

**JAMAICA SURVEY OF LIVING CONDITIONS**

**EXPANDED EDUCATION MODULE**

**TEST ADMINISTRATOR INSTRUCTION MANUAL**

**OCTOBER 1990**

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## Chapter 1: The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

### A. Introduction

The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (SLC) is a household survey undertaken once or twice a year by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), in cooperation with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The survey instrument is a household questionnaire which is usually administered to about 2000 households sampled from all areas of Jamaica. The ultimate purpose of this survey is to collect information for use in evaluating the effectiveness of government policies carried out under the Human Resources Development Programme. The SLC has been administered three times thus far, once in 1988 and twice in 1989. An education module is being added for this fourth round (scheduled for November, 1990) to gather information for use by the Ministry of Education and other government ministries. It is extremely important that great care be taken in collection of this data because future education policies may be changed on the basis of the information it contains.

### B. The General Organization Of The Survey

Each time the SLC is administered, STATIN interviewers visit households throughout Jamaica to administer a household questionnaire to gather information on the living conditions of households. The work of these interviewers is checked by supervisors, who also help them when any problems arise. The household questionnaire for this fourth round of the survey (November, 1990) asks detailed questions on the education histories of all household members. It is the job of STATIN interviewers to collect this data.

The SLC is administered to 2000 of the 6000 households who participated in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in the previous month. For this round (the fourth round) of the SLC, a list of children attending schools was obtained from LFS/SLC households for use by you.

You, the test administrator, will be sent to the schools where the children who live in these households are enrolled. Your job will be to give these children tests in reading and mathematics skills, and to administer questionnaires to the principal (headmaster) and to some of the teachers in these schools. It is expected that you will be able to complete all the work at one school in one day. You will be trained by a special consultant to administer the tests to the children. You will complete this work at about 20 different schools.

## Chapter 2: The Test Administrator's Tasks for the Education Module

In each school you visit, there will be three tasks to perform:

1. Administration of mathematics and reading comprehension tests to all children whose names you are given (usually about 3-4 children).
2. Completion of one School Administrator Questionnaire, which requires that you interview the principal or headmaster of the school.
3. Completion of about 10 Teacher Questionnaires. These questionnaires are designed so that the teachers can complete them themselves in about 15 minutes after a few minutes of explanation by you.

The school should be expecting your visit, because either you or someone else from STATIN has made an appointment. It is best to begin with the administration of the tests to the children in the morning. Before you begin that you should give a copy of the School Administrator Questionnaire to the principal so that he or she can have some time to look up some records, if necessary. After you finish testing the children, you should then meet with the principal to administer the school questionnaire. In many cases the best time to do this is after classes have ended. Immediately before you begin, you should explain to him how to randomly select about 10 teachers (or all the teachers if there are less than ten) for the teacher questionnaire, which the teachers should fill in after the children have finished their classes. The random selection procedure is explained in Chapter 7 of this manual.

Detailed instructions for administering the tests to the children are given in Chapters 4 and 5. Detailed instructions for administering the principal and teacher questionnaires are given in Chapters 6 and 7. In addition, a special consultant hired by STATIN will give you thorough instruction and some practice on the administration of the mathematics and reading comprehension tests to the children.

### Chapter 3: General Survey Procedures

#### A. Scheduling the School Visit

All of the test administrator's work will be done in primary, all age and secondary schools in Jamaica. The very first thing that must be done is to schedule a visit to complete the work. The schools that need to be visited

will be identified from information gathered on schools in the October, 1990, Labour Force Survey (LFS). Each school identified will also have the names of pupils to be tested in the schools, usually about 3-4 children. Each test administrator will be assigned about 20 schools to cover, and he/she is responsible for scheduling the visits.

If the school has a telephone number, the visit can be scheduled by calling the principal on the phone. In other cases the school must be visited directly. It is probably best to schedule all visits before beginning the work at the first school. When scheduling the visit, first tell the principal that this work is supported by the Ministry of Education, and that you will present to him or her a letter from the Ministry when you visit. Then explain that you would like to give a reading comprehension and mathematics test to some children and give the principal the names of the children that are to be tested (Ask the principal to inform these students that it is very important that they come to school on the day scheduled). Also, tell the principal that you also will ask him/her some questions and need about 45 minutes of his/her time. Finally, say that you would like to administer some questionnaires to the teachers in the school, which they can fill out themselves in only 10 minutes.

It is very important that you receive the principal's complete cooperation. You must be clear that this data is to be used for research purposes only and is confidential. None of the data will be used to evaluate or criticize any particular school, principal, teacher or student (The letter from the Ministry of Education should state this).

## B. The School Visit

Each school visit should begin in the morning so that there is enough time to test the children. The school administrator and teacher questionnaires should administered later in the day, probably after the children have gone home so that the teachers are free. Try to avoid scheduling visits on days when the children to be tested may be absent, for example on market days (Fridays). When you first arrive at the school, determine how many of the children to be tested are actually present. If more than half are absent it is probably best to proceed with the administrator and teacher questionnaires. If most children are still not present, test those who are and, if time permits, reschedule a visit for a later day.

