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4. Livelihood Coping Strategies for Food Security (LCS-FS) [REVISED]

VERSION	V4.0 – 2024.03
INDICATOR CODE	4
INDICATOR TYPE & AREA	**Type:** Corporate outcome indicator (CRF under S.O.1) Reported in ACR & APR 1. Food Security and Essential Needs
INCLUDED IN CSP LOGFRAMES	Yes
APPLICABILITY	**Mandatory:** Under the relevant outcomes for interventions with a food security objective. These interventions should provide food assistance, irrespective of the transfer modality, i.e., i) Unconditional Resource Transfer ii) Community and Household Asset Creation and iii) Household and individual Skill and Livelihood Creation activities) to Tier 1 beneficiaries.
TECHNICAL OWNER	Research, Assessment and Monitoring – Needs Assessment & Targeting (RAM-N)
ACTIVITY TAGS	*General Distribution (GD) *Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) *Food Assistance for Training (FFT) More activity tags can be chosen from Annex 5 of the Masterlist (e.g. HIV/TB mitigation and Safety Nets) but it is mandatory to select at least one of the above tags to ensure proper corporate reporting.
UNIT OF MEASUREMENT & ANALYSIS	• Percentage of households **not** applying coping strategies due to lack of food • Percentage of households applying **stress** coping strategies due to lack of food • Percentage of households applying **crisis** coping strategies due to lack of food • Percentage of households applying **emergency** strategies due to lack of food
DEFINITION	The Livelihood Coping Strategies for Food Security (LCS-FS) is an indicator used to measure the extent of livelihood coping mechanisms that households needed to utilise as a response to a lack of food or money to purchase food during the 30-day period prior to the survey. The formulation of an LCS-FS module requires the selection of **four** stress strategies, **three** crisis strategies and **three** emergency strategies from the standardised available master list while taking into consideration the local context. The list of strategies can be found on the VAM resource centre page alongside the recommended severity already assigned to each strategy. However, the severity of some strategies can also be slightly adjusted based on local cultures and customs. Additional new strategies should be consulted with the responsible technical unit in HQ.

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

RATIONALE

The collection of data on livelihood coping is especially useful when there is a good understanding of the strategies typically employed by households in difficult situations and the relative severity of the strategies when compared to each other. LCS is also a powerful indicator to assess hardship and deprivations faced by households during new emergencies and protracted crises. Responses are used to understand mechanisms used by households to cope with internal and external shocks.

While the complementary food security indicators (e.g., FCS and rCSI) are proxy indicators that measure the adequacy of households' food consumption at the time of the survey, the LCS-FS helps in assessing households' coping capacity and productive capacities in the longer-term, as well as the future impact on access to food for households. For instance, the sale of productive assets is likely to affect the sustainability of a household's livelihoods and may therefore translate into reduced physical and/or economic access to food in the medium- to long-term.

Households relying on livelihood coping strategies due to a lack of food are classified based on the severity associated with the strategies applied. The higher the category, the more severe and longer-term the negative consequences are for households. The application of stress strategies indicates a decrease in the households' capacity to manage future shocks, while crisis and emergency mechanisms reduce the future household productivity with an increasing intensity passing from the former (i.e., crisis) to the latter (i.e., emergency).

Emergency	Crisis	Stress
affects future productivity but are more difficult to reverse or more dramatic in nature.	directly reduces future productivity, including human capital formation.	indicates a reduced ability to deal with future shocks due to a current reduction in resources or increase in debts.

DATA SOURCE

Representative household surveys conducted either face-to-face, or remotely by phone calls. Examples of household level surveys include Post Distribution Monitoring (PDMs), Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM), and Food Security Assessment (FSA).

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Important: Please do not include the exact coping strategies provided as an example in the module below. Please refer to the full list of strategies to explore the livelihood coping strategies for food security, along with their explanations and relevance for different contexts (i.e., urban and rural) and populations (i.e., residents, refugees, etc.) It is important to also keep alignment and CATI/mVAM questionnaires to allow for comparisons.

