

## **Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital**

### **Albania Field Test**

### **FINAL REPORT**

#### **Introduction**

The objective of this project was to field test the Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital in Albania and provide substantive recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the questions and answers. The survey was developed by the World Bank with a conceptual approach and the aim of creating an universal questionnaire that could be added to the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) and provide a social capital perspective.

This report will recount the discussions of the survey and the changes that were made to better reflect Albanian culture prior to conducting the survey. The methodology of selecting the regions and villages as well as the households within the village will be outlined. There will also be a short description of each of the areas and villages. Finally there will be an in-depth account of the impressions and recommendations of the enumerators once the surveys were completed.

Albania was one of the first countries where the specific wording of the survey was adapted to the individual country. In Albania this process began with a 2-day training where the questionnaire was reviewed and discussed question by question then given to a volunteer from a nearby village. The training was conducted by Michael Woolcock (World Bank) and attended by Ilir Gedeshi, Eridana Çano, Christin Cogley, Blendi Çeki, Stella Zoto, Eleina Qirici, Entela Shehaj, Gerta Bilali, and Majlinda Sterjo. The participants were employees of CESS and professors in the socio-economic field with experience in conducting surveys. Questions and listed responses were modified to reflect Albanian society and culture (detailed explanation of changes is below). In short, the importance of the extended family group (fis) was added, the comparison time period was set at three years, and reference urban or neighborhood were removed since the survey was only conducted in rural areas (villages) as per the TOR.

The survey was conducted in villages near Korçë, Saranda, and Mirditë. These regions were chosen because of their geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity. The families within the village were chosen at random from resident lists provided by the commune (local government). Ilir Gedeshi, Eridana Çano, Blendi Çeka, Stella Zoto, and Eleina Qirici conducted 125 surveys in the villages of Voskopoje, Bulgarec, Pirg, Dishnice, Proger, Liqenas, and Pojan in the Korçë district. Korçë is a city in the southeast near the border with Macedonia. The population is mainly ethnic Albanian but with significant minority representation and a mountainous terrain. Ilir Gedeshi, Eridana Çano, Blendi Çeka, and Entela Shehaj conducted 101 surveys in: the villages of Andon Poçi and Mashkullore in the Gjirokaster district; the villages of Ksamil and Çuke in the Saranda district; and Stjar and Vrion in Delvina district. These three districts are in the south near the border with Greece. The population is mainly ethnic Albanian and Greek

with some minorities. The terrain is rather mountainous. Eridana Çano and Blendi Çeka conducted 31 surveys in the villages of Bulshize, Rasfik, and Fierze near Mirditë in the north with ethnic Albanians and a mountainous terrain. In total 257 surveys were completed in 16 villages.

### **Key Findings**

In general the research team found the survey to be of a high quality producing abundant and useful data. However, due to the rural locations and the generally low level of education of residents, the team felt that the survey needed to be simplified to facilitate understanding. Specifically, there the multitude of choices distracted the responders and many of the concepts were alien to the respondents. The research team advises reducing the answer choices and tailoring them in each country using familiar terms. In addition, the enumerators should discuss extensively what the terms and concepts mean to provide a uniform presentation.

The social structure in Albania is heavily tied to membership in the extended family group, or *fis*, which was apparent throughout the survey and particularly in the first section. The *fis* influences all life decisions minor and major, especially in the north. It was difficult to find people who were members of groups beyond political parties or groups not active in the village. In section 2, friends or trusted persons were almost always family members. It was also found that in areas where the *fis* is strong, the level of trust is correspondingly strong, and in areas with many new-comers, trust is correspondingly lower. In Section 3, difficulties were found because cooperative projects in the villages are not common. Finally, in Section 6, the level of political awareness and political activism is low and there is little activity when there is no planned election.

### **Changes to the Survey – Prior to Field Test**

A number of minor changes were made to the wording of the survey to reflect Albanian society, culture, and language in a 2-day training session conducted May 30-31, 2002 in Tirana. The changes that were made throughout the survey were the addition of *fis* (extended family group), ethnic and religious group, removal of all urban and neighborhood references, and determination of three years ago as a comparison time. Below is a question by question outline of changes made.

#### *Section 1 – Groups and Networks*

- 1.1 – The list was discussed and it was decided that this list would be shortened to reflect typical Albania groups with one addition.
  - Letters A-E were combined into any professional related group with explanation by the enumerator as to type.
  - Letter J was removed since there is no such group in Albanian society.
  - A letter was added to include “*fis*” or family group.

