

UNECE Online Expert Group Meetings on Measuring Poverty and Inequality

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# The urgent need for data during the pandemic

## Discussion

Federico Polidoro (Istat, Italy)

- What is happening?

This is simple question widespread among people all over the world in 2020 when the pandemic started, during its dramatic development and now when it is still ongoing

- The pandemic increased the demand of statistical information on different aspects of living conditions to understand the consequences of the Covid – 19 crisis
- Official statistics was caught by surprise but it reacted
- U.S. Census of Bureau and others from U.S., Statistics Canada and Statistics Austria provided clear, different and very interesting examples of this reaction

- U.S. Household Pulse Survey. Impressive reaction in terms of extent, speed and frequency of the release  
  
How were the e-mail and cell-phone contact frames built?  
For some indicators are there terms of comparison with 2019 situation?
- Statistics Canada Experimental Weekly Income Estimates. An example of how adapting data available to the new emerging needs (timeliness)
- Statistics Austria and the possible use of Current monthly household income (CMHI) coming from EU-SILC survey  
  
In 2020 income decrease and inequalities increase (quartile analysis) and household pessimistic mood (expected income). Is it possible to generalize the use of CMHI to overcome the time lag of EU-SILC results?

NSIs and statistical offices in different institutions forced to deal with completely unexpected issues experimenting the statistical consequences of the dramatic health emergency we are still living in

More sprawled was the pandemic more huge was the need of timely data

- About the evolution of the disease (number of ill persons, of hospitalizations, of dead people, etc.)
- About the impact of the pandemic on different household life (social and economic) dimensions

But more sprawled was the pandemic wider was the difficulty both in collecting the data and managing the dissemination of information

Italian experience in data collection concerning ordinary surveys aimed at measuring households life conditions

- HBS at the basis of estimation of absolute poverty and entirely conducted via CAPI
- On April 2020 it was stopped and in May it restarted in CATI
- Since July mix mode is used (CAPI and CATI)

What the consequences of this sudden change on the quality of estimation? Bias?

Moreover, absolute poverty methodology still robust to take into account the strong changes in household expenditure behavior?

The future challenge of releasing quarterly data

A crucial question: has this made us ready for future crises?

A lesson in terms of “risk management”.

NSIs have to be ready to deal with the risks (whatever they are not only the pandemic) that could affect data collection in order

- to avoid the consequences coming from sudden, forced (and in some cases unfeasible) changes of techniques
- to be able to provide also in exceptional situations timely and trusted information on poverty, inequalities and the main dimensions of household well being

- Where are we going?

The increased demand of trusted and more timely statistical is a fact

The clear address from the lockdown to manage the risk: household survey has to be increasingly the result of mix-mode data collection (CAPI, CATI, CAWI technique with specific attention to web scraping and the use of big data sources) integrated with admin data

The challenges for the future: how to manage this growing (and complicate) mix? In terms of lists, of sample design, of calibration and aggregation, in terms of bias, in terms of organization of the surveys? In terms of transparency to the users?

Thank you for the attention