

8 out of 10 households in Maracaibo report having an inadequate diet

8 out of 10 households in Maracaibo reported that both children and adults are not perceiving a nutritious diet, affirming that once in the last three months they have had an unhealthy diet based on lack of nutritious food. This perception is ratified with the habits of consumptions in the households of the families on Maracaibo: proteins such as grains and meats of beef and chicken are only consumed at lunchtime, and only in 8% of the households. This data was collected from the *Survey on Food Security in the city of Maracaibo* conducted by the Commission for Human Rights of the State of Zulia (Codhez), conducted on the first days of September, which is based on the Latin American and Caribbean Food Security Scale (ELCSA). The survey took place in 800 households of 18 districts of Maracaibo, interviewing, in accordance to their population, between 30 and 80 households per district.

The foods most people consume during breakfast are cheese (28.2%), margarine (19%) and arepa (18.7%), followed by bread (12.6%) and yuca (7.6%). During lunch: rice (26.2%), pasta (14.3%), vegetables (12%), and to a lesser degree, chicken (8.4%), grains (8.3%) and beef (8.1%). During dinner, cheese (26.3%), arepa (21%), margarine (17%) and yuca (10.6%). The plantain, fundamental in Zulia's tradition, is barely use during breakfast (2.3%), lunch (3.5%) and dinner (6.3%). In general, Maracaibo's residents have a diet based on carbohydrates (arepa, rice, bread, pasta, plantain and yuca) than animal protein (beef, chicken, eggs, fish) and vegetable (grains), with a strong presence of dairy (milk and cheese) and fats (margarine) and low consumption of vegetables and fruits — these food groups are based in the categories established by the last National Nutrition Survey released in 2015 by the National Institute of Statistics. During that time, the foods most consumed by Venezuelan families were arepa, cheese and eggs during breakfast; rice, vegetables, grains, pasta, beef, and chicken during lunch; and arepa, rice, cheese, eggs and chicken during dinner.

According to the results of our survey, households in Maracaibo reported that what affected them most when buying food was its high cost (54.6%) over its scarcity (24.5%). According to our survey, the food items that Maracaibo households have had to stop buying the most due to its cost or scarcity are animal proteins: 21.3% stopped buying chicken due to scarcity and 18.6% due to its high cost, 19.8% stopped buying beef due to scarcity and 20.3% due to high cost, and 10.4% stopped buying fish due to scarcity and 12.3% due to high cost.

In our biweekly monitoring of the availability and cost of food items, beginning in the month of October 2018, we have seen observed high levels of scarcity along with high prices of grains and animal protein. The scarcity of beef surpasses 70% (only available in 30% of the 44 food establishments monitored) and its price has increased significantly between the second and fourth week of October: on average the first cut meat passed from BsS. 398.78 to BsS. 558.63; the choice beef cuts of meat increased from BsS. 296 to BsS. 507.77; and ribs, from BsS. 209.27 to BsS. 317.50. Also, the scarcity of chicken meat is above 66%, with high variations in prices: the whole chicken increased from BsS. 274 to BsS. 471; the chicken breast increased from BsS. 380 to BsS. 586; thighs increased from BsS. 342 to BsS. 560.85 and chicken wings increased from BsS. 240 to BsS. 498, also being animal protein with the highest level of scarcity (90%) and with the highest increase in price (+107.5%). Grains are also highly scarce, with scarcity rates above 82%, with vast price increases in a mere two weeks: beans went from BsS. 174 to BsS. 270; peas increased from BsS. 153.33 to BsS.

186.66; lentils went from BsS. 126.66 to BsS. 196; and beans (other) from BsS. 146.66 to BsS. 220. Beans and peas have reached extremely high average rates of scarcity (91%), the highest of the vegetable proteins. It is necessary to emphasize that the minimum wage at the moment was 1,800.00 *bolívares soberanos*, plus a bonus for food supplies of BsS. 180.

8 out of 10 households reported that adults and children have stopped having a healthy diet

76.8% of households reported that once in the past three months, due to low-income or other resources, adults stopped having a healthy diet because they were not able to include foods of sufficient quality or in sufficient quantities in order to have a healthy and balanced diet. In socio-economic strata D (85.7%) and E (86.4%) the rate of affirmative responses is more than double that in socio-economic classes A-B (30%) and C (36.8%). In relation to this data it is necessary to highlight that the households of stratum E indicated that in the last three months the most important issue in their community was the inability to eat properly (21.2%).

