

United Nations Expert Group Meeting
on Revising the Principles and Recommendations
for Population and Housing Censuses
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Agenda: Session 9

Population Census Topics included in the 2011 Population and Housing Census for Jamaica¹

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The 2011 Population and Housing Census was the fourteenth to be conducted for Jamaica. As for all censuses since 1943, the target population for the 2011 census was the 'usual resident population'. The usual resident population included all persons, Jamaican and non-Jamaicans whose usual place of residence was in Jamaica even if they were temporarily (less than six months) away from the country at the time of the census. Census Day was April 4, 2011.

This paper examines the following:

1. The list of population topics covered in the 2011 Census of Jamaica (with emphasis on topics introduced for the first time in the census),
2. Comparison of the core and non-core population topics as proposed by the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Rev2),
3. Specific difficulties in implementing any of the population topics.

In keeping with the recommendations of the UN Principles and Recommendations (Revision 2) the selection of topics for the 2011 census was guided by factors such as user needs, available national resources and international comparability. Other factors recommended also by the UN and considered as crucial for Jamaica were the need for historical continuity and the probable willingness of the public to provide accurate information.

A. Topics (Core, Non-Core and Derived) Recommended by the UN and included in the Census of Jamaica.

Geographical and Internal Migration Characteristics

- 1) Place of Usual Residence
- 2) Place of Birth
- 3) Duration of residence- (*derived from question on year of entry into place of usual residence*).
- 4) Place of previous residence
- 5) Total Population
- 6) Locality
- 7) Urban and Rural

International Migration Characteristics

- 8) Country of Birth
- 9) Year or Period of Arrival

Household and Family Characteristics

- 10) Relationship to head of household or other reference member of household (*relationship to head only*).
- 11) Household and Family Composition (*household composition only*).

Demographic and Social Characteristics

- 12) Sex
- 13) Age
- 14) Marital Status
- 15) Religion
- 16) Ethnicity

Fertility and Mortality

- 17) Children Ever Born Alive
- 18) Children Living
- 19) Date of Birth of Last Child Born Alive (*Age of Mother at last live born*).
- 20) Births in the past 12 months
- 21) Deaths among children born in the past 12 months
- 22) Age of Mother at birth of first child born alive
- 23) Household Deaths in the past 12 months

Educational Characteristics

- 24) School Attendance
- 25) Educational Attainment
- 26) Field of Education and Educational Qualifications

Economic Characteristics

- 27) Activity Status
- 28) Occupation
- 29) Industry
- 30) Status in Employment
- 31) Time Worked
- 32) Income

Disability Characteristics

- 33) Disability Status

B. Topics (Core, Non-Core and Derived) Recommended by the UN and NOT included in the Census of Jamaica.**Geographical and Internal Migration Characteristics**

- 1) Place of Residence at a specified date in the past

Household and Family Composition

- 2) Family Status

Demographic and Social Characteristics

- 3) Language
- 4) Indigenous People

Fertility and Mortality

- 5) Age, date or duration of first marriage
- 6) Maternal or Paternal Orphanhood

Educational Characteristics

- 7) Literacy

Economic Characteristics

- 8) Institutional Sector of Employment
- 9) Employment in the Informal Sector
- 10) Informal Employment
- 11) Place of Work

Agriculture

C. Topics NOT on the UN Recommended list introduced for the first time in the Census of Jamaica.

- 1) Usual mode of Transportation
- 2) Individual Use of Information and Communication Technology Devices

D. Additional Topics included in the Census of Jamaica.

- 1) Social Welfare Benefits (*focus on source of benefit and NOT the amount of the benefit*).
- 2) Union Status- Consensual (Non-legal) Unions. This topic has been included in Censuses of Jamaica since 1943 in order to deal realistically with the existing diverse family patterns. Union type is a very important variable in the study of fertility due to the fact that over 80% of births occur outside of formal/legal marriages. Over time there have been variations to the questions due largely to the fact that while the census provides important baseline data, it has been recognized that the census is not the most suitable vehicle and the topic is best studied under survey conditions.

E. Specific Difficulties in Implementation and Reporting.

Religion- This topic represents one of the most requested items of census data. The focus of the question is affiliation to one of the mainly Christian denominations and the small number of other religions. The question has the largest number of categories in any one question (23). *The main problem lies in the inability to classify the numerous church groups, with the result that about 6% of the responses is classified as 'Other'.*

Disability- This topic has been included since 1991 and guided by the changing concepts and definitions and with the full recognition of the various limitations of the census as an effective data source. Training was very difficult. The crucial institutional population is excluded. Data quality is affected by proxy reporting. The failure of the users and advocates to interpret the census concepts and definitions and to accept census limitations is a source of frustration.

International Migration Characteristics- Country of Birth

The level of detail in reporting is restricted to area/region of birth because of a small (1%) foreign born population.

Economic Activity- Occupational Classification and Income

The census was conducted at the early stages of development of the 2008 Occupational Classification which was used. The meant that in most cases the coding was restricted to the 2 digit level.

Income data are of poor quality because of the high level of non-response and the inaccurate reporting.

Educational Characteristics

This is perhaps the most challenging topic to deal with in the census, due mainly to the changing educational system and the lack of a clear distinction between institutions providing formal and

non-formal education, as in most cases the two types are combined. Consistency with ISCED is therefore only possible at pre-primary and primary levels.

Questionnaire design, preparation of instructions and training presented many challenges.

Responses on qualifications and field of study from the 2011 census are in many cases not consistent with the responses on educational attainment.

Births (and Deaths among Births) in Past 12 Months

The questionnaire was designed to capture all births (and infant deaths) occurring since January 2010 in order to yield a calendar year total (for comparison with the vital statistics registration) as well as the events in the past 12 months. The exact date of birth was therefore required. Due to the high level of missing dates (date and month) it is not possible to identify the number specifically related to the 12 month period preceding the census. The reporting will therefore cover events occurring since January 2010.