

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 for the 2005 ILCS was built using the database of addresses for the 2001 Population Census; the database was developed with the World Bank technical assistance. The 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 the following three categories: big towns with 15,000 and more population; villages, and other towns. Big towns formed 16 strata (the only exception is the Vayots Dzor *marz* where there are no big towns). The villages and other towns formed 10 strata.

According to this 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 population residing in those settlements as percent to the total population in the country. **In the first step**, the settlements (i.e., primary sample units to be surveyed during the year) were selected. Thus 2005 sample includes 28 towns out of 48 or 58 percent of all towns in Armenia were surveyed during the year; also 91 villages out of 951 or 10 percent of all villages in the country were covered by the survey. **In the second step**, the respondent households were selected: 5,187 households (3,657 from urban and 1,530 from rural settlements).

As a result, second time since 2004 survey data were representative at the *marz* level.

(ii) Sample size and Settlements covered by 2004-2005 surveys

Table 1: Number of households surveyed and number of urban and rural settlements covered by the sample in 2004 and 2005

	2004	2005
Number of households surveyed	6816	5187
Number of urban settlements covered by the sample	43	28
Number of rural settlement covered by the sample	216	91

Source: NSS RA.

The 2005 survey covered 28 urban and 91 rural areas with the sample size of 5,187 households, and as mentioned earlier, for the second time it gives an opportunity to obtain data representative at the *marz* level. The sample frame of both 2004 and 2005 was designed according to the 2001 population census database. The sample was stratified according to the share of each PSU in the total population.

(iii) Description of the field work

The fieldwork of the first quarter of 2005 survey was conducted by a team of 71 interviewers, 6 quality control specialist and 13 supervisors (funded by the World bank),

while the fieldwork of the second to fourth quarters was conducted by 48 interviewers and 6 supervisors (funded by the State Budget). The total survey activities were monitored by the project coordinators. Intensive training session was arranged for the field teams prior to the survey.

Each interviewer was working in 12 clusters during a year, visiting 8 households every month during first quarter of 2005 survey and 9 households every month in following quarters. 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 questionnaires and diaries were coded, logically tested and the information was entered using the special software for data entry, double entry and verification of entered data. As a result, a database containing information on 5,187 households was formed. During the field work the interviewers visited 8,713 addresses. The average national refusal rate was 8.2 percent (Table 2 presents refusal rates by *marzes*).

Table 2: Households covered by the sample and refusal rates by marzes, 2005

<i>Marzes</i>	Number of questionnaires filled	Refusal rate
Yerevan	1557	15.7
Aragatsotn	258	10.2
Ararat	468	5.2
Armavir	468	2.4
Gegharkounik	363	4.0
Lori	549	6.2
Kotayk	387	7.0
Shirak	468	4.3
Syunik	258	1.9
Vayots Dzor	153	0.9
Tavoush	258	0.3
Total	5187	8.2

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 (15.7 percent) and the lowest in Tavoush (0.3 percent). It is worth to mention that the overall refusal rate was lower compared to 2004 survey by 2.2%. Refusals were lower across all *marzes* except for the Kotayk and Tavoush *marzes*, where the refusal rate had increased by 0.6 and 0.1 percent points respectively.

(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 during his/her minimum of five visits to 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 since last year. Sections on Occupation and Self Employment, Social Capital and Services Used were taken out of the questionnaire. Thus the 2005 survey tool had the following sections: (1) Household Roster; (2) Migration; (3) Housing Conditions; (4) Education; (5) Agriculture; (6) Transfers Between Households; (7) Health; (8) Savings and Loans; (9) Self Assessment of Well-Being; (10) Social Assistance.

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 farms, as well as products which were received from other households. 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 during his/her visits to the household during the same month. The detailed list of the sections in the diary is presented below: (1) Purchased food products during the day; (2) Food consumed at home during the day; (3) 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.