- 1.2 – The time period was changed to 3 years which is 2 years after the tumultuous year of 1997 and coincides with the arrival of refugees from the war in Kosovo.
- 1.9 – Two categories were added: employment and infrastructure (roads, electricity, telephones).
- 1.10 – Region was added to Letter A and Letter F was changed to “ethnic or religious group.”
- 1.15 – Another option, “leader decides and does not inform the group,” was added.
- 1.22 – Another option, “group does not engage in financial transactions,” was added.
- 1.23 – Another option, “group does not receive technical information,” was added.
- 1.24 – Another option, “donors/international organizations,” was added.
- 1.25 – The definition of “close friends” was clarified to include family members.
- 1.26 – Reference to urban was removed.
- 1.27 – “Help” was clarified to include help beyond money.

#### *Section 2 – Trust and Solidarity*

- 2.2 – The word “neighborhood” was removed since the survey will only be given in villages.
- 2.3 – Wording was changed to “ethnic or religious group” and 2 options were added.
  - Member of Parliament which does not refer to local or central government official.
  - Leader of “fis” or community.

#### *Section 3 – Collective Action and Cooperation*

- 3.1 – Wording was changed to include “whole community.”
- 3.5 – The word “fair” is not easily translated into Albanian so it was decided that it would be translated as proportion of people who make the contribution that they *should*.
- 3.6 – Reference to urban was removed.

#### *Section 4 – Information and Communication*

- 4.1 – The phrase “by the most typical form or transportation for the village” was added.
- 4.5 – The phrase “by the most typical form or transportation for the village” was added.

- 4.7 – The category “donors/international organization” was added.
- 4.9 – The time period was changed to 3 years ago.
- 4.11 – Reference to urban was removed.

#### *Section 5 – Social Cohesion and Inclusion*

- 5.4 – The numbering was changed to conform to the international standard of numbers 8 and 9. An additional category, “size of fis,” was added.
- 5.6 – The category “social assistance” was added.
- 5.10 – This question was removed as redundant with question 5.1.
- 5.13, 5.16, 5.19, 5.22 – The category “different fis” was added to these questions.
- 5.25 – The time period was changed to 3 years ago.

#### *Section 6 – Empowerment and Political Action*

- 6.3 – The enumerators were asked to explain further about what rights are since it was thought that some respondents would not understand.
- 6.7 – “Hunger strike” was added to letter C.
- 6.9 – The wording was changed to “local/national elections” because there are no state elections in Albania.
- 6.10 – The wording was changed to “ethnic or religious group.”

### **Methodology of Field Test**

The survey was conducted in villages near Korçë, Mirditë, and Saranda. Two additional areas near Saranda, Delvina and Gjirokaster, were also included. These regions were chosen because of their geographic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity. They contain mountains and plains, rural and peri-urban populations, relative wealth and extreme poverty as well as representatives of Albania’s minorities. Delvina and Gjirokaster were included to increase the ethnic diversity of respondents and compensate for the massive emigration in the three southern districts which has created a population of mostly elderly.

Korçë is a large district in the southeast on the borders with Macedonia and Greece. Though the 172,000 inhabitants are mostly ethnic Albanian, there are considerable numbers of Vlach, Macedonian, and Roma ethnicities. The major religions are Islam and Orthodox Christianity. The terrain is characterized by large plains surrounded by mountains and the second largest lake in Albania, Lake Prespa. Industry and agriculture are well-developed in the district. Seven villages surrounding the city of Korçë were selected for the field test.

- Fifteen questionnaires were conducted in Voskopoja which is a large village set in forested mountains. The population is around 1,500 ethnic Albanians and Vlach and one third of the inhabitants have emigrated abroad. Since the terrain is not conducive to raising crops, most inhabitants are engaged in sheep or cow farming.

The village is also developing small-scale family tourism though it is hindered by the poor roads and lack of telephone lines or electricity.

