

The Regional Census Coordinating Committee
17th Meeting
Castries, St. Lucia
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Country Report - Jamaica



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2011 Population and Housing Census - JAMAICA **Status Report, October 2009**

Census day has been tentatively scheduled for April 4, 2011. The census is being planned within the atmosphere of uncertainty arising from the economic crisis and GOJ budget cuts. A budget covering the period April 2009-March 2013 was prepared and submitted late in 2008. The total amount budgeted was J\$1.3 billion of which J\$19.8 million was required for the current year, 2009/10. No funds were allocated initially but following discussions with the Office of the Prime Minister (under whose portfolio STATIN falls), the sum of \$20million was approved in April 2009. In August the amount was reduced to \$15 million.

The main activities currently being undertaken are mapping, census design and questionnaire development and data processing planning.

Census Methodology and Questionnaire Development

The first meeting convened in early 2008 assessed the 2001 methodology and in particular, the use of sampling. Sampling had been introduced in the 2001 census in an effort to ease the burden on interviewers and respondents by reducing the size of the main questionnaire which had become quite large, and also to obtain a higher quality of data on certain topics, than was previously obtained. Sampling allows for the selection and training of a cadre of well-trained interviewers capable of dealing with the probing required for the more difficult questions.

The main disadvantage of sampling is that the data for the sample topics are not available at the small area and in some cases, parish level. For this reason it was decided that sampling would not be used in 2001 because of the critical need to have all census data at small area level. The higher quality of the economic activity data for 2001 has been recognized.

Following meetings with data users during 2008, two draft questionnaires (Population and Housing) were prepared and tested during July-August 2009. Based on the findings of the pre-test and continuing discussions with users, a second test is planned for January 2010. It had been hoped that the second test could have been conducted in the period November –December 2009 but the unavailability of the data collection staff before January 2010 has prevented this. The strategy in testing has always been to utilize the more experienced and capable interviewers from STATIN's regular team to perfect the questionnaire. The plan is to have the final questionnaire ready for testing with the less experienced interviewers who are likely to be more typical of those to be recruited for the main census, by June 2010.

Pre Test

The first pretest of the 2011 Population and Housing Census of Jamaica was aimed at testing the draft of the questions to find out if they were properly worded and more importantly to test the selection of response categories for some questions. For this pre test, twenty (20) enumeration districts (Eds) were selected; one in each parish except for St. Andrew, St. Ann, St. James, Manchester, Clarendon and St. Catherine which had two (2) Eds each. Seven (7) of the 20 Eds were urban. In addition to completing the questionnaires, the interviewers were to complete a listing Schedule for each household visited and also a Fieldwork Comment sheet at the end of their data collection period.

Interviewers worked with Ed maps but could work in any order when collecting data as the intention was to obtain a good representation of age groups of persons. Data collection was conducted during the period July 29 through August 24 and debriefing took place on August 27, 2009.

Topics and Questions tested

Household Questionnaire

Characteristics of Housing Unit- 4 questions

Characteristics of Households- 18 questions

Migration and Mortality- 4 questions

TOTAL – 16 questions

Individual Questionnaire

Personal Characteristics – 10 questions

Education – 8 questions

Training- 4 questions

Birthplace and Residence – 9 questions

Economic Activity – 14 questions

Union Status- 5 questions

Fertility – 10 questions

Transportation – 2 questions

Information and Communication Technology - 3

TOTAL – 65 questions

Mapping

Pre census mapping began in July 2008, and the proposed date for completing this exercise is December 31, 2010. It was possible to begin the mapping in 2008 due to the availability of funds allocated for the 2007 Agricultural Census which had been completed by that time. Mapping for the Agricultural Census for which close to 3,000 enumeration districts were canvassed also meant that a considerable amount of the work of preparation for the 2011 census had been completed.

Status of Mapping at October 8, 2009

Total Eds (from 2001) = 5,235

Total Eds for mapping fieldwork = 677

Of which completed = 366

Total Eds (of the 5,235) updated digitally = 1,974

Training

Jamaica has participated in the following CARICOM workshops:

1. Census Methodologies- May 25-29, Grenada
2. Census Organization and Administration- May 18-22, Grenada
3. Data Processing for the 2010 round- September 28-October 2, 2009 (2 participants)
4. Census Info- October 12-15, 2009

Data Processing Plans

Planning for data processing started from as early as February 2008 by researching the technologies available for processing the 2011 population census. The following options were looked at over a 6 months period:

- (a) Traditional approach using scanning technology
 - i. Outsource the data conversion
 - ii. Process the data in-house

- (b) Contemporary approach using mobile equipment to capture data in the field
 - i. Full implementation island wide, or;
 - ii. Implement mobile technology in urban areas and traditional approach in rural areas

- (c) Use the internet technology (web site) to capture data for hard to reach persons

These approaches were deliberated on and analyzed with the understanding that funding is a very scarce resource for the 2011 population census. Based on the expected high initial outlay for the mobile equipment, the traditional approach of using the scanning technology and processing the data in-house was accepted as the best alternative, being the least cost option.

The printing of the questionnaires will be fully outsourced.

The processing of the questionnaires in-house will require the additional hardware in the form 4 scanners, approximately 30 PC for verification and validation, and a server to support the system. The existing software licence will have to be expanded and upgraded and the document management system upgraded as well.

Notwithstanding the costs and other issues identified with the use of some mobile equipment, it is proposed to test these items with the labour force and other surveys in early 2010. The use of the internet for data capture has not yet been fully explored and more work is to be done in order to facilitate some of the difficulties experienced within the gated communities in particular.