

Ukraine | Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment, May 2020

Assessment Details

NRC carried out a rapid Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) assessment from May 5th-15th, 2020 to better understand the secondary impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations along the contact line in Eastern Ukraine. Data collected was compared to baseline data collected from the same households in Oct-Nov 2019.



381 households were interviewed in both urban and rural towns in Luhansk and Donetsk.

In April 2020, NRC also collected Market Monitoring data in Avdiivka, Ocheretyne, Starohnativka, Stepne and Zolote locations in collaboration with the Cash Working Group. The market analysis is focused on these areas which overlap locations within the LFS assessment. Price and availability data of essential food and hygiene items were collected from 14 retailers as well as 21 customers. This data was compared with data from a February market assessment to identify fluctuations in price and availability.

COVID-19 General Impact

76% of households assessed stated that they have been impacted by COVID-19

Households highlighted that they were primarily impacted by increased prices of food and hygiene items; additional transport costs; loss of household income; and crowded living conditions due to quarantine measures.

44% of households impacted by COVID-19 incurred additional transport costs

31% of households impacted by COVID-19 reported crowded living conditions

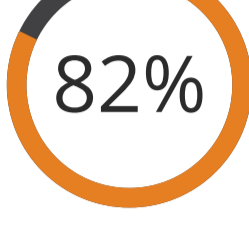
COVID-19 Impact on Livelihoods



38% households that were assessed showed a decrease in monthly income compared to baseline data. Within these households there was an average decrease of monthly income by approximately 34%

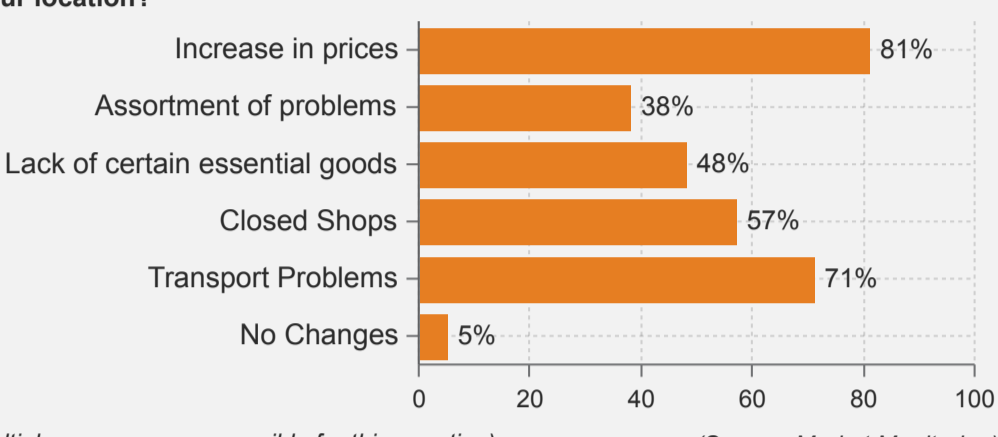
22% of households reported being impacted by loss of household income and 12% reported the primary income earner in their household lost their job in Ukraine due to COVID-19. In addition, 64% households showed a decrease in number of breadwinners in comparison to baseline data.

COVID-19 Impact on Prices



82% households impacted by COVID-19 were impacted by increased prices of food and hygiene items

Graph 1: Have there been any changes in availability/affordability of items in your location?



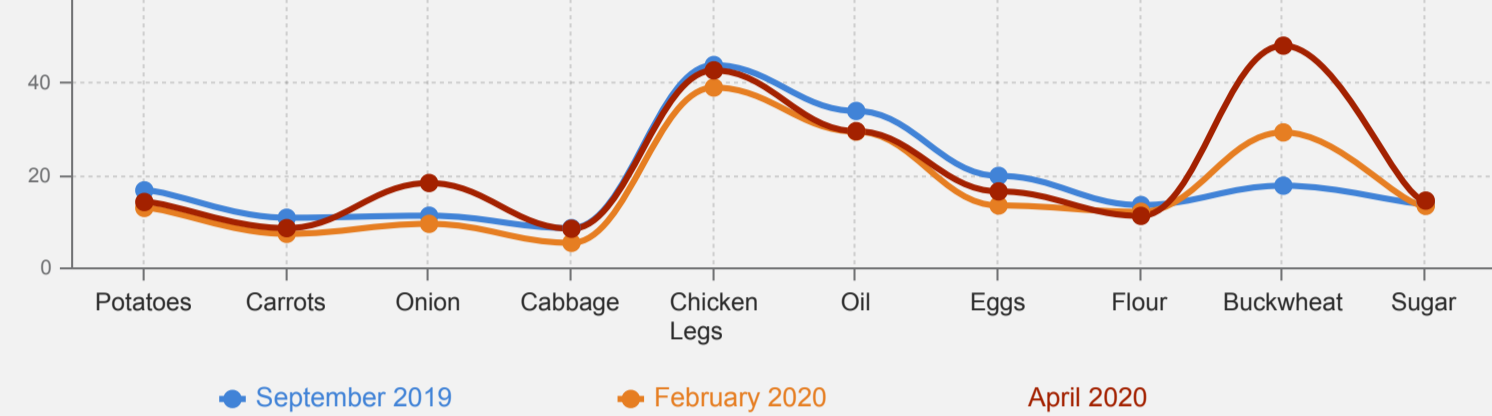
(Multiple answers were possible for this question)