The list of possible livelihood coping strategies can also be selected through from the WFP Survey Designer by choosing the sub-module Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS-FS) or Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS-FS Rural) in the module Coping Strategies. Please see examples of LCS-FS modules in the word file version and additional information on the VAM resource centre page.

Example of LCS-FS module:

During the past **30 days**, did anyone in your household have to engage in any of the following activities **due to lack of food or money to buy it?**	10 = No, because I did not need to 20 = No, because I already sold those assets or have engaged in this activity within the last 12 months and cannot continue to do it 30= Yes 9999= Not applicable (don't have access to this strategy)	Indicative severity of the strategy (Country office to attribute the relevant severity, the following is just an example)	LCS
1.1 Sold household assets/goods (radio, furniture, refrigerator, television, jewelry, etc.) **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Stress	Lcs_stress_DomAsset

1.2 Borrowed money to cover food needs due to lack of food	| __ |	Stress	Lcs_stress_BorrowCash
1.3 Spent savings **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Stress	Lcs_stress_saving
1.4 Sent household members to eat elsewhere **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Stress	Lcs_stress_EatOut
1.5 Sold productive assets or means of transport (sewing machine, wheelbarrow, bicycle, car, etc.) **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Crisis	Lcs_crisis_ProdAsset
1.6 Reduced expenses on health (including medications) **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Crisis	Lcs_crisis_Health
1.7 Withdrew children from school **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Crisis	Lcs_crisis_OutSchool
1.8 Mortgaged/Sold house or land **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Emergency	Lcs_em_ResAsset
1.9 Begged (asked strangers for money/food) or scavenged **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Emergency	Lcs_em_Begged
1.10 Engaged in socially degrading, high-risk, exploitive or life-threatening jobs or income-generating activities (e.g., smuggling, theft, join armed groups, prostitution) **due to lack of food**	| __ |	Emergency	Lcs_em_IllegalAct

SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS

Guidance is available here.

Sample size: The recommended sample size is 270 per stratum per each round of data collection, with consideration given to the parameters below.

- Population size (beneficiaries per stratum): at least 20,000
- Desired level of confidence: 90%
- Acceptable margin of error: 5%
- Response distribution: 50%
- Simple random sample (design effect): 1

If cluster sample is used, sample size should increase by at least 50% (at least 405 households).

If the prevalence is lower or higher than 50%, or the beneficiaries per stratum is less than 20,000 then sample size could be lower than 270. Use the sample size tool for calculation.

Sample size tool: Raosoft sample size calculator

Mandatory stratification:

- Programme activity
- Transfer modality

Optional stratification: Beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries (when relevant)

1. FOOD SECURITY AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS

INDICATOR CALCULATION	Build a dichotomous variable for each coping severity level, representing if a household adopted or exhausted any strategy with that level of severity. Three dichotomous variables need to be created: • stress_coping • crisis_coping • emergency_coping Then, a categorical variable is built, representing the severity level of the most severe strategy that a household adopted or exhausted. The categorical variable ranges from 1 to 4 and reflect one of four groups in which households are allocated: • no use of stress, crisis, or emergency strategies • use of stress strategies • use of crisis strategies • use of emergency strategies Scripts in R, STATA and SPSS and sample data are available on GitHub for calculating this indicator.
DATA ENTRY IN COMET	Yes
DISAGREGRATION FOR DATA ENTRY IN COMET (MANDATORY)	**Mandatory disaggregation:** • Programme activity **Recommended disaggregation (when sample size allows):** • Sex of household head • Transfer modality • Rural/urban • Admin and livelihood zone • Displacement status
FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION/ DATA ENTRY IN COMET	Minimum: twice/year For **multi-annual projects,** it is extremely important to collect data in the same seasons and periods to avoid seasonal biases limiting the scope for comparative analyses over time. It is strongly recommended that data collection for follow-ups happen in the same period as the baseline. In addition, all follow-ups are to be conducted within the same period/number of days after food distributions (i.e., two weeks after food distributions). For years when a baseline is conducted, only one follow up is required.
BASELINE ESTABLISHMENT	In line with the business rules, baseline values should be established within three (3) months before and no later than three (3) months from the start date of activity implementation. However, it is strongly recommended to collect LCS-FS baseline values within one (1) month before the start of the activity implementation. The baseline could also be determined from a relevant WFP assessment conducted within the three months prior to the start of programme activity.
TARGET SETTING	**Annual target:**

