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COVID-19 webinar for UNSD-DFID countries

May 19, 2020

1. Introduction

This webinar is part of the **series of webinars** and workshops of the UNSD-DFID project on SDG Monitoring which now also covers COVID-19 data response.

After bilateral calls with many of you, we have identified that many of you are interested in and have questions related to the various aspects of **surveys in the context of COVID-19**.

Conducting surveys is a good opportunity to get a better idea of the situation – and showcasing the **importance of having an official statistical office which provides timely and reliable data** in situations as these.



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1. Introduction

Agenda for today:

- The role of surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Country experience: State of Palestine
- Telephone surveys and sampling
- Questionnaire design and data collection
- Discussion
- Conclusions and next steps



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1. Introduction - Speakers

- Mr. Richard Tonkin

UNSD-DFID project team member and former employee of ONS. Has worked with various aspects related to survey implementation.

- Dr. Ola Awad

Director general of the Palestine Bureau of Statistics which already has started implementing surveys in the context of COVID-19

- Ms. Haoyi Chen

Coordinator of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group of Household Surveys (ISWGHS)

- Ms. Vibeke O Nielsen

Coordinator of the UNSD-DFID project and experienced in providing trainings in questionnaire design and cognitive testing



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2. The role of surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in some unprecedented **challenges** for data collection by NSOs

- Face-to-face surveys not possible at all due to lockdowns
- Reduced response rates and potentially increased bias
- Complex conceptual issues

However, it also presents considerable **opportunities** to increase the use of statistics in decision making and raise the profile of NSOs



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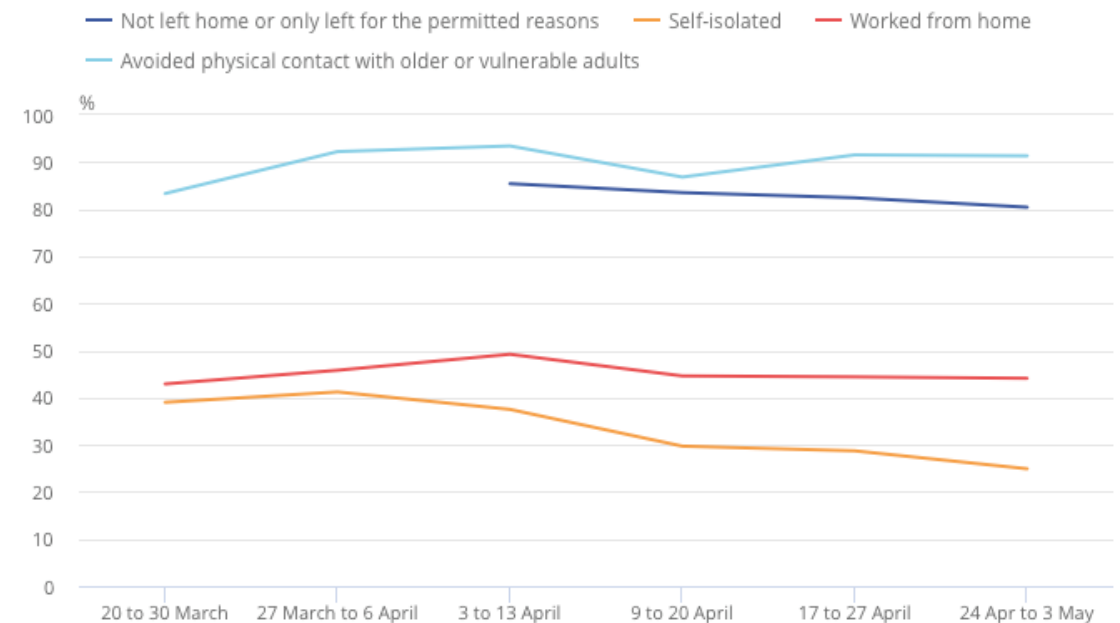
2. The role of surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic

The need for **trustworthy, timely** statistics that are disseminated in a **clear** and **transparent** way has never been greater.

Alongside admin data from health ministries there is a crucial role for **survey data** to understand the **social, economic** and **health impacts** of COVID-19.

How are people complying with official guidelines/rules?

Great Britain, between 20 to 30 March and 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey



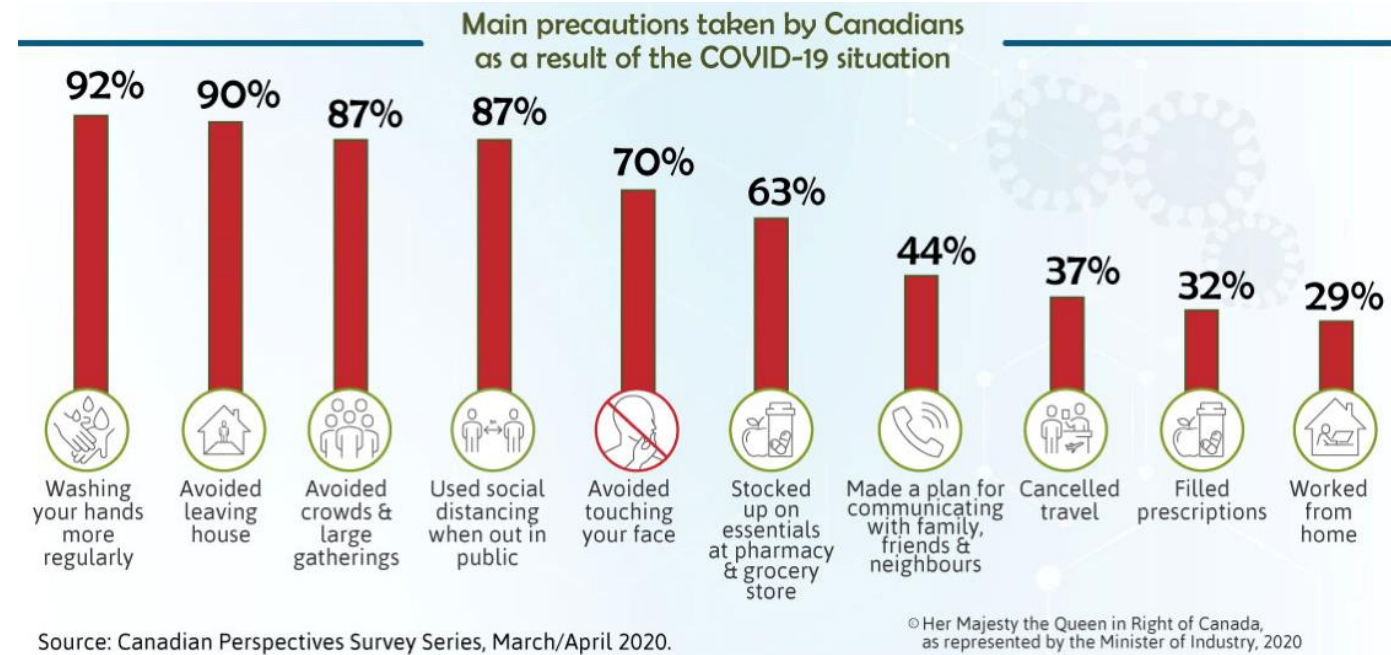
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Social Impacts

- Do people have access to education and learning opportunities? If relevant, what impacts are home schooling having?
- What concerns do people have around friends and family and COVID-19?
- Are people complying with social distancing measures?
- What's happening to personal well-being? What are the impacts on loneliness?
- What are the impacts on those with caring responsibilities?
- Do people have access to the services they need?
- Are grocery items and other essentials available?



