

Household Economic Security (HES)

Analytical Overview



The updated HES Guidelines include new sections on data collection and analysis that build on the original 2012 version. This revision has been led by Jackie Frize and Andra Gulei, with input from other British Red Cross Advisers and Livelihoods Register members and contributions from the IFRC Livelihoods Resource Centre. British Red Cross takes sole responsibility for any errors or oversights in these guidelines.

British Red Cross thanks the Croix-Rouge Nigérienne for the use of photos taken during a HES assessment in 2017.

HES Analytical Overview

The HES Analytical Overview gives you a summary of what HES seeks to understand (figure 1), how this is done and the key questions that drive the process.

Figure 1. HES components – what HES seeks to understand in a given context



These components help identify what information is needed. Users are guided on how to collect the information in a 4 Step process described in detail. A set of analytical questions are provided to help drive the analysis from the start when you are thinking of carrying out a HES assessment and analysis. Looking at the analytical questions is part of Step 1 in the HES methodology. It is the starting point for determining your information needs and how these will help with decision-making.

Table 1: HES Analytical Overview

WHAT	HOW	KEY QUESTIONS
Understand the operational context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify economic, political, social and demographic information of the area - Identify the historical vulnerability context, shocks and trends - Identify the humanitarian context including, Red Cross Red Crescent presence in the area 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the demographic characteristics of the population? 2. What are the main geographical characteristics of the area? 3. What are the main economic activities and trends? 4. What is the administrative and political structure? 5. What is the historical profile of the area in terms of conflicts, disasters and trends? 6. What humanitarian actors are present? 7. What is the role of the RCRC and their activities?
Understand livelihoods, labour market, food production systems and seasonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the geographical livelihood zones distribution - Identify the main labour market systems - Identify the main food production systems and seasonality - Identify socio-economic groups - Identify how households meet their food requirements - Identify household income sources - Identify changes in food and income sources and seasonality - Identify the main food market systems to help understand availability and access to food in time and space 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the livelihood activities in the area? 2. What is the livelihood breakdown of the population? 3. What are the most common food sources for each socio-economic group? 4. What is the impact of seasonal variation in food sources for the households for each socio-economic group? 5. What are most common income sources for each socio-economic group? 6. What is the seasonal impact on income sources for each socio-economic group? 7. What are the socio-economic/wealth criteria for each livelihood? 8. What is the socio-economic/wealth breakdown of the population?

WHAT	HOW	KEY QUESTIONS
<p>Understand household consumption patterns, priority needs and consumer price trends for key household and livelihood items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify household expenditures in different seasons - Identify the commodities that are most likely to be in a household consumption and expenditure basket - Identify the assets required to be purchased for different livelihood activities - Identify the cost of household consumption and food baskets in different seasons - Identify the cost of livelihoods assets required - Identify the key food and basic needs items that help assess purchasing power - Identify the key productive assets that help assess livelihood related purchasing power 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are household expenditures in normal times for each socio-economic group? 2. What are typical household consumption baskets for each socio-economic group? And food basket? 3. What are typical productive assets purchased for each socio-economic group? 4. What are the normal prices trends for key household food, non-food and services in a year? 5. Do prices follow a seasonal pattern? How do household expenses change in different seasons? 6. What are household's priority needs in different seasons? 7. What food and productive items sourced from the market would be a good indicator for household purchasing power? 8. What are the key household items to monitor?
<p>Understand the main food and financial services market systems, functionality and risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the main food market systems to help understand availability and access to food in time and space - Identify the main financial service market systems to understand access to and use of formal and informal financial services - Identify markets functionality during the different seasons - Identify market related risks to supply and demand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the critical market systems? 2. How are they structured? 3. How do they behave in different seasons over time? 4. How are traders behaving? (supply) 5. How are households behaving? (demand) 6. What are the main demand and supply risks identified for each critical market?
<p>Understand household coping strategies and social safety nets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the most commonly used livelihood coping strategies per each socio-economic group - Identify the severity of the coping strategies - Identify the severity of purchasing on credit or accruing debt on household economic security - Identify social protection and safety nets the different livelihood groups rely on, support provided and access conditions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the most commonly used coping strategies for each livelihood group linked to household food consumption, expenditure, income sources and asset stripping? 2. What are the most severe coping strategies for each livelihood group used in times of crisis? 3. What is the significance of credit and debt on the household economy and future coping capacity? 4. What formal social protection schemes are in place supported by the government (national, regional, local)? 5. What other social assistance programmes are implemented by humanitarian/development organisations? 6. For each social protection scheme: what is the support provided and the conditions to access? How reliable are these safety nets? 7. What are the safety nets most commonly used by each of the socio-economic groups?

WHAT	HOW	KEY QUESTIONS
<p>Define Household Economic Security thresholds and support needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define the characteristics of each socio-economic group - Define the food security status of each socio-economic group - Define the HES thresholds: survival, basic needs and livelihoods protection - Define the basic needs threshold - Identify the gap on households capacity to meet the thresholds for each socio-economic group - Identify the scale, location and target groups requiring support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the socio-economic breakdown under each livelihood group? 2. What is the survival threshold for the area? 3. What are the basic needs for the HH in the area? How much is the cost to meet basic needs? 4. What is the livelihoods protection threshold for the different livelihoods groups? 5. What is the food security status of the households? 6. What is the gap for each socio-economic groups regarding thresholds and their capacity to meet the needs? 7. Do livelihoods need supporting? If so, in what way, and for how long? 8. Who are most in need of assistance? What are the specific needs of different groups? 9. What is the severity of needs? 10. When will the situation change? (taking into account seasonal factors and coping strategies) 11. Are there any additional on-going or future risks that may threaten lives and livelihoods?
<p>Define the needs of support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the scale, location and target groups requiring support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the food security status of the households? 2. Are basic needs for food and other essential items and services being adequately met? 3. Do livelihoods need supporting? If so, in what way, and for how long? 4. How effective are sustainable and current coping strategies? Are they damaging to livelihoods, health or dignity (i.e. socially/morally acceptable)? 5. Who are the most in need of assistance? What are the specific needs of different groups? 6. What is the severity of needs? 7. When will the situation change? (taking into account seasonal factors and coping strategies) 8. Are there any additional on-going future risks that may threaten lives and livelihoods?