- Twenty-two questionnaires were conducted in Bulgarec which is a peri-urban village just outside of the city of Korçë set on a plain. The inhabitants are all Albanian Muslims and Orthodox and the village is divided into Muslim and Orthodox sections. The population has sustained substantial emigration abroad and to cities in Albania. Agriculture is well developed and infrastructure is poor.
- Fifteen questionnaires were conducted in Pirc which is the central village in a commune of eleven villages set on a plain. The population of the commune is 10,500 and most received two dynyms of land on which they farm and raise livestock. The crops are distributed all over Albania. The commune is relatively well off and they recently buildt an aquaduct as a public investment. Infrastructure is good.
- Twenty questionnaires were conducted in Dishnice which is a peri-urban village just outside of the city of Korçë in the foothills. The population is about 1,600 with 70% Muslim and 30% Orthodox. Many inhabitants emigrate to Greece and the remainder farm. Infrastructure is poor.
- Fifteen questionnaires were conducted in Proger which is a village of about 1,000 Muslim and Orthodox inhabitants. The economic situationis poor and many rely heavily on remittances for income. Subsistence farming is the norm and infrastructure is poor.
- Twenty questionnaires were conducted in Liqenas which is the central village in a commune of nine villages located in a national park. There is a significant ethnic Macedonian population with their own school taught in Macedonian. The inhabitants engage in agriculture, fishing, and short-term migration to Macedonia. The village lacks adequate roads, potable water, and electricity.
- Twenty questionnaires were conducted in Pojan which is the largest village in Albania with a population of about 10,000 Muslims, Orthodox, and Roma. The village has a high rate of poverty and they mainly engage in agriculture. Unlike many areas of Albania, there is little emigration and so remittances are not a source of income. The roads are in good condition but there is a lack of potable water, a sewage system, and an irrigation system.

Mirditë is a large district in the north of Albania with a population of 45,000 mainly ethnic Albanians. The inhabitants are largely Roman Catholic and the fis structure is particularly strong. The terrain is mountainous and the quality of land is poor which contributes to the high degree of poverty. The once strong mining industry has been closed and there is small-scale agriculture and some forestry.

- Thirteen questionnaires were conducted in Bulshize which is a large village without much usable land. There are about 100 large families of 15-19 members strongly governed by the fis. The population is declining due to migration to cities in Albania and abroad. The infrastructure is poor and such institutions as a school or post office are lacking.

- Nine questionnaires were conducted in Rasfik which is a mountainous village with a very high poverty level. Most of the over fifty families are Roman Catholic and engage in sheep and cow farming. There is high unemployment and a lack of infrastructure.
- Nine questionnaires were conducted in Fierze which a village very similar to Rasfik though with a slightly higher population.

Saranda, Delvina, and Gjirokaster are districts in the south of Albania. Saranda is on the border with Greece and Delvina and Gjirokaster are just to the north. Saranda has a population of 63,000 ethnic Albanians and Greeks. The main religions are Islam and Orthodox Christianity. The terrain is mountainous with some plains and the sea shore. Industry, agriculture, and fisheries are relatively developed and there is rather well-developed tourism. The district has sustained massive emigration to Greece as well as substantial migration from other areas of Albania.

- Eighteen questionnaires were conducted in Andon Poçi which is a village near the city of Gjirokaster. The population of the village is about 300 families who are all of the Vlach minority save two ethnic Albanian families and one ethnic Greek family. The main religion is Christian Orthodox. A significant portion of the inhabitants have emigrated to Greece leaving behind the elderly. The main sources of income are agriculture and remittances with some industry. Infrastructure is adequate.
- Twenty questionnaires were conducted in Mashkullore which is a village near the city of Gjirokaster. The village is set in the mountains though there is a large amount of flat land nearby. The mainly Muslim and Orthodox population are divided by a river. This village has sustained less severe emigration and has received few new-comers. Most of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture and infrastructure is poor.
- Twenty-one questionnaires were conducted in Ksamil which is a picturesque village on the sea shore across from the island of Corfu. The village was established in the 1960s and has received many new-comers in the last ten years. The population have origins from all over Albania as well as the Greek minority. Infrastructure is generally good though potable water is not reliable. Tourism, fisheries, and mussel-harvesting are the main industries.
- Fifteen questionnaires were conducted in Çuke which is a village not far from the city of Saranda. The inhabitants are ethnic Albanian, Greek, and Roma. The terrain is hilly. Most of the population has emigrated to Greece leaving a mainly elderly population. Infrastructure is good and the most of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture.
- Fourteen questionnaires were conducted in Stjar which is a large village near the city of Delvina. The population is ethnic Albanian, Greek, and Vlach. The terrain is flat. The village has high unemployment and the main source of income is remittances from emigrants. Infrastructure is good.

