

Household survey to assess impact of Covid-19 on livelihoods and Food Security



Image: Pakistan Red Crescent Society is engaging with people and communities across the country to provide accurate information about the COVID-19 virus. January 2021.

HELP DESK LIVELIHOODS:

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1. Introduction

This document aims to support livelihoods practitioners with tools to assess the impacts of Covid-19 on people's sources of food and income. Tools could be applied in both rural and urban contexts. LRC has developed the following tools.

- **Tool 1:** Survey template for households
- **Tool 2:** Key informants interview template (community leaders, local authorities)
- **Tool 3:** FGD households (female/males)

This document is focused on a survey template for affected households.

2. Basic Concepts

What is a household?

It is a group of people who regularly share food, income and expenses.

What are livelihoods?

Livelihoods comprise the capabilities, assets and activities required for generating income and securing a means of living¹. Sustainable livelihoods refer to people's capacity to generate and maintain their means of living, and enhance their own well-being as well as that of future generations².

What is food security³ ?

A person household or community, region or nation is food secure when all members at all times have physical, social and economic access to buy, produce, obtain or consume sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life.

What is a market?

A market is any systematic structure allowing market actors to buy and sell commodities.

This does not only include the way the commodity is produced, transported, bought, and sold, but also the formal and informal institutions, rules, and norms that govern these interactions and the infrastructure that facilitate them⁴.

What are coping strategies⁵ ?

Term commonly used to describe short-term, temporary responses to declining access to food and income. In other words, they are strategies different to those normally used to access food and income, which indicate that households are struggling to get the resources they need to meet their immediate needs and to protect their livelihoods.

What is vulnerability⁶ ?

Vulnerability is the inadequacy of adaptive mechanisms, coping mechanisms or accumulated capital or food stocks to meet people's daily needs. Generally speaking, the level of vulnerability of a household and/or individual is determined by the risk of failure of coping strategies. More specifically, food vulnerability refers to the entire range of factors that place people in danger of food insecurity. The degree of vulnerability for an individual, a household, or a group of people is determined by its exposure to risk factors and by its aptitude to confront crisis situations and to survive them.

¹ Chambers and Conway (1992)

² Sphere 2004, *Global food security assessment guidelines*, p. 108, IFRC (2008)

³ *Global food security assessment guidelines*, IFRC 2007

⁴ *Rapid Assessments for markets ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2014.*

⁵ *Household Economic Security (HES) Technical Guidelines for Assessment Analysis and Programme Design - British Red Cross, 2010]*

⁶ *Household Economic Security (HES) Technical Guidelines for Assessment Analysis and Programme Design - British Red Cross, 2010]*

3. Data collection tool: Household survey

This document proposes a template for conducting a household survey to gather primary information related to the impact of Covid-19 or other crisis/disaster on livelihoods and food security. It is important to remember that before primary data collection, it would be necessary to review and analyze **secondary information** about the impact of Covid-19 on FSL⁷.

Household survey: tool for interviewing one or more household members using a structured questionnaire to gather qualitative and quantitative information.

Objective of the HH Survey (tool 1): to understand intra-household functioning or the functioning of individual households as a part of the larger community. Following sections are included: general information about the households, markets situation, livelihoods, food security and needs and current support.



KoBo Toolbox


It is recommended to collect the information through mobile data collection systems (Kobo Toolbox, ODK, Magpi, etc).


For this survey, a digital form has been created in Kobo Toolbox. It allows getting GPS location, taking photographs, collecting data offline from mobiles, tablets, computers, and syncing data online or later⁸.