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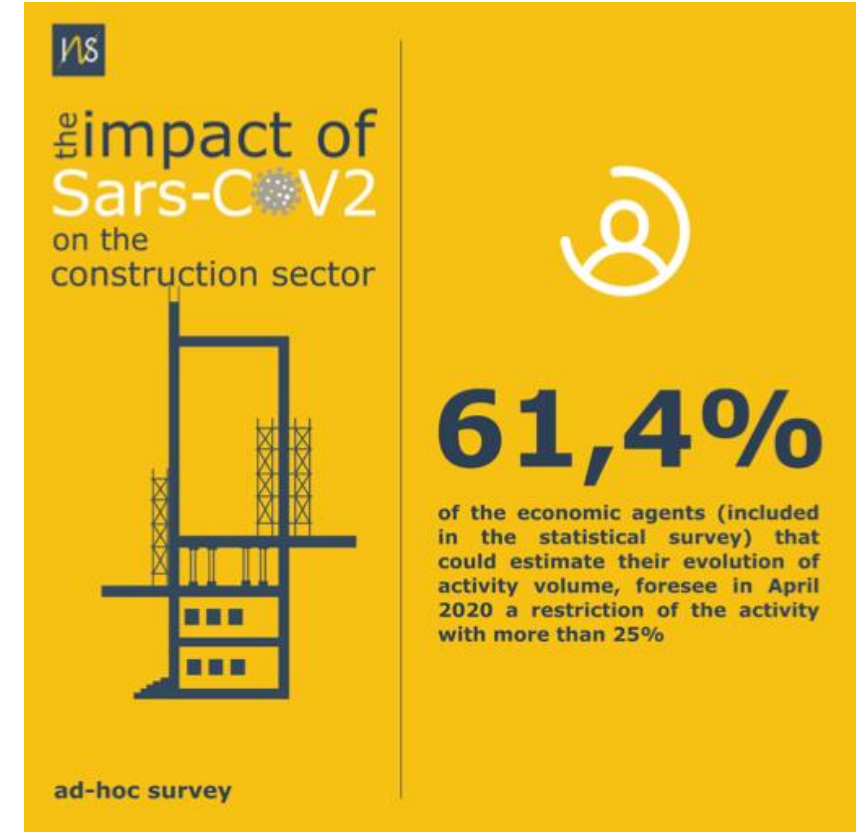
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Economic impacts

- How many people have lost their jobs or have reduced pay or hours?
- What are the impacts on household income? Are people able to sustain normal expenditures? Pay their bills? Have enough to eat?
- What proportion of people are able to work from home?
- How many businesses have ceased trading temporarily? In what sectors?
- Among those still trading, how have turnover and staffing been affected?
- How have prices been affected by the pandemic?



Source: National Institute of Statistics (INS), Romania



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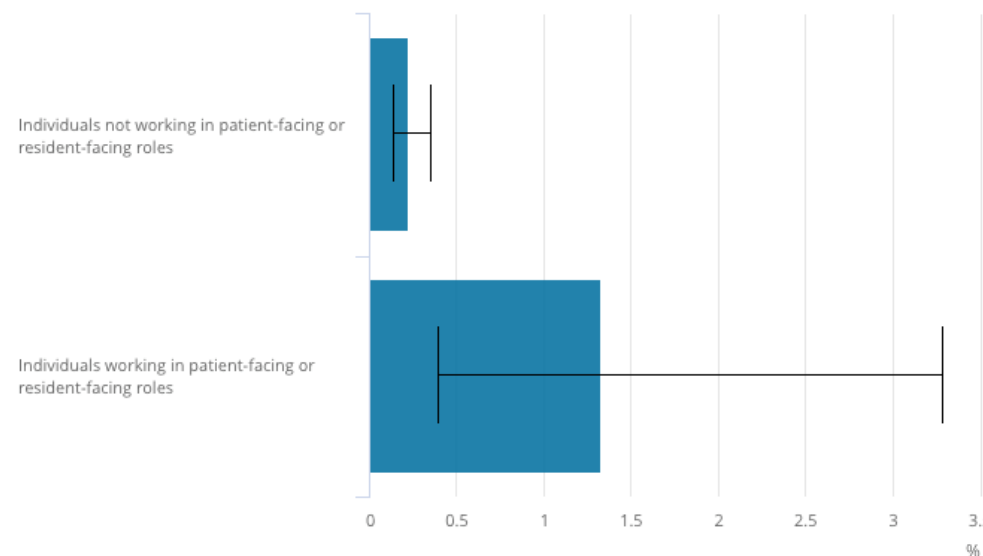


Health impacts

- Do people have access to medical services? Can they get the medication they need?
- Do people have access to soap and clean water?
- How many people:
 - Haven't contracted the virus?
 - Have the virus but are asymptomatic?
 - Have the virus but have not yet been tested?
 - Are suffering from COVID-19 related illness?
 - Have the virus and recovered?
 - Have recovered and then been reinfected?
 - Is an infected person likely to reinfect?

Figure 2: A higher percentage of individuals who report working in patient-facing roles in health or social care have COVID-19

Estimated percentage testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19), by health and social care workers and other individuals, England, 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey



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2. The role of surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic

To address these questions, there is a potential need for:

- Household surveys measuring socio-economic impacts
- Surveys on the business impact of COVID-19
- COVID-19 infection surveys

Depending on country circumstances, these may involve a combination of :

- New questions on existing surveys, potentially collected through new modes (telephone or web)
- Entirely new COVID-19 pulse surveys



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2. The role of surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic

UNSD-DFID project can support you in establishing these surveys & disseminating findings - e.g.

- Sharing best practice on telephone survey design or question development
- Supporting the development of user-friendly dashboards / data hubs

UNSD COVID-19 response page:

<https://covid-19-response.unstatshub.org>

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics • COVID-19 response

Home Ensuring continuity Working remotely Data solutions Open data Useful links Share experiences

This website provides a space for the global statistical community to share guidance, actions, tools and best practices to ensure the operational continuity of data programmes by National Statistical Offices, and to address issues of open and timely access to critical data needed by governments and all sectors of society to respond to the global COVID-19 crisis.