(Source: Market Monitoring)

90% increase in prices of onions was reported in the semi-peripheral settlements

(Source: Market Monitoring)

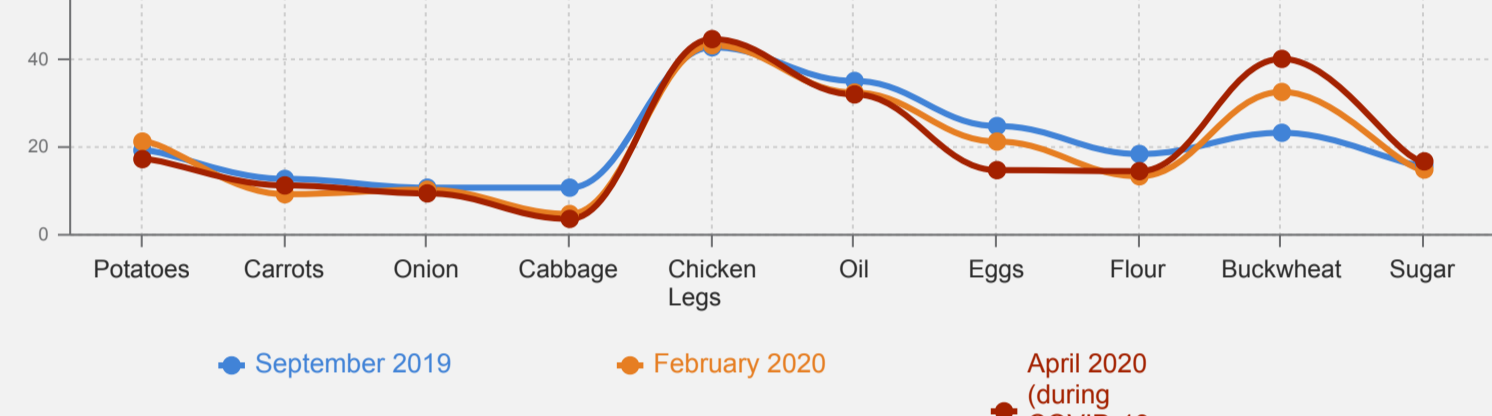
Graph 2: Average Prices (in UAH) of essential food items in semi-peripheral settlements



Semi-peripheral settlements are towns over 5 km farther from the contact line.

(Source: Market Monitoring)

Graph 3: Average Prices (in UAH) of essential food items in peripheral settlements



Peripheral settlements are towns within 5 km of the line of contact line.

(Source: Market Monitoring)

Data from the area specific market assessment shown in *Graph 2* and *Graph 3* highlights price increases for staple commodities. Specifically onion and buckwheat prices increased by 90% and 63% respectively in semi-periphery locations (>5 Kms from the contact line). Eggs and Sugar also saw a price increase of up to 20% in these areas. These increases are substantiated by a recent market analysis conducted by ATB Market Corporation (a large food production and distribution retailer in Ukraine). Their study found that COVID-19 quarantine measures and restrictions caused a significant increase in production costs for suppliers and consequently all operators of the Ukrainian retail market. As per ATB, prices rose by 35-128% for the borsch basket (i.e. potatoes, cabbage, onions and carrots).



28% increase in the price of the Borsch Basket (potatoes, cabbage, onions and carrots) in semi-periphery locations

(Source: Market Monitoring)

The depreciation of the Ukrainian Hryvnia also contributed to the change in prices. Price fluctuation is minimal in peripheral locations, which is worth noting and exploring. Further historical analysis is needed in addition to continuous monitoring of markets; however, given that multiple sources are highlighting acute inflation of prices, it will be important to adapt current interventions to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on localized markets in conflict affected communities.

COVID-19 Impact on Market Accessibility

29% of households assessed experienced some level of problems accessing food markets/stores.