<p>Survey objective</p>	<p>This survey is completely anonymous and is an informative exercise. It will take approximately 30 minutes. The objective of the survey is to obtain first-hand information on the impact of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods or livelihoods and food security of families to analyze and explore responses to cover the needs. The answer to all the questions is voluntary; if you prefer not to answer any of the questions go to the next. Continue only if you want to participate.</p> <p>Completing this survey does not imply any commitment on the part of the Red Cross to assist the respondent.</p>
<p>Data protection protocol</p>	<p>Your personal data and your answers to questions will be kept confidential.</p> <p>The Red Cross will share the analysis of the results of this survey without mentioning any personal data that allows the identification of individuals.</p>
<p>Survey Instructions</p>	<p>We understand as household: <i>the group of people who live together and share income and expenses</i>. The person answering the survey questions should think about the economic situation and work(s) of their household as a whole, taking into account all the different economic activities that generate income for the household and not only the work or employment that he/she performs. It is important that the person answering the survey questions identifies the job or activity that generates the main income in the household. This survey will help the Red Cross to better understand the impact of the crisis on the socio-economic situation of the affected families and therefore to make better decisions to direct our humanitarian actions</p>

⁷ Resources for secondary sources review: <https://www.livelihoodscentre.org>, [Useful websites \(page 130\)](#)

⁸ Page address is: <https://www.kobotoolbox.org/> Accounts for humanitarian agencies are free of charge;

 1. Introduction⁹		
1.1	Date of interview	Day __ __ Month __ __ Year __ __ __ __
1.2	Enumerator's name	
1.3	Organization	
1.4	Position	
1.5	Location (Village, District, Region) GPS location	_____ _____
1.5	Is it an urban or rural place? <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural • Urban • Mixed between rural and urban (peri-urban) • Other:


 2. General information¹⁰		
2.1	Name ¹¹	_____
2.2	Sex <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman • Man • Other • Do not want to answer / prefer not to answer
2.3	Age <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 18 years • 18-30 years • 31-65 years • Over 65 years old
2.4	Are you the "head of the household"? ¹² <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
2.5	Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married (spouse is present) • Married (spouse is not present)


⁹ Section to be completed by the interviewer/enumerator


¹⁰ From this section, interview one household member using the structured questionnaire to gather detailed and quantitative and qualitative information.

¹¹ Include the name if it could be helpful (for example: beneficiaries of a previous project). If not, remove the question to do it anonymously.


¹² Explain the concept to the interviewee (Head of households: the person in the house who is main responsible for making decisions and earning money") to avoid misunderstandings.


 2. General information ¹⁰		
	<i>Select only one option.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divorced • Single • Widow • Separated • Other _____
2.6	Level of education <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal education/illiterate • Primary school • High school • University • Other _____
2.7.	Where do you live now? <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I live (with my family) in my own home • I live (with my family) in a rental home • I live (with my family) with friends / relatives in their home • We share rental housing with other people (not my family) • I do not have housing (Street situation) • Shelter, reception centre or similar institution • Hotel, hostel or similar • Other: _____
2.8	Number of people now living in your household (<i>who regularly share food, income and expenses</i>):	_ _
2.9	Are there minors in your household? <i>Select only one option</i>	<i>Select only one option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No Number of children < 18 years old: _ _
2.10	Is there a presence of older adults and / or other people who need some special care support? <i>Select only one option</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No Number of people who need special care: _ _
<i>Include following questions in case survey is done in a migration project or migration context (2.11.1 to 2.11.3)</i>		
2.11.1	Which is your status in your current country of residence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDP (internal displaced) • Migrant • Host community • Returnee • Refugee • Other: _____

 2. General information¹⁰		
2.11.2	Do you currently live in a locality different from the one you normally used to reside? (for Internally displaced people)	<i>Select only one option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
2.11.3	Do you have any type of visa, permit or residence document in the country where you currently reside or live?	<i>Select only one option. Optional.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I don't know • Prefer not to answer

 3. Markets¹³		
<i>Current situation (after the Covid-19 crisis or other crisis)</i>		
3.1	Do you (or other members of your household) have access to the markets now?	<i>Select only one option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always available • Partially/sometimes available • Not available • Don't know
3.2	In case markets are not available or partially available, which are the reasons?	<i>Select all that apply</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets/stores are closed • Transport limitations • Movement restrictions (e.g. Curfew) • Security concerns • Concerned about leaving the house due to the outbreak • Adult members of the households are unwell • Members of the households are in self-quarantine • Other_____
3.3	Are fresh food items (eg. eggs, meat, and vegetables) currently available in markets/stores?	<i>Select a single option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always available • Partially/sometimes available • Not available • Don't know
3.4	Are basic food items (e.g. bread, rice¹⁴) currently	<i>Select a single option</i>


