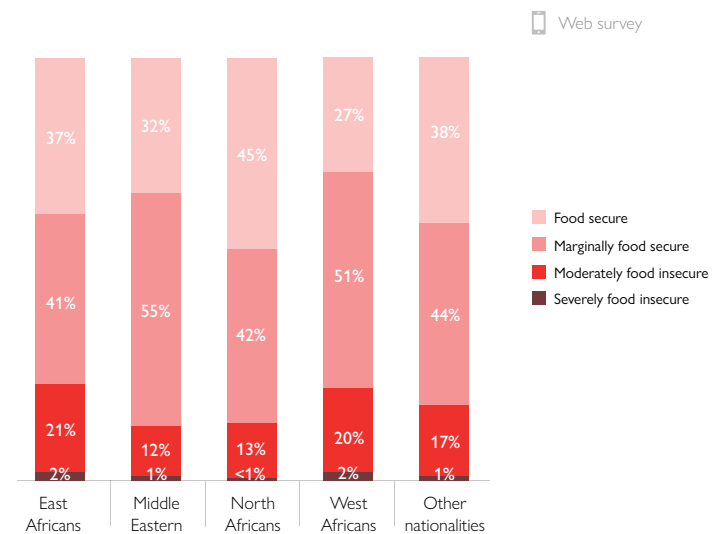
As anticipated, comparisons between the food security statuses of web respondents by region of origin, have shown that East, West and Central Africans have higher proportions of moderately or severely food insecure individuals than migrants from any other regions (Fig 34). Although, a lower proportion of East Africans reported consuming one meal within the last 24 hours compared to other migrant groups, they recorded the highest food insecurity levels. This can be attributed to a high percentage relying on severe food-based coping mechanisms (14%), emergency livelihood coping strategies (16%), as well as feeling concerned about not having enough food (38%).

The least food insecure groups were Middle Eastern and North African respondents. However, the proportions of those who are marginally food secure is significantly higher within the Middle Eastern group than among any other migrant groups.

It is worth noting that both food security classifications cannot be compared to past surveys, given that not all required indicators were available in previous rounds of face-to-face and web surveys.

As mentioned previously, it was expected that the data collection methods (i.e. face-to-face and web surveys) would most likely represent the worst and the better off migrant populations. The results highlight the differences in populations reached by the two different data collection methods. This can be seen in Fig 34, where those interviewed face-to-face have a higher proportion of severely food insecure classification (4%) than migrants interviewed through web surveys (2%).

Fig 34: Food security classification by region of origin



Web survey

19%

of migrants were found to be food insecure, meaning they have significant food consumption gaps and/or resort to severe coping strategies to be able to access food

Face-to-face survey

17%

of migrants were found to be food insecure

SECTION 6: HEALTH

Access to health services

Around half of respondents surveyed face-to-face reported encountering limited (51%) or no access (4%) to health services, mainly due to costs (83%). The proportion of migrants who stated that cost was the main reason preventing them from accessing health facilities increased significantly compared to [2019](#)⁶⁷ (47%) and [May 2020](#)⁶⁸ (73%). The majority of migrants who were unable to access health care services were in the regions of Sebha (34%), Alkufra (26%) or Azzawya (12%).

A greater proportion of migrants surveyed face-to-face from West and Central Africa (66%) and from the East and Horn of Africa (63%) reported having limited or no access to health services, compared to migrants from any other regions. This compares to 43, 33 and 32 percent of migrants from North Africa, South Asia and the Middle East, respectively.

When web respondents were asked about their perception of how access and provision of health care changed compared to prior to the pandemic (March 2020), 15 percent reported no longer being able to receive or access these essential services (Fig 35). Nearly a quarter of web respondents (22%) indicated that health services had deteriorated compared to before the pandemic and seven percent reported not currently having access. A total of eight percent mentioned that they had never had access to health services in the past.

In 2020, many health facilities were forced to close, after having been affected by [attacks](#)⁶⁹, of which 200 were confirmed between January to October 2020, especially in rural areas. Facilities that remain open face acute shortages of staff, medicines and supplies which was made [worse](#)⁷⁰ by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, health services were reportedly constrained due to irregular supply of medicines.

