

LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGY INDEX

Indicator Phrasing

English: % of households in the emergency / crisis / stress / none category of the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index

French: % de ménages dans la catégorie Urgence, Crise, Stress, Nulle / minimale de l'Indice de Stratégie d'Adaptation des moyens de subsistance

Portuguese: % de agregados familiares na categoria de emergência / crise / stress / nenhuma do Índice de Estratégias de Sobrevivência em termos de meios de subsistência

Czech: % domácností v kategorii nouzová situace / krize / stres / žádná v rámci Indexu strategie zvládnání zdrojů obživy

What is its purpose?

The Livelihood Coping Strategy Index measures strategies a household employs when it cannot meet basic needs due to inadequate income in times of stress; the Index indicates coping capacity.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Determine the indicator's value by using the following methodology:

1) **The first step is to identify the most frequent livelihood coping strategies** to which the targeted households turn when unable to meet their basic needs due to inadequate income. It is recommended to contact the Cash Working Group (or possibly other major actors, such as ICRC or respected NGOs) to see if a list of locally relevant livelihood coping strategies is available. If so, review it to ensure the strategies are relevant to the context of your intervention. If such a list is unavailable, use focus group discussions with target group members to identify them. Examples of livelihood coping strategies are included in the documents listed below.

2) **The second step is to define the "severity" of each of these individual livelihood coping strategies** (i.e. how negative their impact is on the household's members). Suppose such information is available from the Cash Working Group. In that case, it is recommended to use it (this will also ensure that the data is comparable to other surveys that use the same methodology). If not, the "weight" of each livelihood coping strategy must be identified by conducting focus group discussions with the community members. To simplify calculations, "weights" are recommended to range from 1 to 10.

3) The next step is to **interview** members of a [representative sample](#) of the target households to assess whether they used the selected strategies in the past 30 days. The options available in a questionnaire should include:

- yes (i.e., the coping mechanism was used in the 30 days prior to the interview)
- no (i.e., the coping mechanism was not used in the 30 days prior to the interview)
- exhausted (i.e., the household used this coping mechanism in the past and no longer has the resources to use it)
- not applicable (i.e., the household never had the resources to use this coping mechanism)
- prefers not to answer

4) Multiply all the "yes" answers by the assigned "weight" (severity). By **summing up the "weights" of all the assessed strategies**, you will receive the total Livelihood Coping Strategy Index score for the given respondent. A high score means extensive use of negative livelihood coping strategies. For information management purposes (not calculated in the final score), the percentage of "exhausted" and "not applicable" should also be considered to better inform further programming (e.g., if households reported that they "exhausted" the possibility of selling their assets, it means that they already sold them, but not in the 30 days before data collection).

5) Based on the score obtained, **each household is then classified** into one of the following categories: "emergency", "crisis", "stress", or "none" (i.e., no negative strategies were used). The Cash Working Group or other relevant coordination groups should define the thresholds for these categories.

6) The indicator's value is usually reported as:

- **the percentage of households in each of the four categories** ("emergency", "crisis", "stress", or "none")
- **the average value of the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index** scores of all the respondents' households (i.e. sum up all the Index scores and divide them by the number of respondents)

The former provides a snapshot of the current situation, while the latter can give you a more granular understanding of improvements over time.

Disaggregate by

[Disaggregate](#) the data by female-headed households, wealth, location, and other criteria relevant to the context of your intervention.

Important Comments

1) The Livelihood Coping Strategy Index needs to be contextualized, and thus each country may have slightly different methodologies and wording. For comparability purposes, the Index creation and/or amendments should be led by coordinating or working groups (e.g., Cash Working Group).

Access Additional Guidance

- Mercy Corps (2022) [Livelihood Coping Strategy Index \(LCSI\) Revision](#)

- WFP (0) [Livelihood Coping Strategy Index \(CARI module\)](#)

- ICRC (2021) [Post-Distribution Monitoring Report](#)