¹³ Note: use the RAM in case you need to do a deeper market analysis (<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/rapid-assessment-markets-guidelines-enar>)


 3. Markets¹³		
	available in markets/stores?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always available • Partially/sometimes available • Not available • Don't know
3.5	Are hygiene items (e.g. soap, detergent) currently available in markets/stores?	<i>Select a single option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always available • Partially/sometimes available • Not available • Don't know
3.6	Are medicines currently available in clinics or pharmacies?	<i>Select a single option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always available • Partially/sometimes available • Not available • Don't know
3.7	Have there been any changes in the cost of food and livelihoods items compared to the same period during the past years?	<i>Select a single option</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prices have increased • Prices have decreased • No changes
3.8	Have you or other member of the household changed their shopping behaviour ?	<i>Select all that apply</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes • Buying larger quantities than usual • Buying smaller quantities than usual • Buying cheaper or less preferred foods than usual • Going to different stores


 4. Livelihoods		
Current situation (after the Covid-19 crisis or other crisis¹⁵)		
4.1	Which is the main source of income that your household currently has?	<i>Select only one</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now we have no sources of income • Own small business/Income Generating Activity • Informal work of one or more household members (selling in the street) • Temporary / wage work


¹⁴ Note: remember to adapt basic food items to your context

¹⁵ Include month of the start of the crisis depending on the country of intervention


 4. Livelihoods		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in private sector • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in public sector • Government aid program, humanitarian institutions or other programs • Bank loans or debts • Savings made in the past • Support from your networks of friends, family or others in your country of residence • Remittances obtained from abroad • Pension • Government social protection or assistance programme • Other: _____
4.2	What sector does the main source of income belong to?	<p><i>Select a single option</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Livestock • Fishery • Formal paid work • Small business/IGA (trade): grocery shop/Mini-market (house, drinks, food items), Coffee shop, Clothing/Accessories shop, Electronics shop, miscellaneous items shop. • Small business/IGA (services): snack house/bar, restaurant, Transportation of people, Beauty parlour, hair salon, security, housework • Small business/IGA (technical work): maintenance of equipment, tailor/garment, construction, blacksmith, carpentry, painting, welding • Informal work • Other: _____
4.2.1	If the answer is “Formal paid work”, please select the sector	<p><i>Select a single option</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal paid work in education sector • Formal paid work in health sector • Formal paid work in financial sector • Formal paid work in industrial sector • Formal paid work in communication and technology sector • Formal paid work in tourism services: Hotels, tourism • Formal paid work in other sector: <i>specify</i>


 4. Livelihoods		
4.3	Which other secondary sources of income does your household currently have?	<p><i>Select all that apply</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now we have no sources of income • Own small business/Income Generating Activity • Informal work of one or more household members (selling in the street) • Temporary / wage work • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in private sector • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in public sector • Government aid program, humanitarian institutions or others programs • Bank loans or debts • Savings made in the past • Support from your networks of friends, family or others in your country of residence • Remittances obtained from abroad • Pension • Government social protection or assistance programme • Other: _____
4.4	How many household members currently earn income for the household?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of HH members: __ __
Before the Covid-19 crisis		
4.5	Have your sources of income changed from last year at the same period?	<p><i>Select a single option</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I don't know • Prefer not to answer
4.6	Has COVID-19 impacted your sources of income?	<p><i>Select a single option</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I don't know • Prefer not to answer
4.6.1	If 4.6 is affirmative, how has the COVID-19 crisis impacted your sources of income of your household?	<p><i>Please, select all that apply</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of job (dismissal) • Reduction of working hours • Salary reduction • Reduced demand for goods/services/ reduction of clients • No market to sell products


