



International
Conference of
Labour Statisticians
11-20 October 2023



Response of labour statistics to Covid-19

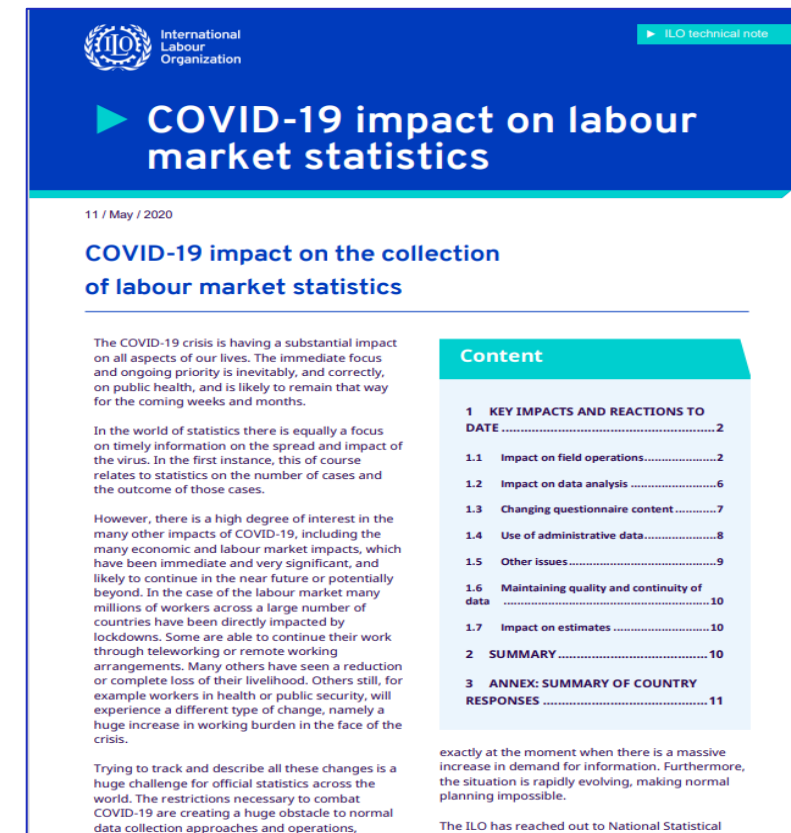
► Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour statistics

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.

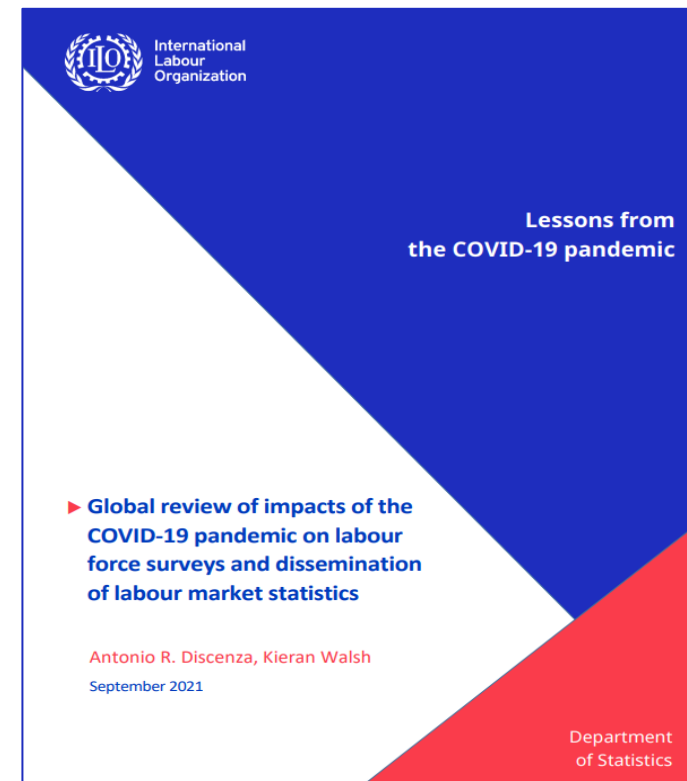
► The ILO response

- 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)