- Ensuring continuity**
Rapid adaptation of data collection, processing and dissemination methods to ensure continuity of key statistical programmes.
[Read more](#)
- Working remotely**
Guidance and possible approaches to address managerial and IT challenges for operational continuity during the emergency situation.
[Read more](#)
- Data solutions**
Guidance and possible approaches for the production of timely data to monitor the evolution and impacts of COVID-19.
[Read more](#)
- Open data**
Resources to support and encourage national statistical offices and other data producers to leverage and use open data.
[Read more](#)
- Useful links**
Initiatives and resources provided by agencies of the UN system and beyond, including the regional economic and social commissions and stakeholders from private sector, academia, and civil society.
[Read more](#)
- Share experiences**
Online webinars and twitter chats to share knowledge and experience on how the statistical system can respond to the COVID-19 emergency.
[Read more](#)

Carrying out a telephone survey under the impact of COVID-19 – What to consider

Apr 14, 2020

This article is also available in [Russian](#)

Under the current COVID-19 crisis, what can we learn from our past experience in collecting information through telephone interviews, when person-to-person interview is not possible? This note provides a few points for statistical organizations to consider when deciding whether to adopt such an approach.

From face-to-face interviews to telephone interviews and web-based self-reporting

Mar 24, 2020

This article is also available in [Russian](#)

In an effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, many governments are imposing severe restrictions on the mobility of their populations, disrupting field statistical data collection operations and threatening the ability of National Statistical Offices to deliver high-quality, timely and cost-effective statistical outputs.



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Other partners, such as UNICEF, WHO and World Bank also provide COVID-19 survey implementation support



3. Country Experience: State of Palestine

- **Dr. Ola Awad**

- President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)
- Former President of the International Association of Official Statistics (IAOS) 2015-2017



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COVID-19 IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC & ESTABLISHMENTS CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

Dr. Ola Awad
President of PCBS

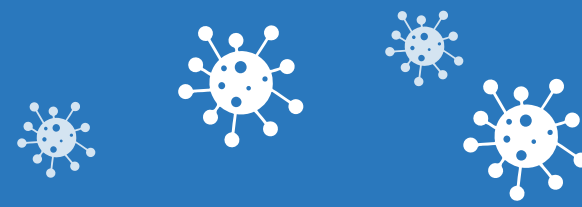
Palestine



Background



Background



**stay
home**

Emergency In Palestine

March 5th, 2020

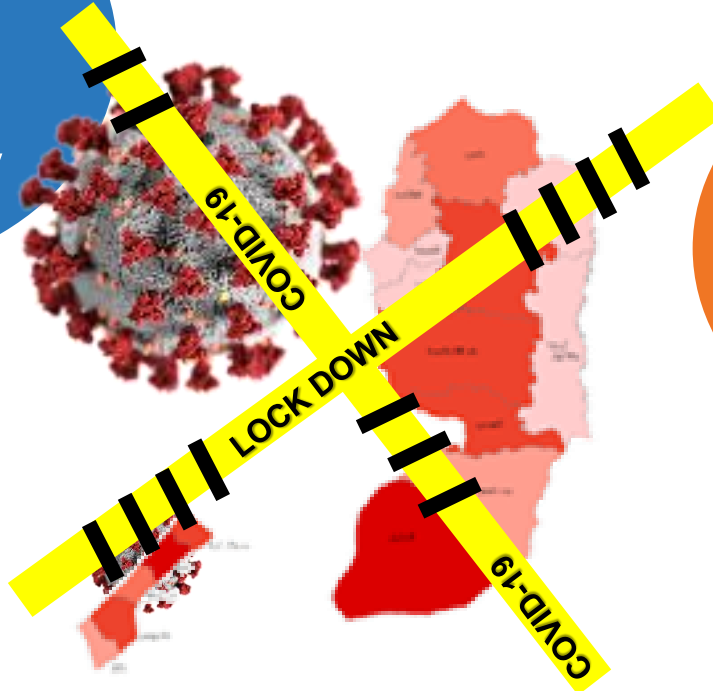
Palestine
Declare
State of
Emergency

April 3rd, 2020

Palestine
Extends the
State of
Emergency

May 5th, 2020

Palestinian
President
Renews
State of
Emergency



COVID-19 in Palestine as of 18 May 2020

Recoveries

455

Diaspora

703

Deaths

4

Gaza Strip

0

West Bank

4

Diaspora

83

Cases

567

Gaza Strip

20

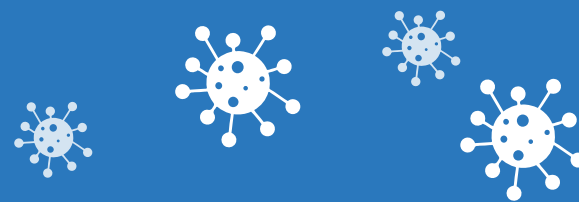
West Bank

547





Diaspora

1,525

Background



COVID-19

-  **PCBS has been working to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian's' lives**
-  **PCBS has conducted two rounds of economic forecasts comparing between economic indicators of 2019 with the baseline and the COVID-19 case taking into consideration a number of scenarios**
-  **A proper measurement of the impact of all aspects of lives is being prepared by PCBS in partnership with all partners and stakeholders**
-  **Larger survey will be done after the emergency state is over and once field work data collection is possible**

COVID-19

A. Operational Level:

- PCBS started with the formulation of an emergency team to ensure following upon the statistical work in terms of the technical, administrative and technological aspects.
- All statisticians and PCBS staff are working from home via the email.

B. Technical Level:

- Conducting estimates regarding the expected losses and submitting them to the government,
PCBS has worked with the Ministries on measuring losses, the impact of the crises
Continuing data collection of prices surveys via the phone .
Studying the statistical activities of the work plan for this year
developing some main surveys

Statistical Calendar 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
JANUARY						
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
FEBRUARY						
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
MARCH						

PCBS Response Plan to the COVID -19 Crises:

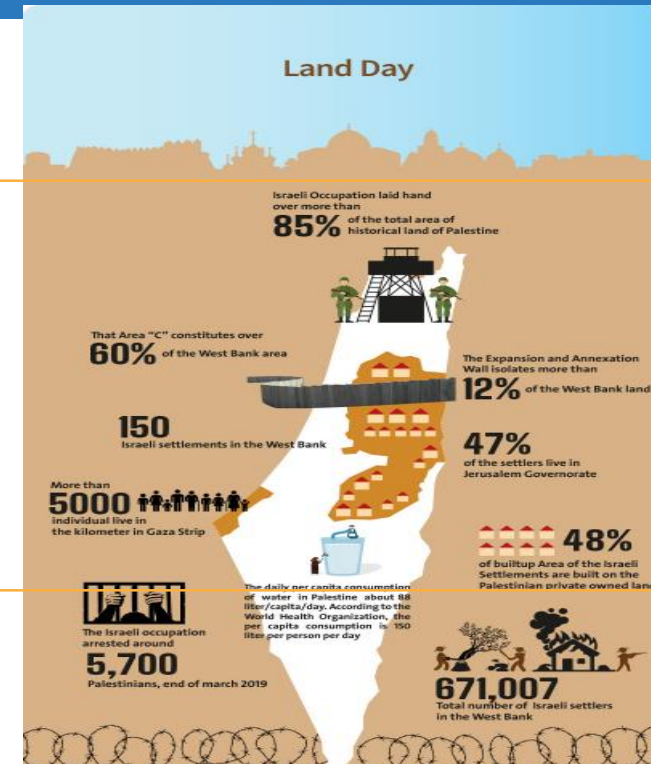
COVID-19

C. Networking Level

- Discuss with policy makers the government needs..
- Virtual meetings with local and international partners
- PCBS is currently coordinating with the World Bank to work
- on an application for data collection via telephone