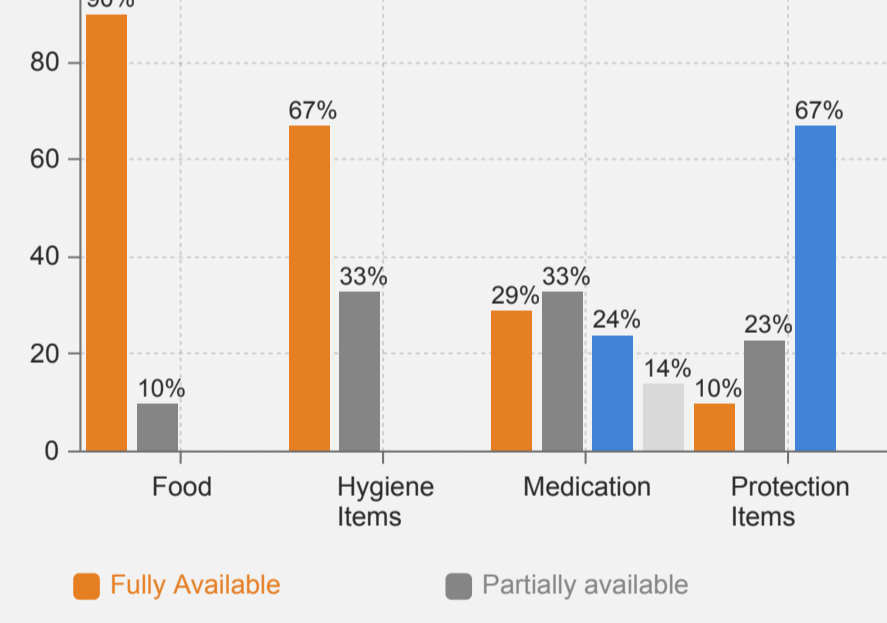
Market monitoring data collected from retailers indicated unavailability of Carrots, Onions, Cabbages, Eggs and Chicken legs in specific areas such as Avdiivka and Stepne (i.e., onions and cabbage). Although the market monitoring data collected from customers indicated 90% of those assessed found food items are fully available, there are issues with availability in specific areas, so localized assessments and appropriate responses remain relevant.

Access to Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves are limited in many locations (Not Available 67%). In addition, only 5 retailers were selling WASH items such as antiseptic and hand sanitizer. For interventions around improving access to these items in response to COVID-19 should be taken into account.



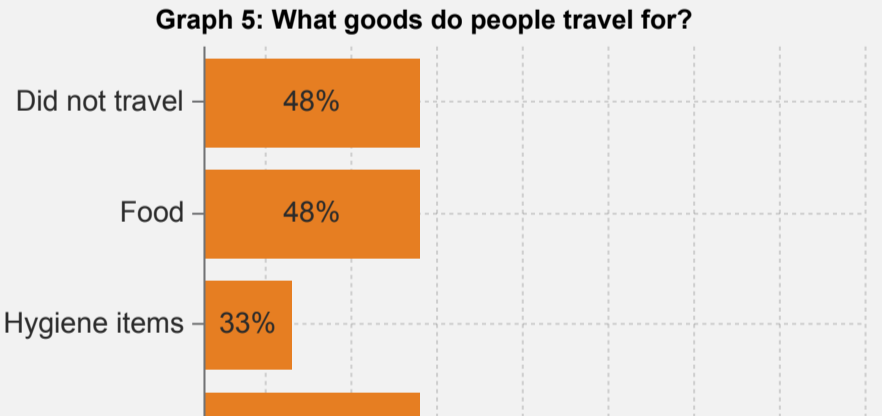
100% of those that travelled to purchase goods in other locations, did so to access cheaper prices

Graph 4: Please, describe the availability of goods to fully meet your basic needs at local markets in your location



(Source: Market Monitoring)

Graph 5: What goods do people travel for?



(Multiple answers were possible for this question)

(Source: Market Monitoring)

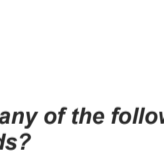
Household Coping Mechanisms

In the past 30 days, did anyone in your household have to engage in any of the following coping strategies to cope with a lack of resources to meet basic needs?

34% of households assessed spent savings in the last 30 days.



62% assessed reduced health expenditures in the last 30 days.



4% of households assessed sent their family members to eat/live with another family/friends.