- Thirteen questionnaires were conducted in Vrion which is a village near Delvina. The population is mainly of the Greek minority which strongly influences their culture and language. This village has sustained a high degree of emigration leaving many houses abandoned or occupied by the elderly. The main source of income is remittances. Infrastructure is mediocre and there is a lack of potable water.

The families within the village were chosen at random from resident lists provided by the commune (local government). In some cases these lists were not available and households were chosen by the enumerators with every attempt at randomness and diversity. If the house selected was not occupied, usually due to emigration, a neighboring house was chosen. The enumerator would approach the household and request their participation in the questionnaire. The respondent was usually the head of the family or the spouse with some adult children and elderly. Interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. The time variance was due to the low educational level of many respondents which hindered their ability to answer the questions as well as the lack of membership in organizations or groups.

## **Recommendations**

In general the research team found the survey to be of a high quality producing abundant and useful data. However, due to the rural locations and the generally low level of education of residents, the team felt that the survey needed to be simplified to facilitate understanding. Specifically, there the multitude of choices distracted the responders and many of the concepts were alien to the respondents. The research team advises reducing the answer choices and tailoring them in each country using familiar terms. In addition, the enumerators should discuss extensively what the terms and concepts mean to provide a uniform presentation. Experience enumerators could also mitigate the complexity without actually reducing the survey.

The social structure in Albania is heavily tied to membership in the extended family group, or *fis*, which was apparent throughout the survey and particularly in the first section. The *fis* influences all life decisions minor and major, especially in the north. It was difficult to find people who were members of groups beyond political parties or groups not active in the village. In section 2, friends or trusted persons were almost always family members. It was also found that in areas where the *fis* is strong, the level of trust is correspondingly strong, and in areas with many new-comers, trust is correspondingly lower. In Section 3, difficulties were found because cooperative projects in the villages are not common. Finally, in Section 6, the level of political awareness and political activism is low and there is little activity when there is no planned election.

The length of the survey and the time it took to complete, averaging from 30 to 60 minutes, was thought to be to be appropriate. The time variance was due to the respondents' membership in organizations.

A question by question list of suggestions follows. All suggestions were included.

*Section 1 – Groups and Networks*

- 1.1 – The list of organizations should be tailored carefully for each country. What constitutes a group or membership in the group should also be explained in detail. We found that even after the training session, our conceptions of groups differed.
- 1.2 – Option 4, “Do not participate,” is redundant with the other options and should be deleted.
- 1.4 – Since it was found that many organizations do not meet monthly, it was suggested that the time period be increased to a year.
- 1.10 – Option F, “Ethnic or religious group,” should be shortened to ethnic group since religion is specifically covered under Option C, “Religion.”
- 1.12 – An option for “Don’t know/not sure” should be added because there are people who do not know the political beliefs of other members.
- 1.22 – There are two suggestions.
  - Instead of dues for Option 1, the wording should be “fees or financial resources of the members.”
  - The possibility of more than one source of funding should be added.
- 1.23 – The term technical assistance was unfamiliar to most respondents and should be explained simply.
- 1.24 – Some options could be combined, e.g. Option 2, “Local government,” and Option 3, “Community leaders.”
- 1.25 – Many respondents counted cousins or other relatives as close friends.
- 1.26 – The results of this question may not be reliable. As understood this question attempts to measure the number of close relations in the community. However, due to the generally equivalent economic situations of many villages, the respondents list only those they believe able to assist them, not those who would be willing if resources allowed. As in Question 1.25, many included cousins or other relatives as those they can count on.
- 1.27 – In this question, economic setback and types of assistance should be explained clearly.
- 1.29 – It was suggested that house be included with children.

*Section 2 – Trust and Solidarity*

This section presented no difficulties and we have no suggestions to offer.

*Section 3 – Collective Action and Cooperation*

- 3.3 – It was suggested that instead of asking how many times, a more concrete answer could be gotten by asking how many days.
- 3.4 – It is never the case that people are fined for not participating so this should be removed.



*Section 4 – Information and Communication*

- 4.2 – Since many respondents read the newspaper every day, it was suggested that options like those in Questions 4.3 and 4.4 be included.
- 4.6 – As in Question 4.2, it was suggested that options be included.
- 4.8 – Many respondents reported that they get market information at the market itself when they go to buy or sell so “Market” should be included as an option.
- 4.10 – It was suggested that an option be included which allows for road which are passable but not good.
- 4.11 – The time period in the question was felt to be too long and the respondents often had to estimate or average the number of times they visited neighboring villages or towns. Therefore, it was suggested that the time period be reduced to three or six months.