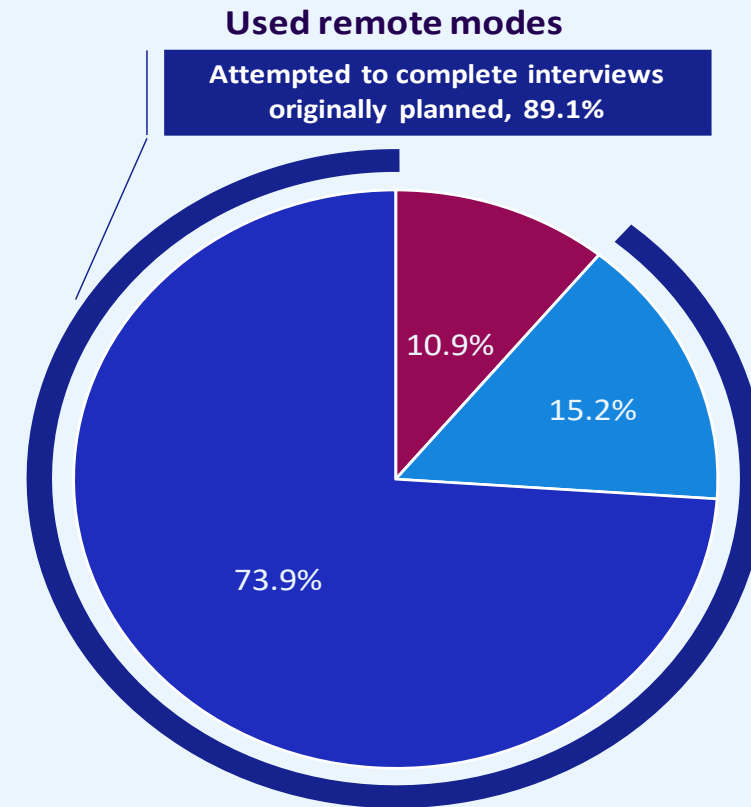
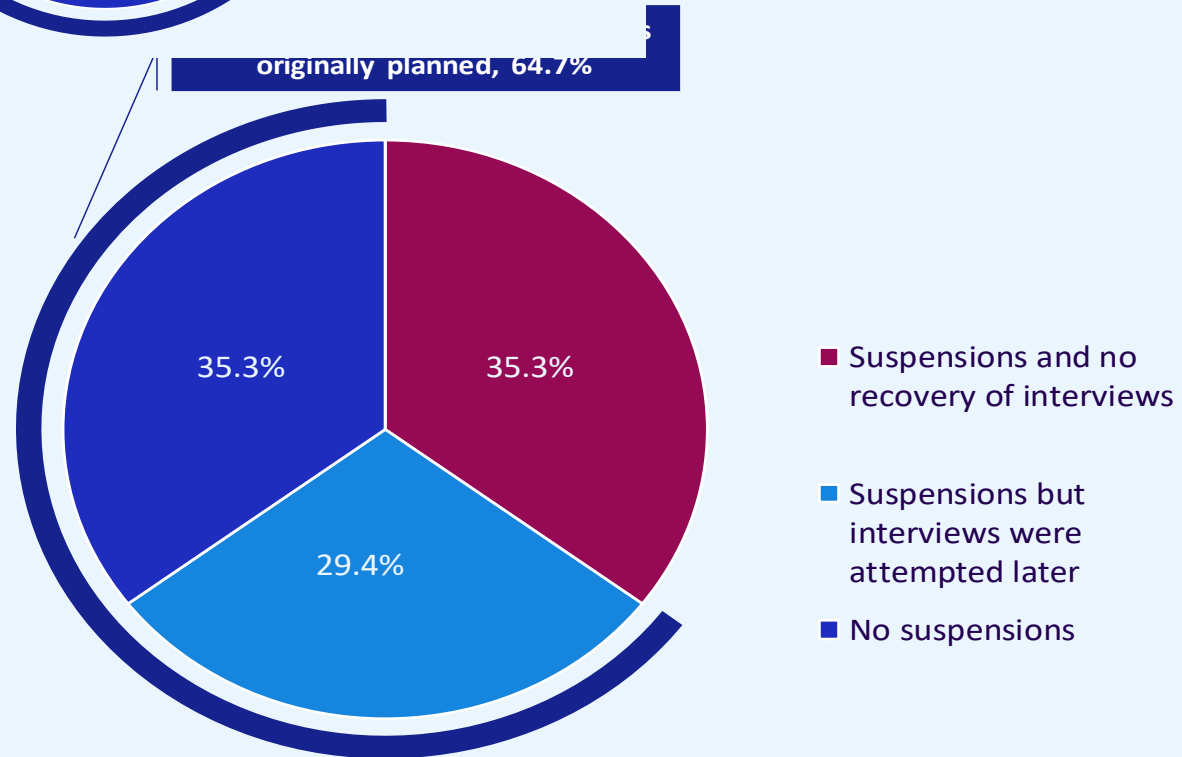
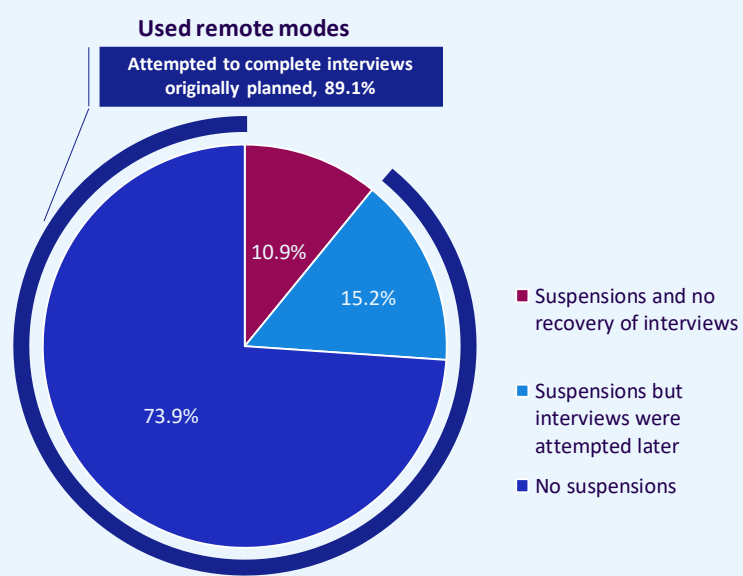