Every household surveyed in the districts of Bolívar, Cacique Mara, Idelfonso Vasquez, Manuel Dagnino and Venecio Pulgar, reported that the adults stopped perceiving nutritious food in the last three months. In the rest of the districts, with the exception of Cecilio Acosta (47.5%), Chiquinquira (48%) and Olegario Villalobos (48%), 55% of households reported that the adults had not had a healthy diet in the last three months. It is necessary to highlight the fact that the districts of the west of Maracaibo (Antonio Borjas Romero, Idelfonso Vásquez, San Isidro and Venancio Pulgar) reported the highest levels of worry about the inaccessibility of an adequate diet. We found that the consumption habits in the households which report that adults don't perceive a healthy diet do not differ too much from the households where people do report eating healthily. In the former, during breakfast most of the meal is composed of carbohydrates (43%), dairy products (31%) and fats (21%), while animal protein (2%) and vegetables and fruits (2%) are barely consumed. In the latter, breakfast is mostly composed of carbohydrates (37%), dairy products (25%) and fats (19%), although vegetables and fruits (9%) and animal protein (5%) are consumed a little more.

The households that reported an unhealthy diet, reported having meals at lunch which consist mostly of carbohydrates (48%), animal protein (15%), vegetables and fruits (15%), vegetable protein (11%), dairy products (6%) and fats (5%). In contrast, in the households which affirm that the adults perceive a balanced diet, lunch is mostly composed of carbohydrates (51%) and animal protein (37%), while fruits and vegetables (5%), vegetable proteins (2%), fats (2%) and dairy (1%) are consumed less.

Dinner where the adults have left without perceiving nutritious food is based on carbohydrates (47%), dairy products (26%) and fats (18%), and at a low range animal protein (7%) and vegetables and fruits (2%). In the households in which adults have a balanced diet, there is not a big difference in consumption habits: carbohydrates (47%), dairy products (26%) and fats (18%), and at a low rate animal protein (7%) and vegetables and fruit (2%). In the households in which adults have a healthy diet, there is not a big difference regarding consumption habits: carbohydrates (37%), dairy products (29%) and fats (21%) are the main food supplies, while animal protein (5%) and vegetables and fruit (3%) which is consumed at a low frequency.

The case with the results for children are similar. 76.5% of the households declared that once in the last three months, due to low-income or other resources, children did not perceive a

balanced diet. The strata D (81.5%), and E (83%) were the most affected, while strata A-B (54.5%) and C (42.4%) don't escape from the issue. In contrast with the case regarding adults, the perception of the strata A-B and C about the lack of nutritious food for the children of their households is superior in comparison to the quality of food of the adults.

In the districts Cacique Mara, Manuel Dagnino y Venancio Pulgar this situation affects all the households. Except for Cecilio Acosta (39%), the rest of the districts affirm in rates beyond 57% that children had stop perceiving a balance diet.

The composition of the meals of children do not vary widely between the households which reported that their children have an unhealthy diet in comparison to those that report that the children do. In the households in which children don't perceive a healthy diet, the food they eat during breakfast is based on carbohydrates (44%), dairy (30%) and fats (19%), while animal protein (3%), vegetables and fruits (2%), and vegetable protein (1%) are food items which are not reported at a high frequency. In the households where children had a balanced diet the dietary habits are similar- carbohydrates (37%), dairy products (28%), fats (21%), animal protein (3%)- although with a higher consumption of vegetables and fruits (9%).

At lunchtime, the differences are relevant regarding the consumption of animal protein. In the households in which children do not perceive a balanced diet, the meal is mostly composed of carbohydrates (48%), followed by animal protein (15%), vegetables and fruits (15%), vegetable protein (9%), dairy products (7%) and fats (6%). In the families which affirmed that children perceive a balance diet, meals are composed mostly of carbohydrates (52%), but the consumption of animal protein is higher (32%), while vegetables and fruits (8%), vegetable protein (5%), fats (2%), and dairy (1%) are sparsely present in the diet.

