

WOMEN DIETARY DIVERSITY SCORE

Outcome indicator

Indicator Phrasing

English: the average number of different food groups consumed by women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years) the previous day or night

French: le nombre moyen des différents groupes d'aliments consommés par les femmes en âge de procréer (15 à 49 ans) le jour ou la nuit précédents

Portuguese: número médio de diferentes grupos alimentares consumidos por mulheres em idade reprodutiva (15 - 49 anos) no dia ou noite anterior

Czech: průměrný počet potravinových skupin zastoupených v jídle konzumovaném ženami v reprodukčním věku (15 - 49 let) během uplynulého dne a noci

What is its purpose?

The indicator assesses the number of (pre-determined) food groups which were eaten by a woman the previous day or night. It indicates changes in the micronutrient adequacy of women's diets, one important dimension of diet quality.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Determine the indicator's value by conducting individual interviews with a [representative sample](#) of women aged 15 - 49 years:

- 1) Check whether yesterday was a **special day** (religious festival or celebration) when an unusually varied or limited diet was eaten - if so, do not proceed with collecting dietary data as it is likely that they will not reflect a typical diet.
- 2) **List all meals** which the respondent ate in the previous day in the Recording Meals Form (see link below).
- 3) Double check the **meals' composition** (e.g. porridge with or without milk).
- 4) Check for any **snacks** (including fruits) which were not mentioned.

5) Only then record in the questionnaire which food groups were eaten. Ask the respondent about eating **foods from groups that were not mentioned** (for example: "Did you yesterday eat any eggs?")

6) Count the **number of consumed food groups** (i.e. the Women Dietary Diversity Score).

7) **Calculate the indicator's value** by summing up the individual scores of all respondents and dividing the result by the total number of interviewed respondents.

Disaggregate by

[Disaggregate](#) the data by [wealth](#).

Important Comments

1) WDDS uses **9 food groups** whereas a more recent indicator, the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W), uses 10 groups (it counts vegetables and fruits as two different groups). If you need to determine both WDDS and MDD-W, use 10 food groups and when analysing WDDS, merge "vegetable" and "fruit" groups into one group (gaining 9 groups, as required for WDDS).

2) The main **difference between WDDS and MDD-W** is that while WDDS shows us the extent to which the target population changed the average diversity of its diet (for example, from an average of 3.5 to 4.3 food groups), MDD-W tells us the proportion of the target population whose diet is sufficiently varied (i.e. meet the requirement of including at least 5 food groups).

3) WDDS is prone to **seasonal differences**. Do your best to collect baseline and endline data in the same period of a year; otherwise it is very likely that they will not be comparable. **Do not collect data during the fasting periods**, such as pre-Easter time or Ramadan.

4) Record food groups in the questionnaire only after all meals were listed in the Recording Meals Form – **never record them straightaway** as it is very likely that the number of food groups consumed will be underreported.

5) When training the data collectors, **practice extensively** which meals belong to which food group (allocate at least 3 hours full of examples and exercises). For example, while pumpkin flesh belongs to Vitamin A Rich Foods, pumpkin leaves belong to Dark Green Leafy Vegetables (see more examples in the FAO Guidelines below). If your questionnaire includes examples of different foods per each group, **adjust them to the local context**.

6) Do not record foods in **quantities lower than one tea spoon** (for example, a small amount of fish powder added for flavouring). Do not count breast milk.

7) You can also use WDDS for measuring the dietary diversity of a very **specific age group**, such as adolescent girls aged 15 - 19 years.

8) Well-designed, long-term (3 years or more) projects have a chance to **increase the average WDDS by 1 score**; for short-term projects, an increase by **0.5 score** is a realistic maximum you can achieve.

Access Additional Guidance

- FAO (2013) [Guidelines for Measuring Household and Individual Dietary Diversity](#)
- PIN (2015) [Practical Checklist for Conducting Nutrition Surveys](#)
- PIN (2014) [Recording Meals Form for Assessing Dietary Diversity - Adults](#)