The ILO response

- 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.




linked to existing mode and data ncy



► 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

 International
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ILO technical note

► **COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection**

29 / April / 2020

Guidance to data producers to maintain labour force survey data collection

Key points

- COVID-19 is impacting the collection of labour data in various ways.
- Data compilers across many countries are attempting to deal with the impacts and maintain the flow of data. However, breaks in series or disruption in data availability cannot be ruled out.
- The typical impact is the need to suspend collection of data through face-to-face interviews.
- The most common response is to attempt to move all face-to-face interviewing to telephone interviewing, with varying challenges by country.

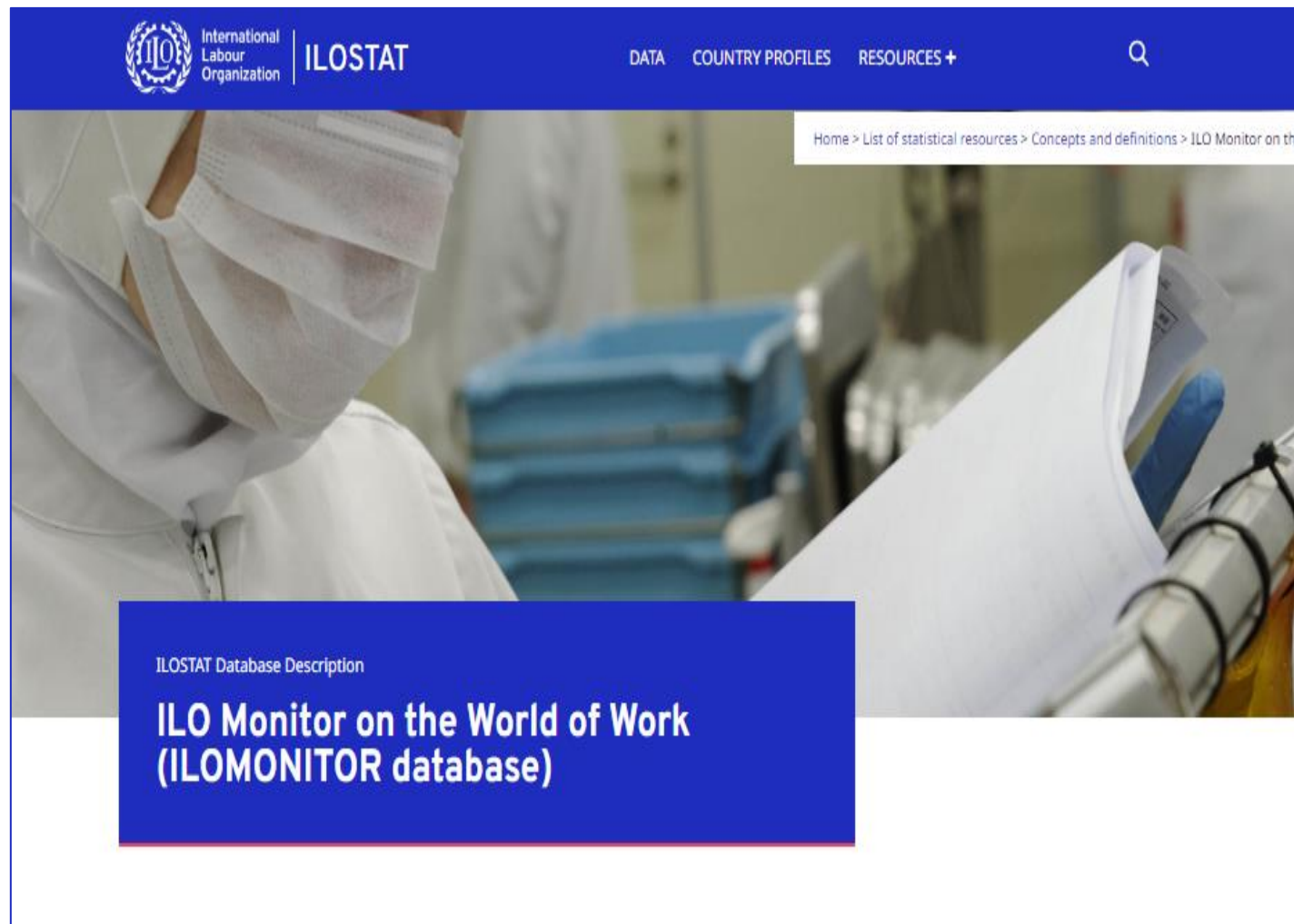
or those using paper and pencil interviewing. Those with panels are considering re-using panels as a way to maintain response levels.

- Technological and logistical challenges will be faced to enable telephone interviewing, linked to the resources and systems available.
- Questionnaire content may also need to be reviewed. Changes in content or any other changes, for example in sampling, need to be planned and implemented carefully.
- In many cases interviewing may have to be

► ilo.org/icsl

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.**




A small red triangle pointing to the right.

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



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COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection

Date: 30 / April / 2020

Essential labour force survey content and treatment of special groups (Rev. 1)

Key points

▶ Government lockdowns, social distancing and other related restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19 pose important challenges to labour force (LFS) data collection.