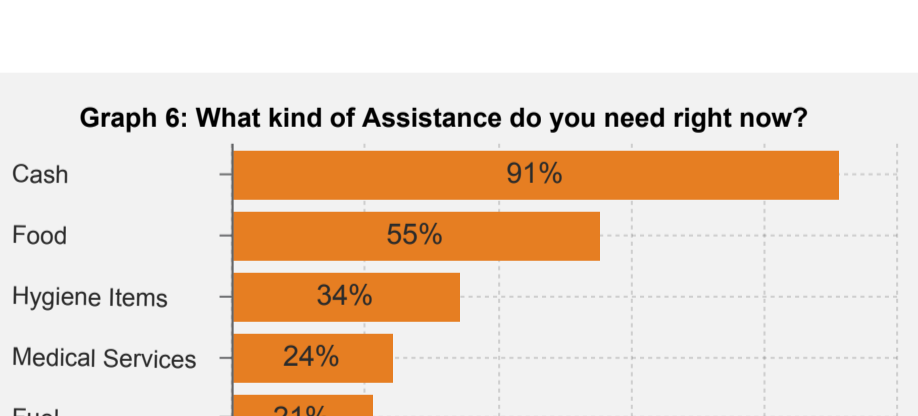
Additional CSI findings: 66% of households assessed reduced consumption of essential items; 58% reduced consumption of non-essential items; 24% delayed or skipped paying their rent and utility bills; and 20% reported they used degrading sources of income, illegal work or high risk jobs in the last 30 days.

Assistance Needed

93% preferred cash assistance, 6% preferred in kind assistance and 1% preferred vouchers.

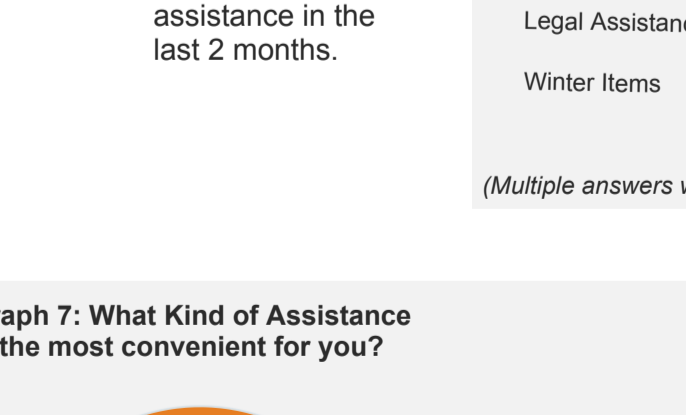
29% of the households assessed had received humanitarian assistance in the last 2 months.

Graph 6: What kind of Assistance do you need right now?

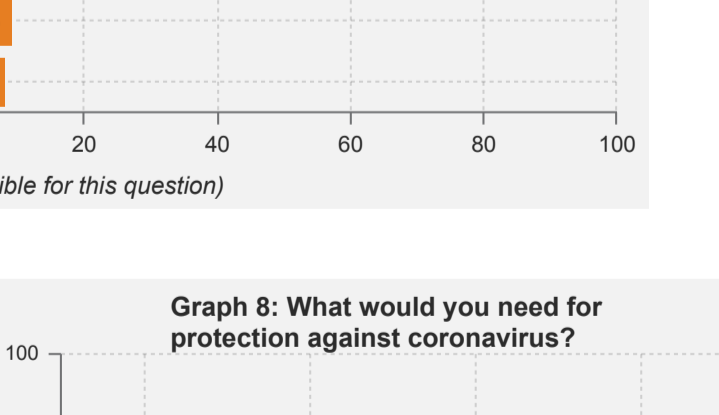


(Multiple answers were possible for this question)

Graph 7: What Kind of Assistance is the most convenient for you?



Graph 8: What would you need for protection against coronavirus?



(Multiple answers were possible for this question)

Out of the assessed population a small but significant percentage either remained or fell into the *poor* category of both FCS and CSI (39%, 15%). More concerning is the negative coping strategies used by households such as spending savings and reducing health expenditures. The analysis presented highlights that endemic vulnerabilities are being compounded by the significant economic impacts of COVID-19 and associated quarantine measures.

When considering a response approach, cash is clearly the preferred mechanism, and it appears, at least, in locations of analysis that markets are functioning and accessible. Cash value assistance may need to be temporarily adjusted in response to currency and pricing fluctuations as well as the additional transportation costs mentioned. In-kind support may be required for certain PPE if the market has not yet adapted.

Methodology and Limitations:

NRC used a convenience stratified sampling approach for this rapid assessment. The sampling frame consisted of 1,010 households that have been identified and registered by NRC in 2019/2020. These households were previously assessed at the time of registration (NRC CVA 2019/2020) and were assigned vulnerability scores. All households within the sampling frame fall within NRC's definition of *highly vulnerable*. Due to COVID-19 related limitations of movement and NRC's current policy of reduced contact with vulnerable populations, the FSL team found that utilizing this sampling frame was the best approach due to the high number of registered households and the comprehensive measures captured during the identification/registration process.

Graph 9: Characteristics of assessed households



(Some households fell under more than one category)

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