	Reduced proportion of households applying crisis and emergency strategies compared to pre-assistance baseline value or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects. AND Reduced proportion of households applying emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects. **End of CSP target:** Reduced proportion of households applying crisis and emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects. AND Reduced proportion of households applying emergency strategies compared to the pre-assistance baseline value, or previous yearly follow-up in case of multiannual projects.
RESPONSIBLE FOR DATA COLLECTION	M&E Officer
INDICATORS COLLECTED & ANALYSED AT THE SAME TIME	Household level indicators: • 1. Food Consumption Score (FCS) • 2. Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis (FCS-N) • 3. reduced Coping Strategies Index • 6. Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs
COMPLEMENTARY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	Focus group discussions can be conducted to inform the design of the LCS-FS questionnaire module by providing information for selecting appropriate strategies and for better understanding the relevance of the module to the local population. A list of coping behaviours can be established through focus group interviews with members of the local community only when the strategies provided in the available master list do not suffice or when the phrasing of the strategies needs to be slightly re-phrased for the context. Questions that can be asked during a focus group discussion may include: 1. How do households in your community cope with this specific shock (e.g., flood, drought, economic crisis, etc.)? 2. How do households in your community cope to increase household resources to access food? 3. How do households cope to reduce the demand for food needs? 4. How do households cope to distribute food resources within the household? For more information, please see the LCS-FS technical guidance note and the LCS-FS Qualitative Tool on the VAM Resource Centre.
DECISIONS DATA CAN INFORM	The provision of assistance to targeted households may result in positive effects over time, without the presence of external shocks. The reduction of reliance on livelihood coping strategies may be observed when comparing the results of LCS-FS with the baseline or previous rounds. These effects may not be immediate, as not all livelihood strategies can be easily reversed by households. If no change is observed over time, some consideration may be needed to adjust the design of an intervention. For example, results can be used to inform beneficiary targeting and prioritization and the selection of transfer modalities. The recommendations can be applied in a wide array of responses and can be particularly helpful in multi-partner interventions.

The LCS-FS indicator plays a part in classifying households according to their level of food security, through the Consolidated Approach for Reporting on Food Insecurity (CARI). The LCS-FS is one of the four indicators used to calculate the CARI composite indicator and is one of the two in the 'coping capacity' domain which measures households' economic capacity and livelihood coping strategies to reflect how households can sustain their food security over time.

Furthermore, the LCS-FS indicator is one of the food security outcome indicators in the IPC acute food insecurity reference table. The indicator and the distribution of individual strategies used by households are key factors in classifying populations into the five phases of acute food insecurity (none/minimal, stress, crisis, emergency, and catastrophe/famine).

INTERPRETATION

Report the proportion of households within each coping strategy category. The higher the severity level of strategies, the longer the recovery process would be for affected households. Further, some of the crisis and emergency strategies can even be irreversible.