 4. Livelihoods		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport limitations • Movement restrictions (e.g. Curfew) • Livelihoods inputs are unavailable • Livelihoods inputs are too expensive or inaccessible • Preventing agricultural activities for rural areas depending on the government rules put in place • Limited access to credit from local merchants • Concerned about leaving the house due to the outbreak • Adults members of the house are unwell • Increased demand of good/services • No access to financial services • Savings groups severely strained or suspended • Reduced or stopped remittances from family migrants • I have closed my business or activity • Change of activity / sector • Other: _____
4.6.2	If 4.6 is affirmative, what sector(s) / source(s) have been impacted?	<p><i>Please, select all that apply</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had no sources of income before the crisis • Own small business/Income Generating Activity • Informal work of one or more household members (selling in the street) • Temporary / wage work • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in private sector • Formal paid work of one or more household members (employee) in public sector • Government aid program, humanitarian institutions or other programs • Bank loans or debts • Savings made in the past • Support from your networks of friends, family or others in your country of residence • Remittances obtained from abroad • Government social protection or assistance programme • Other: _____
4.6.3	If 4.6 is affirmative, how many household members earned income for the household in the same period last year (before Covid-19 crisis or other)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of HH members: __ __

 5. Food Security¹⁶		
Current situation (after the Covid-19 crisis or other crisis)		
5.1	Do you and your household members eat the same products now comparing to the same period of the year (before Covid-19 crisis)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
5.2	If not, how many household members do not eat the same amount?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members do not eat the same amount • Some do not eat the same amount (<i>specify which members?</i>)
5.3	How are you coping with economic difficulties since you are affected by the crisis?	<p><i>Please, select all that apply</i></p> <p>Related to food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of daily meals • Reduce the size of portions during the meals • Purchase of less appreciated products (with lower prices and/or lower nutritional value) • Reduction of meat / fish / eggs consumption • Reduction of fresh vegetables consumption • Consumption of wild products • Borrowing food or other help from friends or relatives • Reduce the amounts consumed by adults so that children eat more • Reduce the amounts consumed by women and girls to the benefit of the man and children • Don't know • No response <p>Related to livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling goods (radio, furniture, refrigerator, television, jewellery, etc.) for food needs • Sale of productive assets (tools, etc.) • Selling means of transport (motorbike, etc.) • Sale of breeding animals • Sale of more animals (non-productive) than usual • Sale of land • Reduced planned expenses for agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers) and livestock to purchase food • Consuming seed stocks that were to be saved for the next season • Withdrawn children from school • Reduced essential non-food expenses such as health, education

¹⁶ Seasonal calendar of the area should be reviewed to know in which moment of the calendar the crisis happened (answers might changes depending on rainy season/lean season)

 5. Food Security¹⁶		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Having school age children (6 - 15) working • Begging because of food insecurity • One or more household members have migrated • Spending savings • Child marriage • • Don't know • No response • Other • No change
5.4	Which type of challenges are you facing for food?	<p><i>Please, select all that apply</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't have money to purchase food • Market is closed • Prices increased • Transportation is closed (can't go to the market) • Other(<i>specify</i>)

 6. Needs and current support		
6.1	How has Covid-19/other crisis/disaster impacted on the economic situation of your household?	<p><i>Select only one answer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely affected (reduction of 76% or more of our income) • Very affected (reduction between 50% and 75% of our income) • Affected (reduction between 25% and 49% of our income) • Little affected (reduction of less than 25% of our income) • Affected because the prices of essential items and services have risen • Affected because now I have more expenses than before the crisis (masks, alcohol, cleaning, technology for distance education, etc.) • It has not been affected • It has been improved
6.2	From the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis until now, have you received any kind of help from the government or humanitarian / social institutions?	<p><i>Select all valid answers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of food basket and / or basic supplies • Financial support for food / basic needs in the form of cash, bank income, vouchers or similar • Financial support for the reactivation of your business • In-kind support for the reactivation of your business • Psychological or psychosocial support • Kits from a humanitarian organization (hygiene, kitchen kits ...)

