Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series
Survey design: Are we asking what we think we're asking?"
Uganda Experience with Cognitive Interviewing

presented at the Virtual Event
14.00-15.15 hrs., Bangkok time (GMT+7)
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Team composition

• We had six researchers – 3 women and 3 men – two supervisors

• They had experience – in both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis and the supervisors have worked for over two decades on several combined methodologies national surveys and poverty studies

• All researchers were conversant with the local language in the sample districts
Tools customization

• The draft tool from ILO was subjected to a review process in order to customize the concepts

• For example - concepts not in the local language – e.g... ‘no distinction between client and customer’, suppliers/customers

• Concepts with several meanings – ‘dependent contractor’ with employees, ‘salary and wages’ and meant the same....
Entry

- We undertook two rounds of cognitive interviews and these were conducted in Wakiso and Mukono District Central Uganda.

- We worked with District Planning Units in the sampling and NGOs for mobilization of households.

- We sampled 80 respondents with almost equal representation of women and men with women slightly more represented.

- The interviews were face to face and FGDs and we developed a Covid protocol in strict observance of Covid-19 SOPs.
Fieldwork

• In the Cognitive Interviews the focus was not on the answer from the respondents but on the understanding of the question – it was important to retrain researchers to focus on this ‘nuance’

• The process requires patience on the side of respondents as the questions sometimes feel repetitive...

• In the context of informality the separation between ‘private’ and ‘public’ spaces is very minimal and sometimes this limits privacy around interviews
Data collection

- In Cognitive Interview it is important to write up all interviews immediately after the fieldwork – this aids analysis since the interviewer is writing up the understanding of the questions and not the results.

- Voice recording is very handy (where it is accepted) as it aids in enriching the fieldnotes – however we had several instances where respondents were hesitant.
Lessons and Added Value

The training of the researchers has to be comprehensive and practice of the tools before the fieldwork is important.

Working with researchers with both qualitative and quantitative skill sets researcher is very helpful.

The focus of the whole process has to be on quality and not the quantity of questionnaires administered – we limited our interviews to two per team per day and all the other time on writing up.

Cognitive Interviews allows for deeper and richer understanding of a question from different perspectives and improves survey questions.

Cognitive Interviews help to remove ambiguity from the questions.
Thank you for listening!