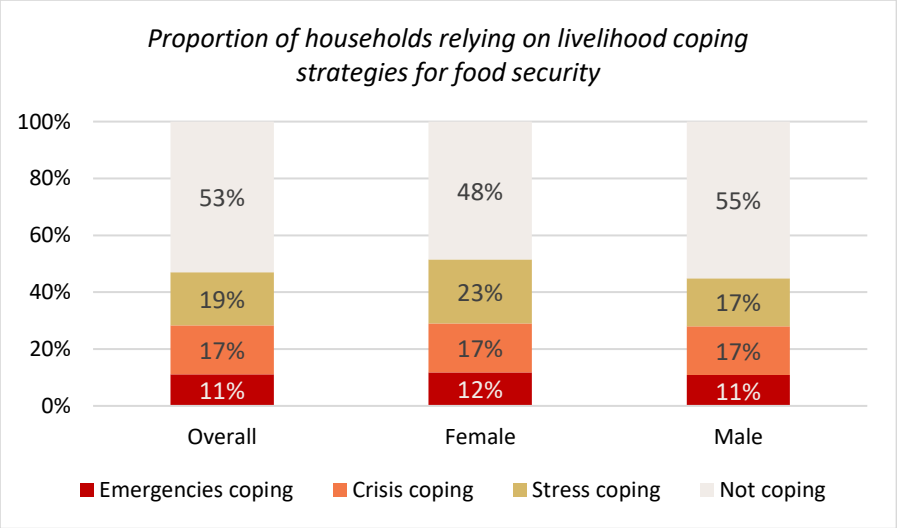
The objective of WFP's food/cash assistance programme activities are to lower the need of affected households to apply livelihood coping strategies and, if possible, to prevent the need to apply any crisis and/or emergency coping strategies.

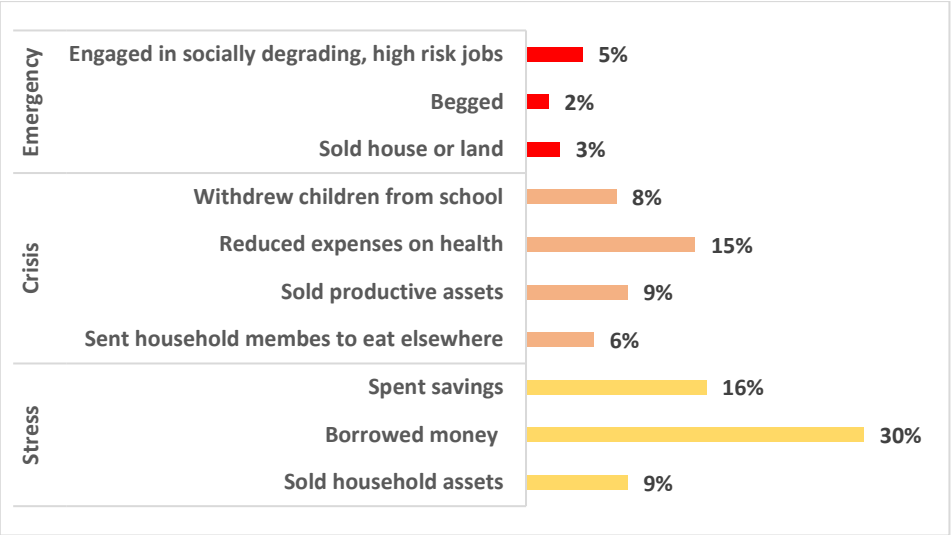
% Households applying no livelihood coping strategies
% Households applying stress coping strategies
% Households applying crisis coping strategies
% Households applying emergency coping strategies

REPORTING EXAMPLE(S)

The proportion of households adopting crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies declined substantially overtime from the pre-assistance period (22.7%) to the first (17.4%) and second follow-up (4%). Resorting to crisis and emergency based coping strategies has long-term consequences on the livelihoods of affected households which may be difficult to reverse. Further analysis shows a reduction of households of the individual livelihood based coping strategies borrowing money for food to cover food need, spending savings, reducing expenses for health, the distress sale of productive assets also reduced.

VISUALIZATION





LIMITATIONS	Type of strategies implemented are largely context and livelihood-dependent, therefore comparisons between regions and countries can be limited. Furthermore, the ability to draw the line and differentiate between households applying strategies due to lack of food and local customs and traditions can be challenging.
FURTHER INFORMATION	Refer to the LCS-FS page on the VAM Resource Centre or contact the Needs Assessments and Targeting Unit in HQ RAM-N at global.assessmentandtargeting@wfp.org.