

## The Armenian Integrated Living Conditions Survey

**The Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS)** was introduced in Armenia in 1996 and has been carried out in 1998/99 and annually since 2001. These surveys were conducted during the year with monthly rotation of households and settlements. The survey results serve primarily to assess the level of consumption-based poverty in the country.

### (i) Sampling frame

**The sampling frame** was designed according to the database of addresses for the 2001 Population Census, which was developed with the World Bank technical assistance. The database of addresses of all households in Armenia was divided into 32 strata including 12 communities of Yerevan city. The households from other regions (*marzes*) were grouped according to two categories: towns and villages. The villages and towns formed by 10 strata.

According to that division, a random, two-step sample stratified at the *marz* level was developed. All *marzes*, as well as all urban and rural settlements were included in the sample population according to the share of households residing in those settlements as percent to the total households in the country. **In the first step**, using the PPS method the enumeration units (i.e., primary sample units to be surveyed during the year) were selected. Thus, 2006 sample includes 29 towns out of 48 (59 percent of all towns in Armenia were surveyed during the year) and 112 villages out of 950 (12 percent of all villages). **In the second step**, the respondent households were selected. Number of surveyed households was 5,184 (3,672 from urban and 1,512 from rural settlements). The sample was stratified according to the share of each PSU in the total population.

Since 2004, survey data is representative at the *marz* level.

### (ii) Sample size and settlements covered by 2004-2006 surveys

**Table 1. Number of households surveyed and number of urban and rural settlements covered by the sample in 2004- 2006**

	2004	2005	2006
Number of households surveyed	6816	5187	5184
Number of urban settlements covered by the sample	43	28	29
Number of rural settlements covered by the sample	216	91	112

*Source: NSS RA*

The average size of household according to the sample population was 4.06 members (permanent population), with 3.38 members in urban areas and 4.40 members in rural areas. According to de facto population the average household size based on sample population was 3.82 members with 3.66 in urban and 4.11 rural areas.

### (iii) Description of the field work

The fieldwork of the 2006 survey was conducted by a team of 48 interviewers and 6 supervisors. The total survey activities were monitored by the supervisors. Prior to the survey a training session was arranged for the field team.

Each interviewer was working in 12 PSU (enumeration area) during a year, visiting 9 households every month. Once the interviewer finished the work in a given cluster he/she presented the completed questionnaires and diaries for data control and coding together with a report on sample results. Each interviewed household received AMD 1000 for keeping a diary during the month of the survey. The field work was under thorough supervision and numerous control interviews were conducted. The collected information was coded, logically tested and the information was entered into the data base using special software for data entry, and afterwards the data entered were verified, passed logical test and corrected according to the list of mistakes recorded. As a result, a database containing information on 5,184 households was formed. During the field work the interviewers visited 8,452 addresses. The average national refusal rate was 6.9 percent (Table 2).

**Table 2. Number of households covered by the sample and refusal rates by marzes in 2006**

<i>Marzes</i>	Number of questionnaires filled	Refusal rate
Yerevan	1404	14.1
Aragatsotn	324	13.1
Ararat	432	7.0
Armavir	432	1.7
Gegharkounik	324	2.5
Lori	540	6.2
Kotayk	324	3.7
Shirak	432	0.4
Syunik	324	1.7
Vayots Dzor	324	0
Tavoush	324	0
Total Armenia	5184	6.9

**Note:** Refusal rate is defined as the number of refusals divided by the total number of addresses used.

The refusal rates, defined as the number of refusals divided by the total number of addresses used, differ significantly by *marzes*. The highest refusal rate was in Yerevan (14.1 percent), while in Tavoush and Vayots Dzor marzes no refusals were recorded. It is worth to mention that the overall refusal rate has decreased by 34% compared to 2004 and by 16% compared to 2005. Refusals were lower across all marzes, except for Aragatsotn and Ararat marzes.

As with any methodology for sample surveys, the 2006 survey has some reservations concerning the sampling related in particular with higher refusal rate of apparently well-off households to participate in the survey. The sensitivity of income and consumption indicators, especially fluctuations in separate decile groups of the population makes the impact of this factor on the results of the survey more noticeable (for instance on Gini coefficient).

#### **(iv) Survey tools**

To conduct the survey the following survey tools were developed: a questionnaire, a diary and the interviewers' manual.

***The questionnaire*** is completed by an interviewer who visited minimum five times a surveyed household within a month. During the face to face interviews with the head of the household or another adult member, the interviewer collected information on the composition and housing conditions of the household, level of education and health status of household members, their employment status, land ownership, availability and utilization of cattle and agricultural equipment, money and goods flow between households, and other information.

The list of sections included in the questionnaire has modified slightly. Sections on "Occupation and Self Employment", "Social Capital" and "Services Used" were taken out of the questionnaire in 2005, while new section on "Activities of households for own use" was added. Section on "Health (general) and Healthcare" was completely modified. Few modifications were applied to sections on "Migration" and "Transfers between households". Thus the 2006 survey questionnaire has the following sections: (1) Household roster, (2) Migration, (3) Housing conditions, (4) Education, (5) Agriculture, (6) Transfers between households, (7) Health (general) and healthcare, (8) Savings and loans, (9) Self assessment of wellbeing, (10) Social assistance, and (11) Activities of households for own use.

***The diary*** is completed by the household during the month. Every day the households recorded all their expenses on food, non-food products and services with detailed description of what they bought, such as the name of the product, its quantity, cost and the place of purchase. In addition, the households recorded the consumption of products, which were received and utilized from their own or other farms as well as products which were received from other households. Households recorded also what income they receive during the month. At the end of the month, the information on rarely used food products, durable goods and ritual (funeral, wedding and etc.) services was recorded as well. The records in the diary were verified by the interviewer. The survey diary has the following sections: (1) Food products purchased during the day; (2) Food consumed at home during the day; (3) Expenditures on food consumed outside; (4) Non food products purchased and services received; (5) All other non food products and services received free of charge; (6) Household income and revenues; (7) List of real estate, durable goods and ritual services.

***The Interviewers' Manual*** provides detailed instructions for filling out the questionnaire and the diary. Both the questionnaire and the diary were revised prior to the launch of the survey.