*Section 5 – Social Cohesion and Inclusion*

- 5.2 – It was suggested that the options be reduced to three.
- 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 – These questions were felt to need rethinking and reorganization.
- 5.6, 5.7 – It was suggested that the discrimination should be explained to include social and economic discrimination.
- 5.10 – This question is usually only applicable to men in rural Albania where it is rare for women to meet in public, rather they meet in each other’s homes.

*Section 6 – Empowerment and Political Action*

- 6.1 – This question was felt to be too direct and needs to be handled by the enumerators with delicacy.
- 6.2 – This question was felt to be somewhat difficult for the respondents to understand and needs to be explained simply.
- 6.3 – This question was also felt to be difficult to understand and the answers varied widely depending on the respondents’ opinions of what “rights” are.
- 6.14 – There are two comments on this question.
  - This was another question that was felt to be too direct. Reassurance by, and trust in, the enumerator is essential.
  - It is common for “tips” to be offered for other non-government services, for example medical care, to ensure proper service is given.

## **A Perspective from the Albanian Institute of Statistics<sup>1</sup>**

In accordance with the “Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2002-2006” adopted by the Albanian government, the Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) has conducted a survey to collect information on measuring living standards and identifying determining factors. This survey was carried out in April and May 2002 in 3600 families and it will be conducted again in the forthcoming years as part of monitoring the strategy implementation. INSTAT is receiving the assistance of the World Bank in cooperation with DFID to accomplish these surveys. The goals of the survey are several and it therefore includes a series of questionnaires that collect information on various aspects of living standards and family behavior. At the same time INSTAT is conducting a survey for the community.

The social capital survey is closely related to the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) and their conclusions compliment each other. The LSMS provides a general framework in which the results of the survey on social capital can be better comprehended. In turn, the strengthening of social capital is a factor that helps explain improvement in living standards.

The social capital survey is closely related to the community survey structure – particularly the content of some questions. The community survey is conducted with a representative of the community to provide information for the community as a whole. In contrast, the social capital survey is conducted with a member of a household to provide information for specific units (i.e., family groups) of the community. The results of both surveys complement each other and can be useful for cross checking conclusions ultimately providing more reliable products.

Both surveys contain sections on the similar or identical topics. These similar sections add depth to the results of both by asking questions about the same thing in different ways and from different perspectives.

- Section 5a in the community survey includes questions about existing organizations and networks within the community and their membership, community activism, etc. This section is echoed in the social capital survey in Section 1 on “Groups and Networks” which focuses on how organizations function and their role.
- Section 5b of the community survey contains questions on collective actions and cooperation of community members to resolve communal problems of water supply, roads, and conflict resolution etc. Equivalent questions are covered in the social capital survey in Section ? on “Trust and Solidarity” and Section ? on “Empowerment and Political Action.” Questions in these sections focus on social unity, eventual use of public services, and participation in petitions and political activities, etc.
- Section 6 of the community survey concentrates on questions related to personal security of community members, crime (types of crimes, motivations, perpetrators) and the relation of community members with the

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<sup>1</sup> This section was written in conjunction with Ms. Ariana Misha, head of the LSMS survey.

local police. In the social capital survey, Section ? on “Conflict and Violence” has similar questions related to the level and dynamics of violence, perception of personal security and incidences of crime directly related to the family.

- In Sections 3 and 4 of the community survey, there are questions related to services, their quality, and the community needs they cover. Similar questions are asked in the social capital survey on communications, road quality, and other public services.

## **Conclusion**

The field test found that this survey has been well-prepared and produces useful data. The extensive preparation work and question selection has obviously been extensive. The conceptual approach used in selecting questions is, in our opinion, correct and the scope of the survey adequately covers all facets of social capital. The survey functions as a general tool and needs to be adapted to the individual country to be most effective. The adaptations are in the wording of the questions using familiar terms and culturally appropriate answer options. Many of the concepts, such as rights and control over one’s life, were difficult to explain to the respondents and this needs to be taken in to account through training enumerators and gaining experience through conducting the survey. The essence of these questions as well as others are dependent not only on the understanding of the respondent but also the enumerator. As we found in Section 1, our idea of what constituted a group and membership of the group varied despite extensive discussion prior to conducting the survey.