 6. Needs and current support	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tele-care and guidance • Delivery of masks/alcohol and/or cleaning related to hygiene specifically for COVID-19 • Other: _____
6.3	<p>Has the assistance received from the government or humanitarian / social institutions been enough to meet your basic needs?</p> <p><i>Please select only one option.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Partially • No
6.4	<p>What are the two highest priorities (in terms of livelihoods and FS only) that you currently have for your home?</p> <p><i>Select only 2 options</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover • Change your livelihoods • Access to Food • Cover your basic needs other than food (water, clothing, shelter, sanitation, education, and healthcare) • Pay your debts • Other: _____
6.5	<p>How would you like the Red Cross to support you in terms of LLH and food security?</p> <p><i>Select only 3 options</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind support for food and other basic needs • Cash support for food and other basic needs • In kind support to start/restore your livelihoods (livelihood assets) • Cash to start/restore your livelihoods • Technical assistance to start/restore your livelihoods (trainings, technical advice) • Other

“ I hereby give my consent to **XXX Red Cross Society** to collect, handle and store my personal data.

Signature

.....
Household representative signature

.....
Date and place

.....
Enumerator/interviewer signature

.....
Date and place

This document provides some guidance to develop surveys for households to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the Livelihoods of the vulnerable population. For further support do not hesitate to contact the LIVELIHOOD HELPDESK (covid19-livelihoods@cruzroja.es).

Livelihoods Centre site: www.livelihoodscentre.org/

Other tools for assessment and analysis, not directly focused on Covid-19 response, can be found in [*“Household Economic Security \(HES\). Technical Guidance for Assessment and Analysis”*](#).

The HES methodology provides an understanding of socio-economic profiles of households by describing how they meet their immediate essential food and other basic needs; and how they can protect and sustain their livelihoods in order to be self-sufficient and economically secure in the long term.

4. Resources

1. Guidance REACH Cash and markets support for the COVID-19 response.
<https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Cash-and-Markets-Community-of-Practice-1.pdf>
2. Rapid Market Assessment of Socioeconomic Impact of COVID-19 on Local Markets in Colombia.
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_COL_Situation_Overview_RMA_2_English_June2020.pdf
3. Rapid Assessment of Food Security and Agriculture in Lao (Annex C: Questionnaire)
https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000116698/download/?_ga=2.200299566.1853871722.1597053624-1841235992.1597053624
4. Impact survey on FS and livelihoods done by WFP in Caribbean https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000114475/download/?_ga=2.195280556.1853871722.1597053624-1841235992.1597053624
5. WFP Cambodia, NEEDS ASSESSMENT DUE TO COVID19 Form: KEY INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE (remotely)
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/questionnaire_covid-19_impact_analysis.pdf
6. [NAWG-Multi Sectoral Anticipatory Impact Analysis of COVID-19.Key Informants Level Assessment Format](#)
7. ILO. Conducting enterprise surveys during the Covid-19 crisis. Guidelines and survey template.
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_741012.pdf
8. International Trade Center. COVID-19 BUSINESS IMPACT SURVEY.
<https://www.intracen.org/survey/Tell-us-how-your-business-is-affected-by-COVID-19/>
9. Questionnaire COVID-19-Club RACINE (Réseau des Acteurs et Initiatives Ecologique) de la petite côte porté par l'ONG Belge Broederlijk Delen.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19iQH7xUMRoo6ZCwZF9Tq7tQHotuoTWO8GLxhvaPga68/viewform?edit_requested=true
10. IFRC's Americas Regional Office tools "*Cuestionario base de impacto y necesidades en medios de vida por la pandemia COVID-19*"
11. The Livelihood Assessment Toolkit. FAO, ILO. April 2009.
12. Food Security and livelihoods assessments. A practical guide for field officers. ACF International April 2010.