

Coping Strategies Index (CSI) tool revision

Libya | February 2021

Introduction to the tool

The [consumption-based coping strategies index \(CSI\)](#) is a common food security tool developed by the World Food Program (WFP) and CARE International. It is a tool commonly used for measuring food security in humanitarian contexts. As opposed to tools based on consumption or caloric intake, the CSI assesses the experience of food insecurity. The tool consists of coping strategies that households use when they do not have food or money to buy food. These types of behaviours are closely related to culture. Therefore, it is important that CSI tools are tailored to the context in which they are used. The strategies, as well as their assigned severity, need to reflect the customs and perceptions of the population of interest. The CSI tool had never been revised for the Libyan context, resulting in calls from food security actors for a more appropriate tool for the unique and complex Libyan context. REACH, in close coordination with the Food Security Sector (FSS) in Libya has conducted an assessment to create a CSI tool appropriate for the Libyan population. REACH is a programme of ACTED. It strengthens evidence-based decision-making by humanitarian actors through efficient data collection; management; and analysis

According to the 2020 MSNA, 52% of households used food-based coping strategies in the 7 days prior to data collection

Methodology

Typically, the CSI is revised using two rounds of focus group discussions (FGDs). However, due to movement restrictions and public health concerns related to COVID-19, this methodology was adapted. The first round of data collection took place in June 2020. FSS partners at all levels were asked to identify strategies that they considered relevant for the Libyan context from a preexisting master list. These consultations were selected for this first phase because FSS partners tend to target and thus have some knowledge about the most vulnerable groups, which may have been easily missed in phase two. The result of this first phase was a list of coping strategies.

Phase two took place in November and December 2020, and consisted of six FGDs with households that had reported using coping strategies during the survey conducted as part of the [Multi-Sector Needs Assessment \(MSNA\)](#). The FGDs took place online, using REACH's online FGD platform. Participants were asked to design a list of coping strategies, and assign severity weights based on the list from phase 1. The FGDs were stratified on region and displacement status, with the Eastern and Western participants merged for logistical reasons. The online platform used was developed by REACH to conduct online FGDs for this assessment as well as other assessments in the future. For more information on the methodology and the platform, see Annex 15 in the MSNA report.

Revised CSI tool for the Libyan context

Coping strategy	Weight
Borrow or receive food from friends or relatives	4
Go whole days without eating	4
Limit portion sizes for all household members	3
Send children to eat elsewhere	3
Send women and/or children to work for food	3
Limit portion sizes and meals for adults in order for small children to eat	2
Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods	2
Purchase food on credit	1
Reduce the number of meals eaten in a day for all household members	1
Use bank checks to purchase food	1

Key findings

In addition to the tool presented above, there are several other key findings from the CSI revision assessment. Part of the analysis was geared towards identifying key differences between regions and displacement status. More extreme strategies such as going whole days without eating were never selected in the East and West, but they were in the South. Additionally, relying on friends and family was seen as a particularly severe strategy in the East and West. These differing perceptions of severity reflect the different food security profiles in these regions. MSNA data also shows more use of coping strategies in the South (77%), compared to East (69%) and West (40%). Despite these regional differences, few systematic differences were found. In four out of six groups, an additional strategy was suggested, namely using bank checks to purchase food. It has been added to the final tool. The strategy was not judged as very severe, despite the significant interest rates that were reported.

“Most of the region’s residents depend on providing their daily needs [...] with certified bank bills because there is no liquidity in public banks”

- Male IDP from Ubari

Relation to rCSI

The reduced CSI (rCSI) is a tool commonly used for comparing food insecurity across regions and contexts. It consists of five coping strategies and associated weights. All five strategies are included in this context-appropriate tool; they are marked in grey in the table above. Accordingly, data for both tools can be collected at the same time.

How to use the tool

The tool in this factsheet is to be used in household surveys on food security in Libya. Each household is asked how many days in the last seven days they had to engage in each coping strategy due to a lack of food or money to buy food. The frequency is multiplied by the weight, and then the score per strategy is summed to create the overall household score.

Note on non-Libyans

FGDs with migrants and refugees in Libya were also attempted, yet the online modality proved inappropriate for this group due to connectivity issues. It is recommended that a separate exercise is conducted to revise the tool for migrants and refugees in Libya. The presented tool applies to the Libyan population only.



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