FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

Outcome indicator

Indicator Phrasing

INDICATOR PHRASING: % of households with an acceptable Food Consumption Score

Français: to be added later

What is its purpose?

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a more complex indicator of a household's food security status, as it considers not only dietary diversity and food frequency but also the relative nutritional importance of different food groups. Its disadvantage is the use of a less precise, 7 day long recall period.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Determine the indicator's value by using the following methodology:

1) Conduct individual interviews with a representative sample of the target household representatives (ideally people responsible for preparing meals) assessing for how many days in the past 7 days the household has eaten any of the **16 pre-defined types of food**. This is done by asking: "I would like to ask you about all the different foods that your household members have eaten in the last 7 days. During this period, for how many days in the past 7 days has your household eaten ... [name gradually all the 16 types of foods listed in WFP's FCS guidelines - access below].

2) Sum up all the **consumption frequencies** of the types of foods belonging to the same food groups (e.g. maize and rice belong to the same food group; however, people are asked separately about how many days they ate maize / rice for). There is a total of 9 groups, as listed in WFP's FCS guidelines. Recode the frequency value of each food group scoring more than 7 as 7 (e.g. if rice was consumed for 6 days and maize for 5 days (6 + 5 = 11), recode 11 as 7).

3) To create new **weighted food group scores**, multiply the value obtained for each food group by its **"importance weight"** specified in WFP's FCS guidelines.

4) By summing up the weighed food group scores, you **calculate the Food Consumption Score** (FCS) of each respondent.

5) According to the FCS's value, indicate the percentage of households with "poor" FCS (0-21 scores), "borderline" FCS (21.5 - 35 scores) and "acceptable" FCS (35.5 scores and above). However, these **thresholds are not valid in all contexts** - you might need to modify them based on the dietary patterns of the target population – read carefully WFP's Guidance Sheet provided below and consult the Food Security Cluster in your country of operation.

6) To calculate the **percentage of households with "acceptable" FCS**, divide the number of households with FCS higher or equal to 35.5 scores by the total number of surveyed households. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to percentages.

Disaggregate by

Disaggregate the data by the households' wealth category and location.

Important Comments

1) FCS is a good **indicator of a household's food security**; however, it does not help with understanding the quality of diets consumed by a specific group of household members, such as children 6 - 59 months of age.

2) FCS is prone to seasonal variations. Do your best to **collect baseline and endline data at the same time of year**; otherwise, it is very likely that they will not be comparable (i.e. providing largely useless data).

3) Make sure you **do not collect data during fasting periods**, such as pre-Easter time or Ramadan.