

Module 2: Baseline Assessment
SESSION 12: COPING STRATEGIES

FACILITATOR NOTES

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| Presentation | <i>Coping Strategies.ppt</i> |
| Handouts | <i>H2.12 Handout - Coping Strategies</i> |
| Practitioners' Guide Reference | Chapter 4 SECTION 1 – PART 1 <i>Household Coping Capacity and Outcome Analysis</i> |
| Time | 45 minutes |

Purpose and content

To describe the concept of coping strategies and what we need to know about them for HEA analysis, particularly how they are classified in terms of cost.

Note: Detailed discussion on how information on coping strategies is used in HEA outcome analysis takes place in the Outcome Analysis Training Module, since it is in outcome analysis that information on coping strategies is used. However, since this information needs to be collected during a baseline assessment – and since understanding how households respond under economic stress is so important in HEA analysis – this session is placed here in the Baseline module as well in order to introduce the key concepts relating to coping strategies, particularly the idea of classification in terms of cost.

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Describe what is meant by 'coping strategies' in HEA and what we need to know about them.
- Explain what we mean by the 'cost' of coping strategies and why this concept is important in HEA.
- Give examples of low cost, medium cost and high cost coping strategies.

When do you want to introduce this session?

This is session 12 in the Baseline Assessment Training Module.

What handouts do you need?

- *H2.12 Handout - Coping Strategies.*
This outlines what we mean by coping strategies, what we need to know about them for HEA analysis and the importance of considering their cost, i.e. their effect on households' livelihood assets, future production or health. It lists most of the coping strategies that participants will come across and classifies them in terms of cost.

Key learning points

- Coping strategies are the things that households do to try to increase their food and cash income after a shock or hazard, such as increasing livestock sales or sending a household member to work in the town
- Analysing coping strategies is important because (i) it determines how much of a gap is left to be filled by external assistance; and (ii) provides guidance on what to monitor in order to test and revise a predicted outcome
- In HEA, the key characteristic of a coping strategy is its cost, where cost is measured in terms of the effect on livelihood assets, on future production by the household, and on the health and welfare of individual household members.
- High cost strategies are left out of HEA analysis. By leaving a coping strategy out of the analysis, we are saying that an intervention should occur before households have to revert to that option (e.g. prostitution, reduced consumption, child labour, excessive livestock sales, etc.)

Session plan

| Session plan summary | | |
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| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Timing</i> |
| 1. Introduction to coping strategies | Brief outline by facilitator | 5 minutes |
| 2. Examples of coping strategies | Brainstorming (plenary) | 10 minutes |
| 3. Why are coping strategies important in HEA? | Presentation (part of) | 10 minutes |
| 4. Categorising coping strategies according to cost | Brainstorming (plenary) | 10 minutes |
| 5. Why is the 'cost' of coping strategies so important in HEA? | Presentation (remainder) | 10 minutes |
| Total | | 45 minutes |

This session involves going back and forth between the presentation and discussion with participants.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO COPING STRATEGIES (5 MINUTES)

Start by introducing the concept of coping strategies. Explain that they are the things that households do to try to increase their food and cash income after a shock or hazard. This is stated on the first slide of the presentation.

ACTIVITY 2: EXAMPLES OF COPING STRATEGIES (10 MINUTES)

Next, ask participants to brainstorm any coping strategies they can think of. Do not at this stage categorise them according to cost.

ACTIVITY 3: WHY ARE COPING STRATEGIES IMPORTANT IN HEA? (10 MINUTES)

Now go back to the presentation and explain why the analysis of coping strategies is important in HEA. There are two reasons: (i) it determines how much of a gap is left to be filled by external assistance, and (ii) provides monitoring guidance to test and revise a predicted outcome.

Stop when you get to the slide 'How are coping strategies analysed in HEA', when you introduce the concept of the cost of coping strategies.

ACTIVITY 4: CATEGORISING COPING STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO COST (10 MINUTES)

Ask participants to categorise the coping strategies previously identified into low, medium and high cost strategies.

ACTIVITY 5: WHY IS THE 'COST' OF COPING STRATEGIES SO IMPORTANT IN HEA? (10 MINUTES)

Once participants are clear about this categorisation, go back to the presentation which will help you explain why the concept of 'cost' is so important in HEA: high cost strategies can be left out of the analysis, so that the recommended point of intervention occurs before households are forced to revert to those high cost strategies.

This can be a difficult concept to grasp, so make sure everyone is clear. Distribute the handout *H2.12 Handout - Coping Strategies* after this discussion.