

## **Research outline**

### **Rapid qualitative assessment of the impacts of the economic crisis in Turkey**

#### **Background**

The Social Development Department (SDV) of the World Bank and UNICEF are supporting a number of rapid assessments of the impacts of the economic downturn. These exercises are modest in nature and rely on qualitative research techniques to gather information that can be of use to those engaging in crisis response work. In Turkey, SDV is working with the Social Development team in ECA and the HD team in the Turkey country team to implement a small assessment that can complement an initiative to gather quantitative data on crisis impacts.

This outline sets out the proposed scope of work.

#### **Objectives and scope of work**

The objective of this work is to gather qualitative information that will supplement quantitative data gathered through a (roughly) representative household survey on the impacts of the crisis. The scope of work has been designed with a view to providing information on topics and issues that are difficult to capture through quantitative work. It is expected that the research will provide insights into the following questions:

- Who is being affected and through which channels? How are impacts different for different groups and individuals? How are impacts distributed within the household, as well as between households? Are there particular impacts on women or children?
- How are people responding to the labour market shocks? Which formal and informal institutions are they turning to for help?
- How useful, functional and how well-targeted are these sources of assistance and where are the gaps?
- Are coping strategies that are being adopted by those affected likely to cause further harm in the longer term and how might this be prevented?

This modest assessment will be carried out in two districts of Istanbul (Umraniye and Bagcilar) that have populations engaged in the low-wage informal sector. The districts have been chosen purposively to include poorer areas of town with immigration and settlement patterns which make the analysis of coping strategies important. Within these areas, the focus group discussions will bring together a representative cross-section of the local population. The inclusion of two districts will also allow the team to capture a diversity of social assistance systems in an environment where these systems are fairly decentralised.

There will be six focus group discussions in each of the districts, covering approximately 70 people in total. These focus groups will include separate groups with women, men and young people. Guidelines for the focus group discussions are included in annex 1. In

addition, in both districts the research team will meet and conduct interviews with local representatives who are able to describe general trends that are related to the slowdown in the economy and who have an understanding of social relations in the areas. These might include discussions with the local *muhtar*, representatives of local NGOs working in the district, health or education service providers, religious leaders and/or local businessmen.

The working hypothesis for this work is that the primary transmission channel for impacts of the economic downturn will be through a contraction in demand for labour and, in particular, those engaged in the low-wage informal sector of the labour market. The country team has proposed that the research have a dual emphasis on (a) sources of assistance and how they are accessed by vulnerable groups and (b) links between urban residents and rural communities, through remittances or return migration. The research will explore impacts within the household and at a community level.

It is possible that the World Bank will want to repeat this research exercise at a later date and the research will be organized and documented in a way that will allow easy return to the same communities and comparison of findings over time.

### **Activities**

The research team will carry out the following tasks.

- Working through the field team, identify locations for the research in two districts.
- Finalise a research plan that specifies the expected timeframes.
- Organise focus group discussions and interviews with community leaders/observers.
- Carry out the focus group discussions and interviews in the two districts.
- Compile a summary report of no more than 15 pages which covers the main findings of the research and follows agreed guidelines (Annex 2)

### **Outputs and timeline**

By 10 May:	research locations identified
By 15 May:	research plan complete
By 12 June:	fieldwork complete
By 20 June:	draft report complete

### **Disbursement schedule**

## **Annex 1. Guidance for Focus Group Discussions and Interviews**

### **1 Focus Groups**

In discussion with the WB, the research team will identify two research sites in which to carry out focus group discussions and interviews. The attached pages lay out the possible detailed questions that the research team could pursue. Some elements of the FGDs will be aided by some timeline or ranking exercises that the researchers are familiar with.

It has been agreed that there will be two focus groups discussions with each of men, women and young people in the two districts. As such it is expected that about 70 people will participate in the research. This research is particularly oriented towards documenting the experience of people who are engaged in low-wage work in the informal sector of the economy, since simulations suggest that this group is more vulnerable to labour market shocks. The team will ensure that this sample of 70 includes a cross section of the local population and that there is a balance of recent migrants and longer term residents.

It is expected that the focus group discussions will cover the following issues. The report will indicate the degree to which there was consensus (or debate) in the responses to these questions. In particular the report will note any obvious patterns in responses that indicate differences of viewpoints by gender, age, length of residence or other factors.