▶ Countries that are able to maintain LFS operations during this period should ensure that a selected but diverse set of labour market information be collected to support monitoring and analysis, and inform decision-making.

▶ Maintaining consistency in measurement, following the international standards, will support assessment of the changing labour market conditions and identification of groups particularly impacted by the pandemic.

▶ Changes in definitions and core criteria used to measure key headline indicators of the labour market, particularly employment and unemployment rates, should be avoided.

▶ Rather, clarifications to enable ongoing measurement may be introduced as recommended to improve the perceived continued relevance of key LFS questions by respondents and to handle the uncertainty surrounding when government restrictions might be lifted.

▶ Countries that need to limit the content of their LFS will find guidance on the priority topics to retain (see box 1). The topics highlighted will support aggregate monitoring and to identify groups particularly impacted. This information, however, is not sufficient to attribute changes to the pandemic. Minimal guidance is provided on how to add few questions to link different outcomes to the COVID-19 crisis.

▶ As conditions are changing rapidly, LFS data collection items and clarifications to enable consistent treatment of special cases should be assessed regularly, with a view to establish their continued relevance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented set of measures by countries to contain its spread and reduce the loss of human life. Social distancing and general lockdowns are becoming a part of everyday life in many countries with massive ramifications for labour markets and people's livelihoods. At a time when governments begin to put in place plans to stabilize the economy and support livelihoods, essential household surveys needed to monitor labour markets and inform decision-making are also being severely impacted.

