

The Armenian Integrated Living Conditions Survey

The Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) was first conducted in Armenia in 1996 (in a one-month period), followed by the one in 1998/99; thereafter, it has been conducted every year since 2001. The survey is carried out during the year with monthly changes (rotation) of households and communities. Findings of the survey are primarily used to estimate consumption-based poverty rates in the country and to provide valuable information on households' living conditions by means of other indicators.

I. Sample Frame

The sampling frame for 2009 was designed according to the database of addresses of all households in the country developed on basis of the 2001 Population Census results, with the technical assistance of the World Bank.

The sample consisted of two parts – master sample and supplementary sample.

1. For the purpose of drawing the master sample, the sample frame was divided into 48 strata including 12 communities of Yerevan City (currently, the administrative districts).

Communities in all regions were grouped into three categories: large towns with 15.000 and more inhabitants, small towns with less than 15.000 inhabitants, and villages. Large towns formed 16 groups (strata), while small towns and villages formed 10 strata each.

According to this division, a random two-tier sample was drawn, stratified by regions and by Yerevan. All regions and Yerevan, as well as all urban and rural communities were included in the sample in accordance to the shares of their resident households within the total number of households in the country. In the first round, enumeration districts – that is primary sample units to be surveyed during the year – were selected. The ILCS 2009 sample included 46 enumeration districts in urban and 18 enumeration districts in rural communities per month.

2. The supplementary sample was drawn from the list of the villages included in MCA-Armenia road rehabilitation projects. Then, enumeration districts of the villages already included in the master sample were excluded from this list. Eighteen enumeration districts were selected per month from among the remaining ones. Thus, the sample of rural communities doubled.
3. After merging the master and supplementary samples, the households to be surveyed were selected in the second round. A total of 656 households were surveyed per month, of which

368 and 288 households from urban and rural communities, respectively. Every month 82 interviewers were on field work with a workload of 8 households per month.

A total of 7,872 households were selected in 2009, of which 4,416 and 3,456 households from urban and rural communities, respectively. Survey data provided for the minimum representativeness by regions.

II. Sample Size and Communities Covered by 2008-2009 Surveys

Table 1: Number of Households Surveyed, Urban and Rural Communities Covered by 2008-2009 Samples

	2008	2009
Number of households surveyed	7872	7872
Number of urban communities covered by the sample	44	45
Number of rural communities covered by the sample	263	313

Source: ILCS 2008-2009

According to ILCS 2009, in terms of resident population, the average size of a household was 4.0 members, with 3.9 and 4.2 members in urban and rural communities, respectively. In terms of current population, the average size of a household was 3.8 members, with 3.7 and 3.9 members in urban and rural communities, respectively.

III. Description of Field Work

A team of 82 interviewers and 15 team-leaders was established for conducting the fieldwork for the 2009 survey. The process of survey was supervised by coordinators, quality controllers, and team-leaders. Prior to launching the survey, relevant instructions were given to the field work personnel.

Each interviewer worked in 12 clusters (enumeration districts) during the year, by visiting 8 households per month. On finishing the work in each cluster, the interviewers presented the completed questionnaires and diaries for data check and codification, along with the sampling reports. All collected data were codified, logically tested, cross-compared by different operators, processed through a software logical test and corrected on basis the list of recorded errors. Based on the entered data, a relevant database was developed by means of special data entry software. A total of 15,208 addresses were visited by interviewers in the course of field works, while the average refusal rate totaled 7.8% (Table 2).

**Table 2: Number of Households Covered by 2009 Sample,
Refusal Rates by Regions and in Yerevan**

	Number of completed questionnaires	Refusal rate
Yerevan	1344	20.2
Aragatsotn	576	1.4
Ararat	768	9.6
Armavir	768	8.0
Gegharkunik	672	0.7
Lori	768	4.8
Kotayk	768	2.7
Shirak	768	4.7
Syunik	480	0.6
Vayotz Dzor	384	0.4
Tavush	576	2.8
Total	7872	7.8

Source: ILCS 2009

Note: Refusal rate is defined as the ratio of refusals and the total number of visited addresses.

Refusal rates defined as the ratio of refusals and the total number of visited addresses significantly varied by regions. Refusal rates were the highest in Yerevan (20.2%) and the lowest in Vayotz Dzor region (0.4%). Interestingly, the overall refusal rate had increased by 4% as compared to 2008. Such increase in refusal rates was significant in Yerevan, Ararat, and Shirak regions. Other regions demonstrated decreasing or insignificantly increasing (0.3%) refusal rates. The 2009 survey, just as the previous ones, saw higher refusal rates among relatively well-off households. Nevertheless, the income and consumption sensitivity analysis did not reveal any fluctuations in different decile groups of the population to reflect the impact of refusals by the well-off.

IV. Description of Survey Tools

The following tools were developed to conduct the survey: questionnaire, diary, and interviewer's manual.

The *questionnaire* was filled in by the interviewer in the course of at least five visits to households per month. During face-to-face interviews with the household head or another knowledgeable adult member, the interviewer collected information on the composition and housing conditions of the household, the employment status of the members, their educational level and health status, availability and use of land, livestock, and agricultural machinery, monetary and commodity flows between households, ways of overcoming the financial crisis and other information.

From 2009 the list of sections included in the questionnaire has modified slightly. New section on “Coping of financial crisis” was added to the questionnaire. The sections on “Migration,” “Occupation” , “Education”, “Health (general) and healthcare”, “Agriculture” were modified. Thus the 2009 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), “Coping of financial crisis” (15).

The *diary* was completed directly by the household during the month. Every day the households would record all their expenditures on food, non-food products and services, while giving a detailed description of such purchases; for example, for food products, the following was recorded: name of the product, its quantity, cost, and the place of purchase. Besides, the households recorded the consumption of products received and used from their own land and livestock, as well as of products obtained from other sources (e.g. gifts, humanitarian aid). Non-food products and services purchased or received for free were also recorded in the diary. Then, households recorded their income received during the month. At the end of the month, information on rarely used food products, durable goods and ceremonies was recorded, as well. The records in the diary were verified by the interviewer. The survey diary had the following sections: (1) food products purchased during the day, (2) food consumed at home during the day, (3) expenditures on food consumed away from home, (4) non-food products purchased and services obtained, (5) non-food products and services received free of charge, (6) household income and monetary inflows, (7) products of usually small consumption during the day, (8) list of real estate, durable goods, and ceremonies.

The *interviewer’s manual* provided detailed instructions for completing the questionnaire and the diary.

The questionnaire, the diary and the interviewer's manual were revised and corrected prior to the launch of the survey.

