Response of labour statistics to Covid-19
Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour statistics

The situation during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Affected the ability of countries to collect labour market data through surveys
- Created significant additional demands for data to monitor the wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic on the work people do, working conditions and engagement with the labour market
  - Some of those issues did not have available standards or published guidance
- Placed significant pressure on producers of statistics and consequently created a demand for support from the ILO in various areas.
The ILO response

• March 2020: Initial rapid assessment of the impacts of the pandemic on efforts to collect and publish labour market statistics
  
  • Highlighting challenges faced by countries, such as suspension of face-to-face interviewing, impact on data analysis, changing questionnaire content, etc.
  
  • Existing indicators needed to be supplemented to capture the impact of the pandemic on the labour market (lost and temporary absences from employment)
The ILO response

• In 2021: A comprehensive global review which enabled a complete picture on the scale of impacts:
  • Nearly half of all countries that had planned to conduct an LFS in 2020 had been forced to suspend interviewing
  • About half of the countries that were not already collecting information by telephone turned to this method during 2020
  • Some countries had to suspend surveys and planned publications entirely
  • In most cases, countries did manage to continue their LFS and expand the range of information being published.
Impacts heavily linked to existing mode and data collection frequency

- The group "Used remote modes" includes any country who planned to use remote modes for some or all of their interviews.

Used remote modes

- Attempted to complete interviews originally planned, 89.1%
  - Suspensions and no recovery of interviews: 10.9%
  - Suspensions but interviews were attempted later: 15.2%
  - No suspensions: 73.9%

Used remote modes

- Attempted to complete interviews originally planned, 64.7%
  - Suspensions and no recovery of interviews: 35.3%
  - Suspensions but interviews were attempted later: 29.4%
  - No suspensions: 25.3%
Practical guidance to maintain labour force survey data collection

• Guidance issued in April 2020
• Recommendations to support continuation of data collection
• Changing mode
• Contact details
• Reference periods
• Assessing data quality
The ILO response

• ILO Monitor on the World of Work series

  • To bridge the initial gaps in data at the global level on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour markets
  • Incorporating innovative new modelling approaches to generate global estimates on topics such as:
    • working time losses,
    • overall changes in numbers of people employed and unemployed,
    • how such changes were distributed between women and men.
Guidance
ILO Guidance on labour force survey content and treatment of special groups

- Early guidance issued
- Importance of maintaining existing employment, unemployment definitions
- Highlighted critical relevance of 19th ICLS resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, with clarifications on how to treat
- Absence from employment, hours worked, time-related underemployment, unemployment, potential labour force, reasons
- Guidance to prioritize measurement of
  - Employed persons absent, by reason, duration and pay during absence
  - Employed persons working more / less hours than usual by reason
  - Job losers by reason for last job ending, and essential characteristics of lost job
  - Persons outside labour force by degree of labour market attachment, and reasons for not seeking or not being available to work
ILO Guidance for Consumer prices indexes

- Early guidance issued
- Recommendation to use all possible modes of data collection
- At least for most representative or important products
- Guidance on treatment of missing prices
  - Through sound use of imputation techniques
  - Guidance on dissemination practices
  - Use of flags
  - Accompanying metadata
ILO Guidance on measuring remote work, telework, work at home and home-based work

- Emerging topics to track impact on working arrangements and place of work
- Provided definitions and measurement guidance on 4 new concepts:
  - Remote work
  - Telework
  - Work at home
  - Home-based work
- Model question sequences based on selected country experience
ILO Guidance for rapid surveys

• In response to emergence of multiple initiatives to conduct rapid surveys

• Guidance on appropriate uses of rapid surveys, and inappropriate uses

• Highlighted potential limitations when covering impacts on work and employment

• Guidance including model rapid survey sequences at household and person-level, for different settings, in line with minimum good survey practice and 19th ICLS resolution

  • Beyond employment impacts
  • Subsistence food production
  • Unpaid domestic and care work, volunteer work,
Inter-agency coordination and collaboration

- Monitoring support to countries
  - Population-based surveys supported by UN agencies, WB
- Guidance coordination
  - Eurostat, UNSD, UN regional economic commissions
- Inter-agency guidance
  - Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities
  - Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys
  - Inter-secretariat Working Group on Price Statistics
  - UN Expert Group on Time-use measurement
  - UNECE Task force on Gender Statistics
Wide communication to raise awareness and build capacity

- Blogs
- Online events and training
  - Webinars, Stats-café
  - E-courses
- In partnership
  - ILO International Training Center
  - UN and other partner agencies
  - Development partners

21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians
Points for reflection and sharing

Participants at the Conference are invited to share their experience and reflections regarding

- ILO guidance and support in labour statistics provided during COVID-19 pandemic period
- Relevance of ICLS statistical standards to support monitoring impacts of COVID-19 on labour markets, working conditions, working arrangements, work-life balance, and unpaid work
- National innovations introduced to maintain labour statistics data production now retained
- Lasting impacts on work and labour statistics programmes requiring attention
Thank you