D. Communication Level

- An internal team was formed to maximize efforts
- and coordinate on relevant messages
- A press release was published under the title **“PCBS will continue carrying out statistical message during the emergency”**.
- PCBS toll free and landline were connected with of PBCS staff.
- All press releases on statistical data were disseminated on their due dates
- Providing several data via the phone or email
- Coordinating with many audio-visual mass media.
- Coordinate with all local partners to support them with all data needs.



Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - PCBS
5 hrs · 5
02/2020 إحصاءات التسلطية يعن الرقم القياسي لأسعار المنتج في فلسطين لشهر شباط، 2020
<https://bit.ly/3aCvpBW>
Palestinian Producer Price Index, February, 2020/02 #PCBSPalestine
<https://bit.ly/2xBE3BQ>

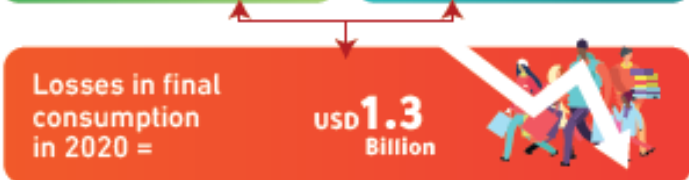
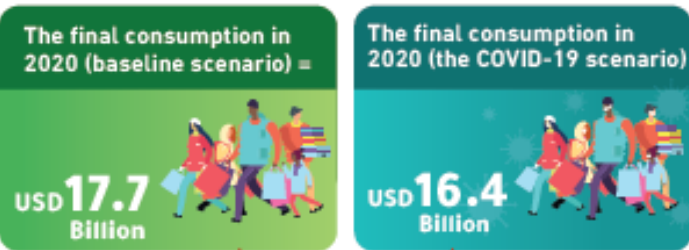


Economic Forecasts* in Palestine for the Year 2020, in light of the Current COVID-19 Pandemic

Impact on GDP:



Impact on Final Consumption



Value Added of Agriculture:

The decline of the value added of the agricultural activity in 2020 (COVID-19) =

14.7%
compared to 2019



Value Added of Industrial Activity:

The decline of value added of the industrial activity in 2020 (COVID-19) =

18.4%
compared to 2019



Value Added of Construction Activity:

The decline of value added of the construction activity in 2020 (COVID-19) =

20.6%
compared to 2019



Value Added of Services Activity:

The decline of value added of services activity in 2020 (COVID-19) =

11.4%
compared to 2019



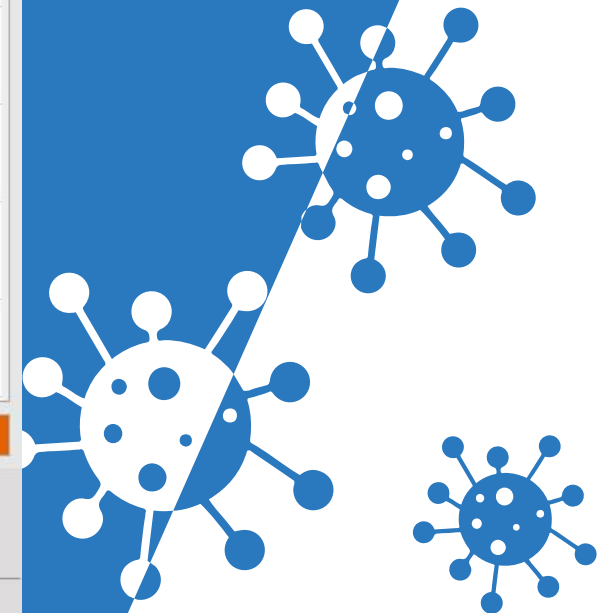
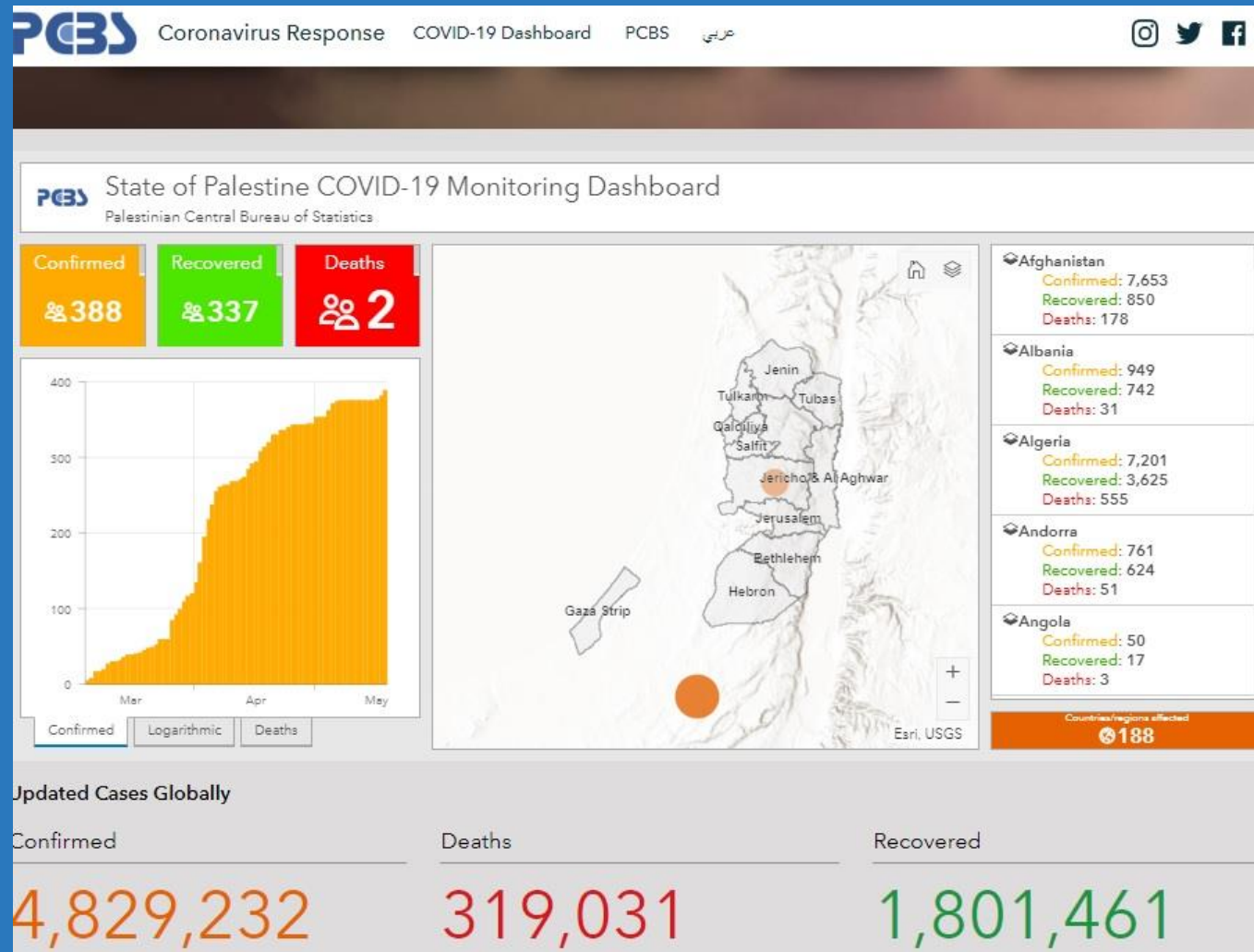
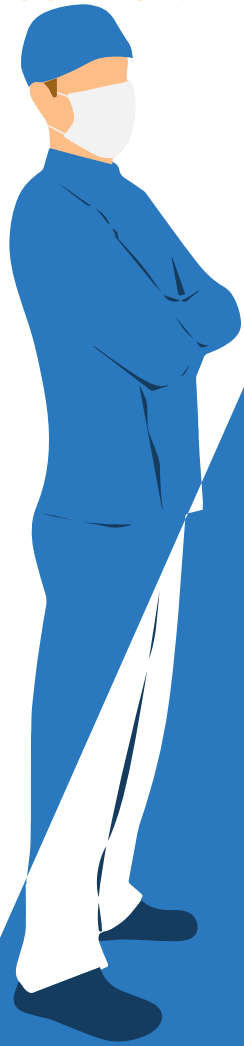
Losses of USD 4 million per week in the transportation sector