The types of response from national statistical offices (NSOs) vary substantially, ranging from reducing survey content to maintain response rates, increasing content to better understand impacts or not changing content but

needing to maintain operations as is, while clarifying to interviewers how to record the different impacts of COVID-19 they will encounter, something which may be ambiguous given the unprecedented nature of the situation.

This note provides guidance for NSOs currently able to maintain labour force survey (LFS) operations on how to apply the latest international standards to maintain a core set of labour force statistics for monitoring in a context of government lockdowns and widespread uncertainty. In particular, it highlights the range of topics to prioritize and provides guidance on the treatment of special cases becoming more prevalent, such as job absences of uncertain duration, business closures, and overall reduced job search activity.

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



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COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection

Date: 28 / April / 2020

Consumer Prices Indexes

The COVID-19 crisis is affecting data collection activities of national statistical offices (NSOs) around the world, including for consumer price indexes (CPI).

1. Data collection in the context of COVID-1

As the pandemic continues to spread, countries struggle to collect sufficient data on consumer prices, especially for goods and services normally collected by personal visits to outlets. As with labour force surveys, countries around the world are testing different solutions to these new challenges.

Restrictions on movement led to a suspension of all personal data collection activities in most affected countries. In some cases, collection continues but is limited to price collection from outlets and markets close to price collectors' homes and only for selected products in the CPI basket. In the absence of personal data collection, many countries are increasingly using other modes of data collection, such as mailed questionnaires, telephone enquiries, web data collection, and administrative data. However, switching modes is challenging and not guaranteed to achieve the same level of coverage for a variety of reasons including:

- ▶ The complete closure of some outlets
- ▶ Low level of coverage of websites or incomplete pricing information online
- ▶ Lack of technology/internet access to allow price collectors to capture and return prices through new modes

These factors may affect the quality and timeliness of the index.

The use of scanner and internet data is not directly affected by the pandemic and provides an opportunity. However, it is not widely used by countries, and only as part of a multi-mode data collection approach,

alongside personal data collection. It will not offer a quick or complete solution to current disruptions.

To face these challenges and maintain some continuity in the CPI, NSOs should make every effort to collect a sufficient number of prices, by using all available modes of data collection, at least for the most representative or the most important products.

2. Imputation

Using imputations may be required given potentially large gaps in the available prices. Along with efforts to maximise the number of prices collected, sound imputation methods can allow the CPI series to be continued with reasonable comparability over time.

The [Resolution concerning consumer price indices](#) adopted by 17th ICLS provide some guidance concerning the treatment of missing prices. The [Consumer Price Index Manual: Concepts and Methods](#), endorsed by the 51st session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020, provides detailed guidance on how to treat temporary missing price observations, and describes various procedures for imputations, including (see figure 1 below):

- ▶ Overall mean imputation: Imputing the missing price by the average price change for the prices that are available in the elementary aggregate. This method provides the same result as simply dropping the variety that is missing from both periods from the calculation.
- ▶ Targeted mean imputation: Imputing the missing price by the price change of an elementary aggregate or an aggregate of similar varieties that is, varieties expected to have similar short-term price changes.
- ▶ Carrying forward the last observed price.

Omitting the variety for which the price is missing is not recommended.

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

COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection

5 / June / 2020

Defining and measuring remote work, telework, work at home and home-based work


Key points

- ▶ Working from a distance and working at home are not new phenomena, but the relevance of measuring them has increased, not least due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- ▶ One of the responses to the pandemic has been a massive increase in the number of people working from home. This change might have a longer-term impact on a number of different aspects, including how people organize their work and where the work is performed.
- ▶ The different concepts of remote work, teleworking, working at home and home-based work are all concepts related to these issues.
- ▶ Currently there is a lack of statistical standards defining these different concepts and countries are using slightly different and sometimes overlapping definitions, and different terms are being used interchangeably.
- ▶ The objective of this note is to provide recommendations for how the four different concepts of "remote work", "telework", "work at home" and "home-based work" should be understood in terms of statistics, how they relate to each other, how they can be combined and how they can be measured in a household survey.
- ▶ The methodology proposed includes a high degree of flexibility, which enables countries to measure the specific categories of interest, depending on the national need and context.
- ▶ This will allow the measurement of the prevalence of these phenomena, the frequency and intensity with which workers work at home, telework or are working remotely, as well as the development of these phenomena over time.
- ▶ The statistical identification of the four different concepts also creates the possibility to further explore the situation of workers with these different types of working arrangements.




