



Snapshot of key findings from baseline studies - Indigenous Peoples

WFP's Indigenous Peoples' Portfolio

WFP's Indigenous Peoples' (IP) Portfolio is embedded in the social inclusion agenda of leaving no one behind. Engagement with indigenous peoples is harnessed in WFP's new Protection and Accountability Policy (2020) which brings to the forefront the voices of affected populations to influence WFP's actions. It also draws attention to the complexity of factors leading to vulnerability such as structural inequality and discrimination- which play a critical part in indigenous peoples' persistent exclusion and economic poverty.

Building an evidence-base

In 2020-2021 WFP conducted four baseline studies across different contexts globally. The studies provide evidence of indigenous peoples' food insecurity in Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Nepal and Rajasthan, India. They identify some of the key drivers leading to food insecurity and the main challenges IPs face in their access to food, sustainable livelihoods, and well-being. In Nepal the study focused on indigenous peoples with disabilities in two provinces. In Rajasthan the study identified the barriers to accessing government-led food safety-net programming.



Main obstacles and challenges

- **Geographic remoteness** impedes access to markets, schools, services, and WFP and/or government programming.
- **Loss of access to resources** and displacement from traditional lands due to settlements of other population groups, establishment of protected conservation areas, encroachment of large-scale industry, or conflict.
- **Loss of traditional livelihoods** and associated socio-cultural changes. Indigenous peoples' identity is linked to their lands, territories, and the surrounding environment.
- Dependence of households on **wage labor** for income—where unequal power dynamics become apparent.
- **Lack of skills and know-how** for agricultural waged labor.
- Degradation of the environment and the effects of **climate change** and /or climate-related shocks on precarious ecosystems, which indigenous peoples are often reliant on.
- Vulnerability to food and nutritional insecurity of **female-headed households**.
- **Lack of birth certificates/IDs**, which are necessary to access education, government services, land titling, inclusion in national census. In the case of disabilities in Nepal- registration for disability cards for services.
- **Access to WFP programming** and assistance is limited or in some cases non-existent.



Recommendations include:

- **Mapping** to ensure indigenous peoples' communities are identified and targeted.
- **Surveys** need to be expanded and analysed with greater data disaggregation to understand inequities to ensure programmes can better respond.
- **WFP activities:** Home-grown school meal programming; resilience building through food for assets/climate-responsive agriculture; capacity development for skills training; behaviour change communication linked to nutrition sensitive interventions, and pilot projects focusing on specific groups using integrated approaches.
- **Social protection programming** that supports platforms to register and manage information for social assistance.
- Work with cooperating partners to expand **Self-Help Groups**, and local organizations to share information and promote agency.
- **Partnerships** with UN agencies, bilateral donors, indigenous peoples' organizations, and civil society organizations will be key in moving forward programmatically but also to raise awareness.
- **Social and behaviour change communication** to address food consumption behaviour and gender equity in food distribution and consumption within households.