Losses of USD 1,155 million in the revenues of internal tourism

* Note: These forecasts were made on the assumption that:

- The impact of the COVID-19 crisis continues for 3 months starting from the beginning of March up to the end May 2020 and the gradual resumption of economic activities after the end of May.
- The government's decree of closure for all businesses, excluding health facilities, medical staff, pharmacies, bakeries and groceries, is renewed to include the period till end of May.
- The sharp decline in the number of Palestinian workers in Israel, especially during April and May 2020.
- The sharp decline in tax collection whether domestic taxes or clearance taxes.

PCBS in cooperation with UNSD - DFID developed a monitoring Dashboard for COVID-19 in Palestine , the dashboard is linked to international agencies specialized websites on COVID-19 in Palestine to provide an overall picture and provide support and data at the same time



Four Main Activities During Lockdown

COVID-19



CPI

Household
Survey (Rapid
Assessment)

Establishments
Survey (Rapid
Assessment)

Labor Force

IMPACT ON THE HOUSEHOLDS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

COVID-19

Methodology



✓ **Target Population: All Palestinian households and individuals with regular residency in Palestine during the survey's period**

✓ **Sample of Socio-economic Monitoring of the Palestinian Households' Survey, 2018**



✓ **Collecting data by using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)**



✓ **Questionnaire take 20 -30 Min**



✓ **Questionnaire was based on the World Bank template**

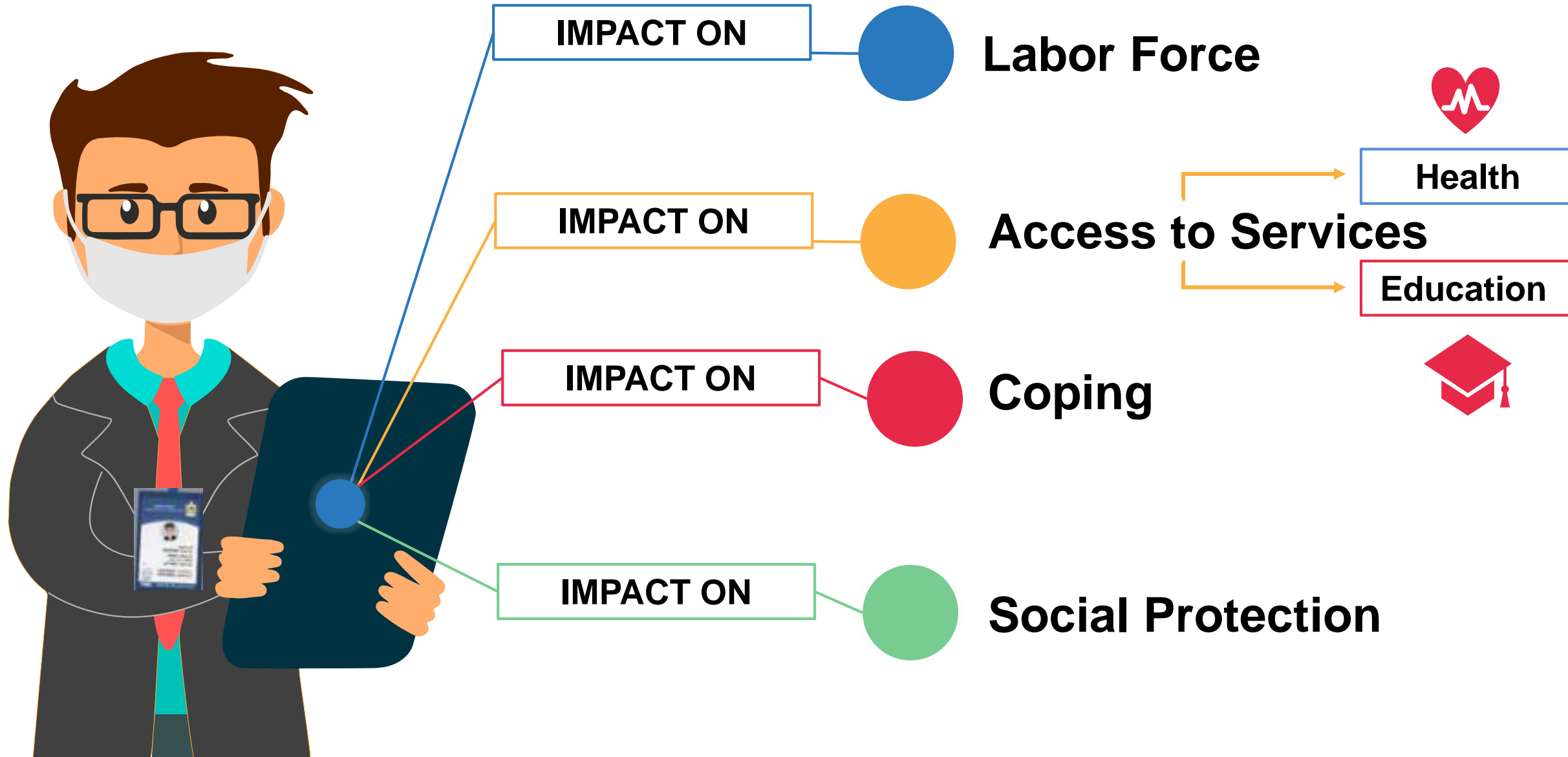


THE WORLD BANK

Questionnaire of

IMPACT ON THE HOUSEHOLDS' SOCIO-
ECONOMIC SURVEY

COVID-19



Economic Impact of COVID-19: Business Pulse Survey

Better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses



Lockdown effects

Public health measures require non-essential businesses to close

Temporary shock, targeting non-essential businesses, mostly in **retail**, **hotels/restaurants** (tourism) and **personal services**.



Supply shocks

Decline in labor and intermediate inputs, global value chains disrupted

E.g., firms that **rely on imports** are affected.