There is not a significant difference in what children have for dinner in the different households. In the households in which children have an unbalanced diet, they have more carbohydrates (48%), dairy (25%) and fats (17%), than animal protein (7%) and vegetables and fruits (3%). In the households in which children have a balanced diet, they consume more carbohydrates (38%) than dairy (30%), fats (21%), animal protein (5%) and vegetables and fruits (3%).

On the other hand, the CLAP program has not been a suitable program for the State to guarantee its obligation to enforce the right to adequate food for Maracaibo households: 100% of households that have purchased a CLAP box (89.6% of the total) report that they do not contain enough nutritious food to guarantee a balanced diet. Also, 12.8% report that at least once they have received a food product in the CLAP box which was in poor conditions.

In 8 out of 10 households, both children and adults have a monotonous diet

The low variety of foods is a constant in the diet of Maracaibo families. 80.4% of households reported that once in the last three months, due to a lack of money or other resources, adults had a monotonous diet. The rate is highest in strata D (87.3%) and E (84.7%) in comparison to A-B (50%) and C (49.6%). Every district has rates higher than 52% for households where adults report having monotonous diets, reaching 100% of households in the districts of Bolívar, Cacique Mara, Juana de Ávila, Manuel Dagnino and Venancio Pulgar.

In the case of children, 79.7% of the households affirmed that their diet is based of a low variety of foods. The households of strata D (86%) and E (83%) experience monotonous diets at

higher rates than the strata A-B (54%) and C (42.5%). With the exception of Cecilio Acosta (41%), this is a generalized issue in the city, with rates above 56% in every other district. In Bolivar, Cacique Mara, Juana de Ávila, Manuel Dagnino, Santa Lucía and Venancio Pulgar, 100% of households reported that children had a diet based on a low variety of foods.

1 out of 2 households buy food in *abastos* (small corner stores)

People in Maracaibo regularly buy their food supplies in grocery stores (49.4%) and at a lesser extent in supermarkets (25%), popular markets (19.6%), and in charcuteries (5.9%). The stratus in which they buy more in grocery stores are D (55.1%) and E (66.1%). In contrast stratus A-B (60%) and C (60.8%) often acquire their food supplies in a supermarket.

These numbers are consistent with the frequency in which food supplies are bought: 46.8% of the households buy food supplies every day, 15.9% buy four times a week or more, while 8.1% buy two or three times a week and 9.9% only once a week. The frequency of buying food every 15 days is still high (15%), and the practice of buying every three weeks (1.8%) or monthly (0.6%) is much lower. Strata D (52.5%) and E (66.9%) are most accustomed to buying food daily, while strata A-B (55%) and C (52%) often do it every 15 days.

The households most affected by the scarcity of food supplies (24.5%) usually buy at *abastos* and supermarkets (38%), while those most affected by the high cost of food (54.6%) tend to buy at *abastos* (59%), and popular marketplaces (23%). The families which report not being affected by the scarcity of food supplies or elevated prices (12.4%) have as a habit to buy in supermarkets (67%) and *abastos* (19%).

Households report spending approximately between 0-4 hours (50.6%), 4-8 hours (29.1%) and more than 8 hours (20.3%) a week buying food. Stratus E tends to spend between 0-2 hours (40.2%), along with stratus D (33.7%), while stratus C tends to spend between 2-4 hours (60.6%), and A-B between 6-8 hours (100%). The families which dedicate 10 or more hours to buying food during the week (2.9%) tend to buy food at supermarkets (50%), while those that spend between 2-4 hours (17.5%) are accustomed to purchasing food in *abastos* (84%).

Given these results, we reiterate that the Venezuelan State should design and apply policies which address the grave levels of food insecurity efficiently. Among other causes, scarcity and the high cost of food -correlative phenomena- are negatively impacting the quality of food ingested by adults and children. In this scenario, measures should be taken to encourage national food production and reverse hyperinflation. It is also necessary for the Venezuelan State to seek technical advice of experts to establish programs that promote healthy nutritional habits and nutritional recovery for a vast portion of the population. It is the responsibility of the State to publish official data regarding food consumption, specifically of the National Institute of Nutrition and the National Institute of Statistics, whose most recent reports were published in 2015. Likewise, we call on international agencies for the protection of human rights- in particular, those dedicated to the right to food- to examine the situation of this right in Venezuela and intercede to restore their prompt to guarantee.

Maracaibo
November 2nd, 2018