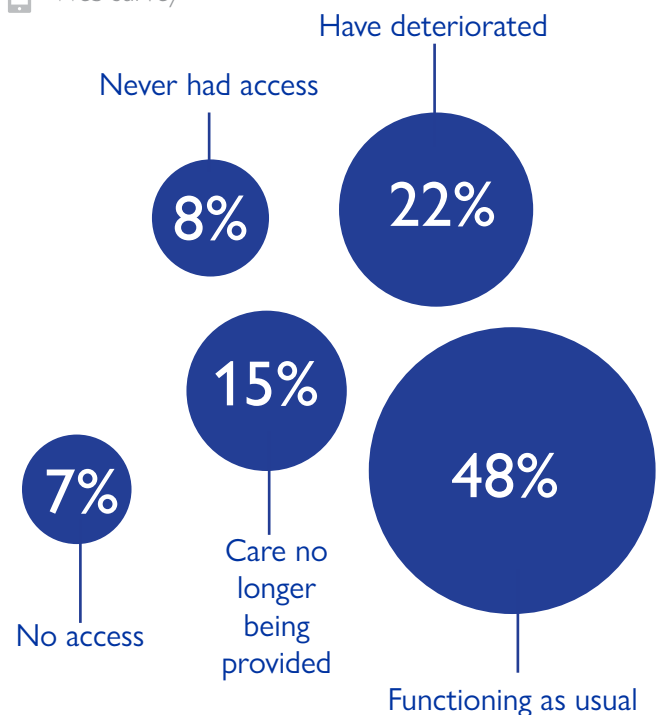
Face-to-face survey

55%

of migrants reported having limited or no access to health services, mainly due to costs

Fig 35: State of health care services

Web survey



Chronic illness

A total of five percent of respondents reported having been diagnosed with a chronic illness, the majority of whom with diabetes (54%) or high blood pressure (42%). Slightly more migrants (7%) reported suffering from an acute illness, which was either a urinary tract infection (29%), respiratory infection (26%) or acute watery diarrhea (22%).

67 IOM & WFP (2019b).
 68 IOM (2020d).
 69 WHO (2020).
 70 OCHA (2020).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the analysis of both web surveys and face-to-face interviews highlights that food insecurity remains a challenge for migrants and is further threatened by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, such as job loss.

Based on the analysis of face-to-face interviews a total of 17 percent of migrants were classified as food insecure while 60 percent were categorised as marginally food secure, meaning that they achieved minimal food consumption but are at risk of food insecurity. The web-based interviews revealed that one in five migrants (19 percent) were food insecure while 47 percent were marginally food secure.

The increased use of coping strategies to mitigate food shortages compared to May 2020 appear to be closely related to the enduring socio-economic impact of COVID-19, including the lack of labour opportunities and income reduction or loss, and is further exacerbated by a lack of access to social safety nets. The increased and extensive use of coping mechanisms is a source of concern as it may affect migrants' ability to face future shocks.

Food insecurity



Up to

1 in 5

migrants interviewed is food insecure while more than half are considered marginally food secure.

Recommendations

The socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to endure and remain a challenge for migrants, as well as for other population groups in Libya. The World Food Programme and the International Organization for Migration recommend five priority actions to mitigate the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on migrants in Libya:

- Ensure that food insecure migrants can access assistance to help them meet their essential needs.
- Consider protection-related risks and vulnerabilities related to factors that are likely to result in increased food insecurity, such as education levels, length of stay in Libya, age, employment status and marital status, in the design of programmatic interventions to address food insecurity.
- Implement programmatic interventions to tackle the increased use of coping mechanisms to ensure that migrants who are marginally food secure do not fall further into food insecurity and do not deplete their ability to deal with future shocks.
- Continue improving data and analysis to better understand and monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the food security situation of migrants as well as remittance flows.
- Recognize the positive contributions of migrant workers in Libya and promote their inclusion in social protection systems.

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To consult all DTM reports, datasets, static and interactive maps and dashboards, please visit:

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