



***Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project***  
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**The Gambia**

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**REPORT ON PRETEST OF THE PRIORITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INTRODUCTION**

After the heated discussions of the questionnaire on the last User Group meeting The Household Survey Section decided to make a pretest of the priority survey questionnaire as this would give us a better basis to decide on the many proposals made. A total of 10 households were interviewed: 5 urban (in Greater Banjul) and 5 rural (the village Sifoe near Gunjur).

A pretest is a simple test of whether the respondents are able to understand and to give meaningful answers to the questions. At a more general level the pretest shall indicate whether the questionnaire can meet the objective of the survey.

The objective of the priority survey is to provide indicators on the social and economic well being of the Gambian population of use for policy makers and planners. In order to be of use the results have to be available within a short span of time. The survey is specifically directed at monitoring the situation of the poorest sections of the population in areas influenced by government policy.

**MAIN RESULTS:**

**1. It takes longer than expected to do the interview:**

We have planned the survey on the assumption that it will take an hour or slightly less to do an interview. For urban households this will be possible. A trained interviewer will probably be able to do an interview in an hour or less. We are 'untrained' and used more than an hour on average but the anthropometric measurements will certainly add to the total interview time.

For the rural households used in the pretest it took much longer to do the interview. This is due to three factors:

a) larger households in rural areas. The households used in the pretest were not randomly chosen, but decided by the alkalo. They were the households of important people in the village and so were large even by average rural standards.

b) many questions are only relevant for rural households. This applies especially to the 82 questions on crop production (section

5B). One large rural household took more than 3 hours even though the household roster was completed for only 13 of the 46 members and no anthropometric measurements were made;

c) interpreters were used. This was because two of the three interviewers did not speak Mandinka.

2. Units of measurement for crops are not standard

Some respondents used bundles or heaps to measure their harvest of rice, millet, etc. It will therefore be necessary to convert these units into standard units for comparison purposes.

3. The categories used for expenditure on health caused some confusion.

For instance, respondents could not distinguish between a medical doctor and other categories of health personnel. It is also difficult to categorise expenses because they are sometimes combined - eg, at the RVH, a fee of D5 is paid for both consultation and drugs.

4. The concept of household should be clearly defined

Sometimes there are ambiguities. For instance, should maids and *talibes* (Koranic scholars) be considered members of the household?

As a consequence we have devised a more precise definition of household for the manual.

CONCLUSION:

1. The number of questions has to be reduced.

As this is not an agricultural survey [NASS provides good data on agricultural production, much better than we are able to] we have decided to cut the number of crops covered by the survey to three. We will have columns for groundnuts and rice as they are the predominant cash crops and they are heavily influenced by government policy (prices on these crops are determined by government). The third crop will vary. It will be the most important crop (after groundnuts and rice) grown by the household. Importance will be determined in terms of resources put into its production). This will mean that there will be less information per household on production, but information on a broader range of crops, including horticultural crops. The information will be more regionally specific.

2. Some of the questions have been rephrased.

Some terms, such as *agricultural holding* and *enterprise*, although not intended to be used by interviewers have been changed to ensure that they are not in fact used. The word *main* has been omitted from 2A-2.

3. Some response categories have been changed

"reasons for not attending school" now includes several other responses including "prefer Koranic education", "marriage". Rural respondents were

not clear about *modern medicine* in Section 7.

4. Use of interpreters should be avoided as much as possible

This is not only to reduce interview time, but also to avoid misinterpretation of questions. Interviewers should be matched with respondents as far as possible in terms of language spoken. Where interpreters are used they should not be from the same village or immediate area if possible as respondents fear the breaking of confidentiality.

5. A large number of details were gathered for the field manual

There were a number of questions where the wording was adequate or satisfactory but it was noted that details of definition or interpretation would be added to the field manual, and emphasised in enumerator training.

6. Dealing with large households

A checkbox has been added to the cover to take into account households with more than 15 members, where multiple survey forms are used.