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,



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COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection

22 / May / 2020

Capturing impacts on employment and unpaid work using Rapid Surveys

Key points

▶ Measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak have disrupted labour force data collection throughout the world. For many middle and lower income countries, lockdown measures have led to LFS operations being halted or altogether postponed.

▶ Without LFS, lack of data on the economic activities of households and the working situation of people during the COVID-19 outbreak can severely affect the formulation and targeting of programmes and policies aimed to help those in most need.



▶ During this period, rapid surveys conducted by telephone or web can be an alternative tool to generate vital information for short-term planning, especially where official LFS have been severely disrupted or halted.

▶ This note provides alternative modules covering essential information on paid and unpaid working activities, at the household or person level to support data collection during the COVID-19 outbreak, suitable for inclusion in multi-topic rapid telephone or web surveys.

▶ Rapid surveys, however, can face important limitations in coverage and representation. In particular, telephone and web surveys may exclude groups most vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, including persons with low education, informal workers, older age persons, migrant workers, persons in rural areas.

▶ These limitations should be assessed and good practices to reduce bias implemented to the extent possible. Likewise, data reports should include clear information on groups included and excluded from the rapid survey and other important methodological information.

▶ For these reasons, rapid surveys should not be used as a replacement for LFS to produce estimates of key labour market indicators, such as employment and unemployment rates, for monitoring purposes.

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

Countries ISWGHS members are supporting to measure the impact of COVID-19

Click a country to see more details



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Select one region: (All) Number of members working within the country: 1 to 6

Search by Agency: ILO

Country (Original)	Agency provided information	Name of the survey	Objective of the survey	Status (Tentative, In preparation, ..)	Focal point for the survey impl..	Focal point email	Lead survey implementation on e..	Partners of the survey	Sample frame (from a recent pr..)	Sample size (individuals)
		Take Home R...	Assess the n...	Planning / In...	Dechen Zan...	Available up...	All program...	WFP, Minist...		10000
		U-Report on ...	To understa...	Planning / In...	Sonam Wan...	Available up...	ADAP, PME	NA		50000
	World Bank	Regional sur...	Implementat...	Implementat...	Yeon Soo Ki...	ykim8@worl...	World Bank		RDD	1000
Bolivia (Plurinational)	FAO	Agricultural ...		Final draft			FAO	MDRyT and ...		
		Food Insecu...		Completed	Carlo Caffieri	Carlo.Caffieri@FAO	FAO	National r...		

Time Use Instrument during Crises

WHAT IS THE CRISIS CONTEXT?

Unexpected occurrences. Crises affect women and men differently. The statistical community needs to collect high quality data in crises.

Why Time Use Instrument during Crises?

Goal: Timely availability of data during crises response to the resulting challenges traditional method of data collection.

What does the instrument consist of?

40 QUESTIONS

On a large number of activities including

UNEPCE

UN WOMEN

Guidance on Measuring the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Women and Men

How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective

How Covid-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective

How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective Volume II

How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective Volume III

CCSA

April 30, 2020 September 30, 2020 March 1, 2021

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



Interest in volunteering reached new heights in March and April 2020

By Vladimir Ganta / December 4, 2020 / COVID-19, unpaid work, volunteer work.



Stats Café series: Rapid assessment surveys on the impact of COVID-19

This third session of the Stats Café, organized by ESCAP, ILO and UNICEF, was aimed at exchanging experience and lessons from surveys, of both households and businesses, on the impact of COVID-19.



ONLINE LABOUR MARKET

COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR PRODUCERS AND USERS OF LABOUR STATISTICS

15 FEBRUARY – 12 MARCH 2021
3 WEEKS, 25 HRS

Information Note



Fallout of COVID-19: Working moms are being squeezed out of the labour force

By ILO and UN Women / November 27, 2020 / COVID-19, inactivity, labour force, women

A workable balance is what parents are desperately trying to find in these uncertain times. Even in "normal" times, the balance between work and family has not been an easy one to achieve. The challenge is not new, especially for women. But the pandemic is shining a stadium size light to the problem, can it also shine light on the solution?

► 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**