Financial shocks

Opportunities for finance becoming further constrained

Deterioration in availability of credit while demand increases will affect access to finance



Demand shocks

Economic downturn drives down demand domestically and abroad

Broad-based shock. Will especially hit firms producing **durables**, **apparel/textiles** and those **reliant on export**.



Uncertainty

Uncertainty is driving down investment

What will the **Economic Impact of COVID- 19:Business Pulse Survey** measure?

1. **Distribution of respondents**

- firm size (in terms of employment, revenue, capital base), exporter status, main sector of activity, Compare these distributions with the sample frame distribution

2. **What is the on-going impact of COVID-19 on operations, employment and business results?**

- Overall change: For example, share of firms that are open, temporarily versus permanently closed
- Changes in employment (layoffs, furlough, reduction in hours, salaries, benefits)
- Changes demand and disruptions in raw materials supply
- Liquidity constraints
- Impact by firm size, exporter status and sector

3. **What are firm's prediction about future impact?** (Uncertainty)

- Expectations on revenue, employment






4. **What can the government do to help firms?**

5. **How are firms adjusting to COVID-19?**

- Share of firms relying on online sales, digital platforms
- Share of firms relying on digital technologies
- Share of firms channelizing home-based work

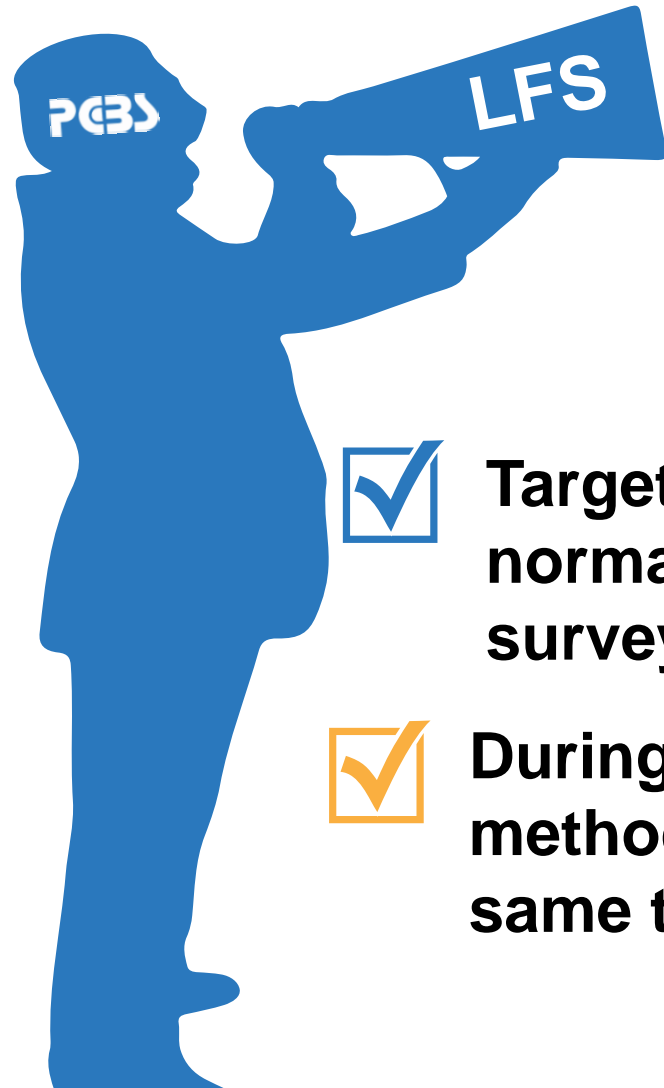
Methodology

COVID-19

-  Target population include all enterprises working in any of the following activities (industry, construction, internal trade, information and communication, transportation and storage, and services) in Palestine at 2020.
-  Sample Size: **Around 8 Thousand** enterprises will be reached to get about **6480** completed enterprises in all governorates
-  The sample strata design(16 governorates ,3 business sizes , 6 main economic activities)
-  The reference period for the economic situation comparison (3 months of lockdown compared to the normal situation, NEXT 3 months compared with Lockdown situation)
-  Questionnaire was based on the World Bank template

COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE HOUSEHOLDS' LFS

COVID-19



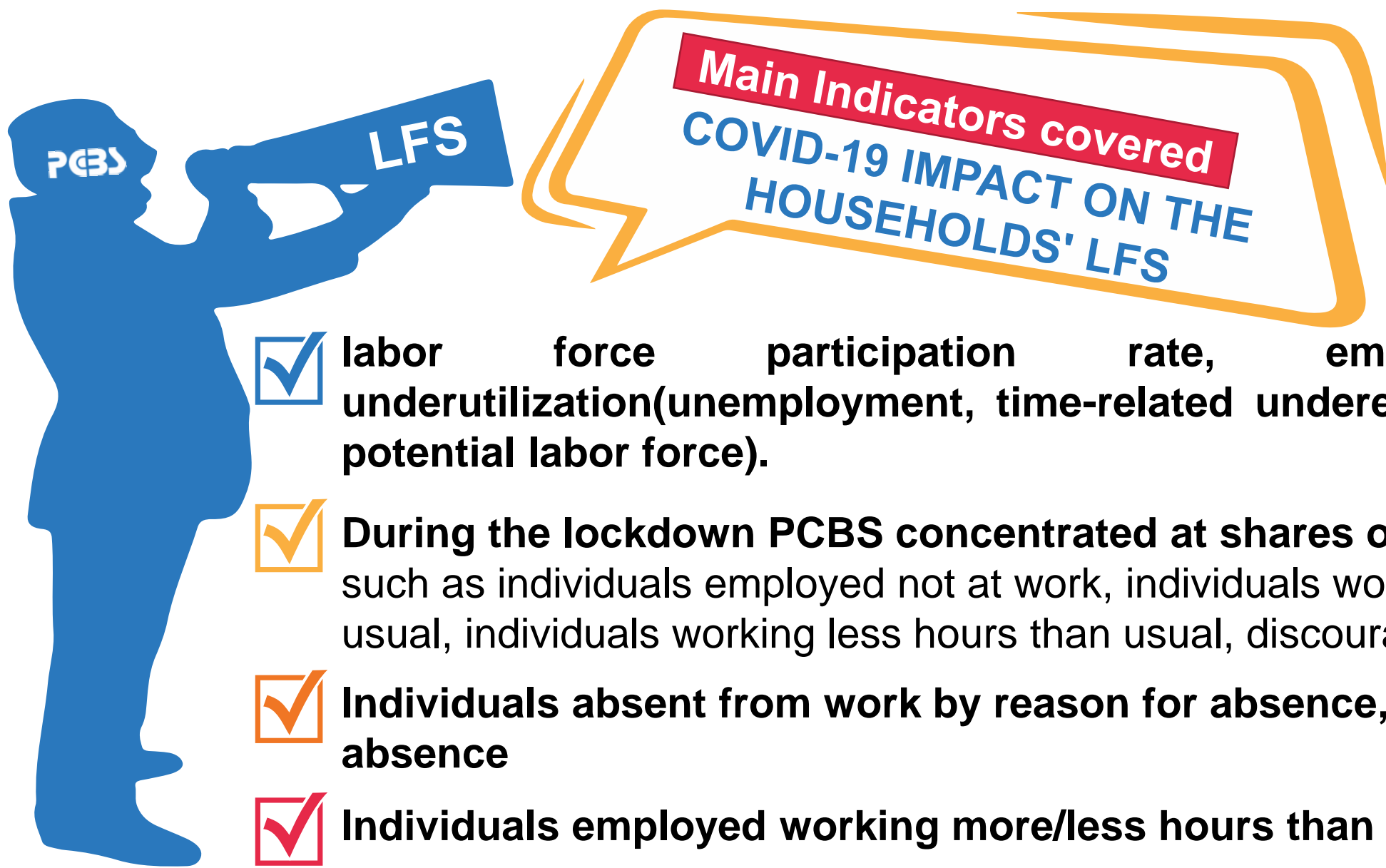
Methodology



Target population All individuals aged 10 years and above normally residing in their households in Palestine during the survey period 1st quarter 2020.



During the Lockdown the labor force survey data collection method replaced to be collected by phone to be flexible, at the same time have minimum impact on the quality .



- ☒ labor force participation rate, employment, labor underutilization(unemployment, time-related underemployment and the potential labor force).
- ☒ During the lockdown PCBS concentrated at shares of selected groups: such as individuals employed not at work, individuals working more hours than usual, individuals working less hours than usual, discouraged job seekers.
- ☒ Individuals absent from work by reason for absence, duration for absence
- ☒ Individuals employed working more/less hours than usual by reasons;
- ☒ Individuals outside the labor force by degree of labor market attachment and by reasons for not seeking or not being available to work;

Data Collection and calculation

- **All the field work has been shifted to telephone interview.**
- **Minimization of missing data.**
- **Implementing the same methodology in all stages of calculating CPI.**
- **The rest of the work was followed up electronically from home**



Coverage and publication

- **All consumption data was collected**
- **The press releases were published on time**
- **The impact of the Covid 19 virus was covered in the press releases**
- **Comparing data between the time periods before and after the Covid 19**





THANK YOU

4. Mode of data collection – telephone interview and others

- When face-to-face is not possible, can we switch to other modes that do not require physical interaction?
 - Telephone
 - Web
 - Mixed-mode
- Depends on:
 - what you would like to measure
 - Impact of Covid-19
 - A new round of panel survey – new sample households cannot be rolled in
 - Availability of a frame to select respondents



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Telephone frames– a few questions to consider

- Do you have the list of phone numbers from a recent survey (or earlier rounds of a panel survey)? Can it be used?
- Mobile phone penetration rate
 - Using dual frames or not?
- Access to a list of phone numbers from telecommunication companies (1 or more operators)
- Random digit dialing
 - Removing unassigned numbers



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Quality of telephone frames

- Non-coverage: population without telephone have zero chance to be selected: under-coverage of vulnerable population groups

Richard Tonkin	↔	1-212-764-9876
Haoyi Chen		
Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen	↔	1-646-983-7129

- Blank elements on the frame: a telephone number that does not correspond to an individual (not in service number or a business number)

Richard Tonkin	↔	1-212-764-9876
Haoyi Chen	↔	1-646-983-7129
		1-718-929-0986



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Quality of telephone frames (2)

- Duplicates: one individual has two phone numbers

Richard Tonkin	↔	1-212-764-9876
Haoyi Chen	↗	1-212-964-1234
	↘	1-646-983-7129

- Clustering: one phone number is associated with multiple individuals

Richard Tonkin	↔	1-212-764-9876
Haoyi Chen	↗	1-212-964-1234
Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen	↘	



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Other important aspects to consider

- Response rate: typically lower; and biased
- Stratification with phone frames
 - Are information available on geographical region, sex, age etc?
- Good versus not so good informant for household level data, what to do when household-level information is needed
- Assessing the quality after the survey: compare to earlier data collection



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An example from Ghana

- RDD technique used to construct potential phone numbers using the 12-digit basic structure of mobile phone numbers

233 - XX - XXXXXXXX

The diagram illustrates the structure of a Ghanaian mobile phone number: 233 - XX - XXXXXXXX. Annotations include: an arrow pointing to '233' labeled 'Ghana country code'; an arrow pointing to 'XX' labeled '2 digits for assigned prefix for MNOs'; and an arrow pointing to 'XXXXXXX' labeled 'Randomly generated'.

