

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.¹ 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 sample consists of two parts: *core sample and oversample*.

1. For the creation of core sample the sample frame (database of addresses of all households in Armenia) was divided into 48 strata including 12 communities of Yerevan city. The households from other regions (*marzes*) were grouped according to three categories: large towns (with population of 15 000 and higher), villages and other towns. Large towns formed by 16 groups (strata), while the villages and towns formed by 10 strata each. According to that division, a random, two-step sample stratified at the *marz and Yerevan city* level was developed. All *marzes and Yerevan city*, 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, 2008 sample includes 46 urban and 18 rural enumeration areas per month.
2. The oversample was drawn from the list of villages included in MCA-Armenia Rural Roads Rehabilitation Project. The enumeration areas of villages that were already in the core sample were excluded from that list. From the remaining enumeration areas 18 enumeration areas were selected per month. Thus the rural sample size was doubled.
3. After merging the core sample and oversample, the survey households were selected in the second step. 656 households were surveyed per month, from which 368 from urban and 288 from rural settlements. Each month 82 interviewers had conducted field work, and their workload included 8 households per month.

In 2008 number of surveyed households was 7,872 (4,416 from urban and 3,456 from rural settlements).

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

(ii) Sample size and settlements covered by 2004-2008 surveys

Table 1. Number of households surveyed and number of urban and rural settlements covered by the sample in 2004- 2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of households surveyed	6816	5187	5184	7872	7872
Number of urban settlements covered by the sample	43	37	29	45	44
Number of rural settlement covered by the sample	216	132	112	289	263

Source: NSS RA

¹ Only in 1996 the survey was implemented in one month.

In 2008 the average size of household according to the sample population was 4.10 members (permanent population), with 3.94 members in urban areas and 4.31 members in rural areas. According to de facto population the average household size based on sample population was 3.80 members with 3.72 in urban and 3.95 rural areas.

(iii) Description of the field work

The fieldwork of the 2008 survey was conducted by a team of 82 interviewers and 15 supervisors. The total survey activities were monitored by coordinators, quality controllers, as well as 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 8 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. In 2008 each interviewed household received AMD 1200 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. Based on the data entered a database was created using a special data entry software package. As a result a database containing information on 7,872 households was formed. During the field work the interviewers visited 14,280 addresses. The average national refusal rate was 7.5 percent (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of households covered by the sample and refusal rates by marzes in 2008

	Number of questionnaires filled	Refusal rate
Yerevan	1344	18.9
Aragatsotn	576	2.6
Ararat	768	7.5
Armavir	768	10.6
Gegharkounik	672	0.6
Lori	768	4.6
Kotayk	768	2.3
Shirak	768	4.0
Syunik	480	2.2
Vayots Dzor	384	2.7
Tavoush	576	2.9
Total Armenia	7872	7.5

Source: NSS RA 2008.

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 (18.9 percent), and the lowest in Gegharkounik marz (0.6%). Interestingly the overall refusal rate has decreased by 28% compared to 2004, and by 4% compared to 2007. Refusals were decreased across almost all marzes, except for Yerevan, Armavir, Ararat, Tavush and Vayots Dzor marzes.

As with any methodology for sample surveys, the 2008 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.

From 2008 the list of sections included in the questionnaire has modified slightly. New section on "Monthly consumption of energy in households" was added to the questionnaire. The sections on "Household Members Roster," "Housing Conditions," "Occupation", "Education," "Agriculture", "Savings and loans", "Social assistance" were modified. Thus the 2008 survey questionnaire has the following sections: (1) Household roster, (2) Migration, (3) Housing conditions, (4) Occupation, (5) Education, (6) Agriculture, (7) Monetary and commodity flows between households, (8) Health (general) and healthcare, (9) Savings and loans, (10) Self assessment of wellbeing, (11) Social capital and service delivery (12) Social assistance, Activities of households for own use and (14) "Monthly consumption of energy carriers in households".

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 sources (gifts, humanitarian aid). Also, non-food products and services purchased or received for free are recorded in the diary. 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) Purchase and availability of durable goods.

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.