#### **Changes in the last six months**

The focus group discussion should begin with a discussion of the nature of changes over the past six months. This should allow the researchers to document perceptions of:

- Changes in the availability of work (ie hours or days worked) for different types of work
- Changes in wage rates (ie amount paid per hour)
- Changes in earnings
- Changes in the predictability and security of employment
- Changes in the level of competition for usual work
- Changes in working conditions
- Changes in the allocation of paid and unpaid labour within the household (whether some hh members are working less and others working more)
  
- What are the implications of these changes for consumption (list implications and rank)? Which family members feel these impacts most?
  
- Do participants have savings that can be used during temporary hardship?
  
- What impact does economic stress have on relations in the household? Have there been changes in the number of arguments that happen within (other) families?

- What are the main changes that have happened in the community in the last six months? Have there been changes in levels of crime? Or levels of mutual support?
- [for groups of youth] What alternatives exist for young people when they cannot find work?

It would also be useful if the facilitators could make use of timeline techniques to provide a comparison of the situation with the 2001 crisis.

### **Access to assistance and support**

There are a variety of established formal social assistance mechanisms in Turkey. Stakeholders in Turkey have also noted the importance of non-formal support provided through kinship and other networks. This part of the research will investigate how respondents access and manage different forms of support in response to economic stress and will cover the following questions:

- What kind of support can the respondents receive from existing support programs run by the municipality, the province or the central government level (e.g. conditional cash transfer, SHECK, yesil card)?
- Which are the most important (ranking exercise)? How does this compare to two years ago?
- Are there some people who cannot access this kind of help (and for what reason)? Within the household, which individual benefits most from this kind of support?
- What kind of support can the respondents receive from all non-government sources when they experience economic shocks (list all types that respondents mention)?
- Which are the most important (ranking exercise)? How does this compare to two years ago?
- Are there some people who cannot access this kind of help (and for what reason)? Within the household, which individual benefits most from this kind of support.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of government support and non-government support?

### **Links with rural areas**

Conversations with researchers in Turkey suggest a complicated picture with regards to the linkages between urban and rural areas. Some have suggested that those migrating most recently have the *weakest* links with the rural areas and that flows of support travel both from and to urban areas depending on circumstances. This discussion topic will discuss the functional linkages that respondents see with the rural sector. Topics will include:

- Is it a viable option for people to return to rural areas when it becomes hard to find work in Istanbul? Do participants know of people who have returned? Which people find it easier to return and which find it harder?
- Do participants **send** remittances to rural areas? If so, how have these remittances changed in level and regularity over time? How important are these remittances to receiving households in household budget decisions?
- Do participants **receive** remittance from rural areas? If so, how have these remittances changed in level and regularity over time? How important are these remittances to receiving households in household budget decisions?

## 2 Interviews

The research team will meet with members of the community who are able to provide an overview of recent changes that have occurred. The interviewees should be asked *to identify the main changes that have taken place over the last six months, with special reference to:*

- Levels of poverty and wellbeing
- The quality of social relations and mutual support within the community
- Levels of crime
- The number and intensity of conflicts within and between households
- The number of children who are not attending school on a regular basis and/or are working for money
- Risky behaviour by young people
- Levels of in- or out-migration (including, whether some households are having to move house because they cannot afford rent)
- Comparison of current situation and responses with the 2001 crisis.

## **Annex 2. Report outline.**

The research team should provide a report in English that is no longer than 15 pages, excluding annexes.

The proposed outline might be adjusted in discussion with the World Bank, but is likely to contain the following information.

- An introduction, that presents details about the research methodology. This would include information about numbers of groups, with participation broken down by gender, age and recent/non-recent migrants. It would include information about how the focus groups were conducted and the techniques used. It would also draw attention to any limitations of the research.
- Sections on the main findings from the research, with a focus on describing:
  - The changes that people have reported and the impacts of those changes on different groups. This should not be confined simply to economic change, but also describe the social dimensions of the impacts.
  - Responses at the household and community level to those changes.
  - The role and relevance of non-formal forms of assistance, how these are accessed and who might be covered.
  - The connections between the urban and rural sectors, including remittances in either direction, and other forms of mutual support.
- A concluding section that summarises both vulnerabilities and resilience to the impacts of the crisis for different groups of people.

In presentation of findings, the report should identify the level of consensus or debate in the discussion of different issues. Statements on findings should be backed up by evidence from the discussions.