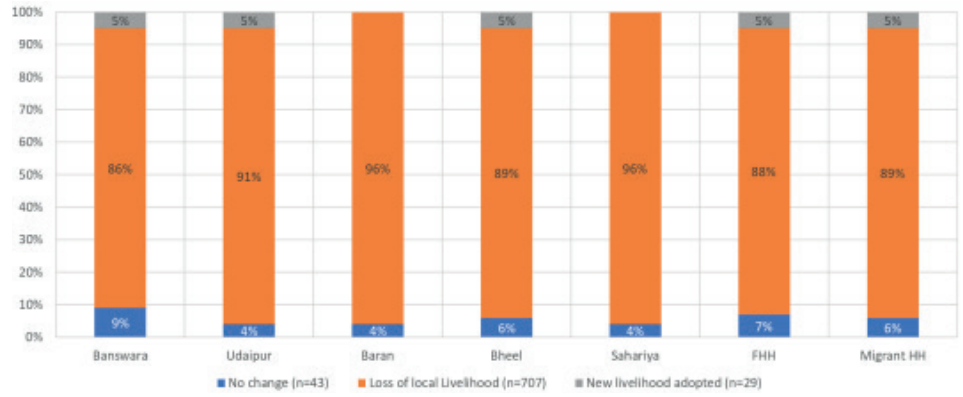


Key findings at a glance

- Quantitative data demonstrate how indigenous peoples fare compared to the general population - **higher proportion of indigenous people are food insecure.**
- Findings from a survey conducted among the general population during the same period as the IP study in CAR show that 35 percent of the population in **CAR** is food insecure. Among the indigenous peoples' households surveyed 67.4 percent were food insecure indicating that IPs are nearly twice as food insecure.
- In the five departments surveyed in **RoC**, the prevalence of food insecurity among the indigenous households is 45.9 percent. The last Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis study in RoC shows that food insecurity at the national level was at 14.2 percent in 2015.
- In the provinces of Sudurpaschim and Karnali, **Nepal** levels of economic poverty are high among indigenous people with disabilities. Nearly 45 percent of both indigenous women and men with a disability's monthly income was under 5000 Nepali rupees (approximately USD 42.00) or none. Average income in Nepal in 2016/2017 was 6734 Nepali rupees a month and in rural areas 5393 a month.
- **Regarding protection-threats** are high among indigenous people in RoC. Nearly 40 percent of indigenous households surveyed are threatened in some way primarily by physical violence- mostly perpetrated by the dominant local community or at times the eco-guards working in the protected conservation areas.
- Regarding **agency** – the surveyed Indigenous people with disabilities in **Nepal** tend to have little agency, are unaware of their rights or entitlements, and are dependent on their families with limited connection to support services. For example, only five percent of indigenous women with disabilities who were surveyed are involved in an indigenous peoples' organization, 15 percent in a women's organization, a self-help group or organization of persons with disabilities.
- Regarding **FHH:** in **CAR** surveyed indigenous female-headed households are also more severely food insecure (6.1 percent) compared to their male-headed counterparts (3.6 percent) - as women's livelihood opportunities are more limited than those of men.
- In **Rajasthan**, India about 40 percent of the tribal Bheel and Sahariya households surveyed are food insecure, and one-third are vulnerable to food insecurity. They are also asset poor. **Female headed households** are the poorest, in asset wealth, with 87 percent owning 0-2 different assets only.

→ Regarding climate change:

More than half of the surveyed tribal households in Rajasthan felt impacted by climate change. The majority of those affected by climate events said that it led to a loss of livelihood of household member/s, forcing them to look for wage labor to supplement their income. By tribe, about 90 percent of the Bheel respondents and 96 percent of the Sahariya households said they were affected by climate events.



Selection and Methodology

- The countries were selected because of their favourable normative frameworks, and/or ongoing activities with indigenous peoples as in Republic of Congo.
- A mixed methodology approach was used for all studies including quantitative household surveys in addition to qualitative data collection through a combination of focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews.
- Expert consultants identified through consultation with nationally-based and global indigenous peoples' networks and organizations undertook the work in partnership with the country offices and headquarters.
- In the case of Rajasthan, India, a local NGO working in the affected tribal areas was hired for both the qualitative and quantitative work.
- The scope of the studies was not standardized across the countries. Each study benefitted from a different amount of resources, which affected the scale of the study resulting in smaller or larger sampling sizes.

Who are indigenous peoples?

Although there is no official UN definition, United Nations human rights bodies, the ILO, and international law apply the following criteria to distinguish indigenous peoples:

- They usually live within (or maintain collective attachments to) geographically distinct habitats and ancestral territories;
- They tend to maintain distinct social, economic, and political institutions within their territories;
- They typically aspire to remain distinct culturally, geographically and institutionally rather than assimilate fully into national society; and
- They self-identify as indigenous or tribal.

In some countries, such groups may be referred to as "ethnic minorities", "ethnic groups", "aboriginals", "hill tribes", "marginalized groups", "minority nationalities", "scheduled tribes", "first nations", "tribal groups", "pastoralists", "hunter-gatherers", "nomadic groups" or "forest dwellers".

Please refer to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to view the criteria agreed upon by the [African Union in 2005 on the term indigenous peoples in Africa](#).

Programme - Humanitarian & Development Division Protection and Accountability Team World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131
hq.protection@wfp.org | wfp.org

The studies can be found [here](#).

- [Useful and related resources](#)
- Protection and Accountability Policy
- WFP Guidance Note on Free Prior and Informed Consent
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Protection and Accountability Manual
- [Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework](#)