- Each number dialed once, anyone above 18 and responds to the call is eligible
- Each respondent is asked for 16-19 questions in total
- Recorded questions, pressing keypad to respond (0 to repeat the question)

An example from Ghana (2)

- More than 1 million calls made, 13K interviews
- Benchmarking with the 2018 DHS
- \$4.95 per completed interview

	C4H 2017 (18 + years)	Ghana DHS 2014 (15–49 years)
Sample Size	13,016	13,265
Sex		
Males	66.7	29.0 ^b
Females	33.3	71.0
Age		
15–24	55.9 ^a	35.3
25–34	29.6	31.0
35–49	9.4	33.7
50+	5.1	—
Residence		
Urban	67.7	53.5
Rural	32.3	46.5

Survey research with a random digit dial national mobile phone sample in Ghana: Methods and sample quality

L'Engle et. al. (2018): <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0190902>

5. Questionnaire design and data collection

- Adapting questionnaires and testing
- Useful preparations ahead of data collection
- Training interviewers in new approach



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Adapting questionnaires and testing

- Consider adapting questions and questionnaire design
 - May be more difficult to convey the message – shorter and simpler questions
 - May also have to reduce number of response option
 - May be more difficult to keep attention - reduce number of questions
 - Could run survey regularly and ask less questions each time
 - Can all kind of questions be asked on the phone?
 - May not be able to get information from household members
- Carry out scenario testing before going into the field
 - Test the questionnaire on colleagues and friends
- Use the test/survey data to refine the survey



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Example question

- As a result of COVID-19, has your household been impacted in any of the following ways?
 - Lack of access to education
 - Reduced access to food/markets
 - Lack of access to health services
 - Lost job
 - Reduced income
 - No equipment to work from home
 - Challenges in moving around due to reduced transportation
- I will now ask you a series of questions on whether your household has been impacted by COVID-19.
 - Have you lost access to education?
 - Do you have reduced access to food?
 - Have you lost access to health services?
 - Have you lost your job?
 - Has your income reduced?
 - ...



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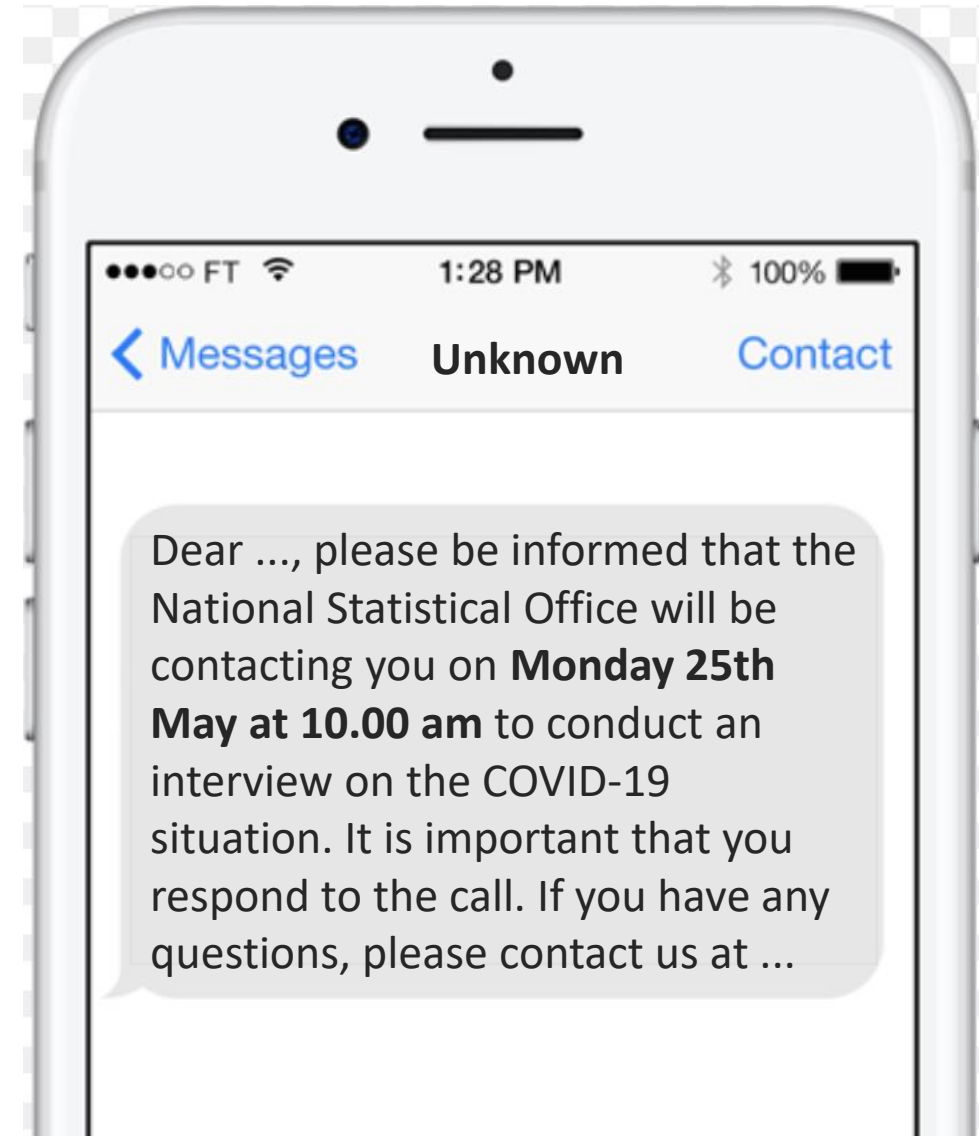
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Preparations ahead of data collection

- How can you improve the response rate?
 - Send SMS ahead of interview
 - Call ahead of interview – to confirm sampling frame
 - SMS if person did not respond
- General information campaigns
 - Radio
 - Village leaders
 - Health workers
 - ...



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Preparations ahead of data collection

- Do you have the necessary equipment and environment?
 - Phones/phone numbers
 - Does your office have phones which can be used to call?
 - If not, could private phones be used with new sim-cards?
 - Do you need to purchase new sim-cards?
 - Will they need handsets?
 - Tools for entering response
 - Can information be entered on a laptop or tablet?
 - Will they need to enter on paper forms?
 - Environment
 - If interviewers are not working from home, do you have a call-centre or other place?
 - If they are working from home, do they have a quiet place they can work from?



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Training interviewers

- Important to train the persons who will conduct the interview.
 - Some adjustments may be needed in interviewing techniques – take more breaks, ask if everything was well understood
- Consider how to train them -may be more difficult if you need to train them remotely
 - Use of e-learning
 - Online workshops



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6. Discussion

- Polling questions – Answer in Webex
1. Do you plan to measure the impacts of COVID-19 through surveys?
 - Yes – survey already underway (new or existing survey)
 - Yes – plans currently being developed
 - Not yet – but we are interested if the right support is available
 - Not at this time



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6. Discussion

- Polling questions – Answer in Webex
-
2. In relation to surveys and COVID-19, what areas would support from UNSD would be most helpful? (Please tick all that apply):
- Moving existing surveys from face-to-face to telephone (or web)
 - Conducting face-to-face fieldwork safely
 - Questionnaire design for COVID-19 impact
 - Sampling frames & sample designs
 - COVID-19 infection surveys
 - User-friendly dissemination
 - Other – please specify in comments



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7. Conclusions and next steps

- Please contact us with any requests or questions
 - Linked to survey implementation
 - Other project aspects
- We will follow up with you based on your requests
- Remember: This situation may be a good opportunity to show how useful a statistics office can be for informing government and the population about the situation.



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