The following points should be kept in mind during the school visit:

1. When filling out the school administrator questionnaire, do not show any emotions when the principal gives particular responses. If you do, the principal may try to give you answers that he/she thinks will win your approval. Simply be polite and express thankfulness for his/her cooperation.
2. Do not let the school administrator interview slow down too much. If the school administrator starts talking about some other subject, politely lead him or her back to the questions in the questionnaire. If he or she is taking a long time to look up some information, ask him/her to look it up at the end of the interview and move on to the next question.

3. Stress several times that all the data you are gathering, including the children's test scores, will be used only for research purposes and not to pass judgement on the school, its administrators, teachers or students.
4. At the end of the visit remember to thank all the persons involved for their cooperation.

#### Chapter 4: Administering the Locator Tests to the Selected Children

##### A. Purpose of Locator Tests

In general, you will only administer tests to a few children in different grades at each school. Jamaican children, even within the same grade, have a wide variety of reading and mathematics skills. Because of this, it is not always possible to give different students the same tests. If they are all given the same test it may be too hard for some and too easy for others. In order to give an appropriate and fair test to each student, you will first give a very short test called a locator test to each child. The result of this short test, which you as the test administrator will score immediately, will determine which of the longer tests each child should take. This should be explained to the principal if he or she is interested.

##### B. General Procedure for Administering Locator Tests

The children should accompany you to a quiet room with desks or tables and chairs, enough so that the children are far apart and cannot copy from each other. Explain to them that you are going to give them three tests,

one short test and two long ones, and that you will begin with the short ones. Tell them that their performance on these tests will not affect their grades in any way, and that their teachers will not even know how they score on the test. Further, the tests will not determine their educational future in any way at all - they are only for use by the Ministry of Education to help them better understand the current state of education in Jamaica.

In most cases all the children will take the same locator test, since one test is designed for grades 1-6 and the other is designed for grades 6-12. The only exception is schools which have both grades above and below grade 6, such as All-Age schools. Pass out the appropriate locator tests to all the students, then procede as you have been instructed by the special consultant hired by STATIN. When all the children are finished, collect all the tests and tell the children to relax for a minute or two while you correct the tests. Correct the locator tests as instructed and then, based on the results of these tests, choose the appropriate test booklets for each student. Then proceed as explained in Chapter 5.

### C. Special Considerations

1. The principal or perhaps the teachers are likely to ask you what tests you are administering. Tell them that the tests are called the California Achievement Test and were designed in the United States. This set of tests was chosen from a group of similar tests, and this set was thought to be the most relevent to the Jamaican context (i.e. least culturally biased). Future work by the Ministry of Education may focus on developing a similar set of tests for Jamaica, but at present there are no sets of tests developed in Jamaica which apply to all grades the way these sets of tests do.

Chapter 5: Administering the Math and Reading Tests to Selected Children

The details of administering these tests will be explained to you by the special consultant hired by STATIN to provide this training. This chapter just gives some general information.

Based on the results of the locator tests, you will choose an appropriate test booklet for each child. The test booklet contains tests for several different subjects, but you will only administer tests in two subjects, mathematics and reading. These tests will be timed so it is important that you have a watch or some other way of keeping time (a wall clock). For the younger children you will have to administer some parts of the test orally. This may require that you test the younger children first and then older children later, depending on how many children you have to administer the test to. In general, you will have only about 2-4 children per school.

For further details, refer to the materials given to you by the special consultant on testing.

## Chapter 6: Administering the School Administrator Questionnaire

### A. General Procedure

The School Administrator Questionnaire is about 28 pages in length and takes about 45 minutes to administer, depending on the type of school. This questionnaire is administered to the principal or headmaster of the school. Before arriving at the school you should have already made an appointment with this person. When you arrive, give the principal (headmaster) a copy of the questionnaire and explain that you will return later in the day to interview him or her. If for some reason he or she is not available when you arrive at the school, ask to see another knowledgeable school administrator or senior teacher. If no one is available who can supply the information, make an appointment to come back at a later time and leave a copy of the questionnaire for the principal so that he or she can look up any school records that may be needed.

It is important that you explain to the principal (or whoever is being interviewed) that the purpose of this exercise is to gather information for use by the Ministry of Education and other ministries for general research purposes. The data you collect will not be used to evaluate any particular school or school administrator. It is also important that you be polite when administering the questionnaire, and that you do not show any approval regarding the answers given which may provoke the person being interviewed to try and give you answers which he or she make think will please you (see Chapter III).

## B. Specific Instructions

There are 4 basic rules for filling out the school questionnaire:

Rule 1: Anything written in upper case (capital letters) is not read out to the person being interviewed. Anything written in lower case is a question read to the respondent exactly as written.

Rule 2: Write responses to the questions only in the boxes provided, and only in numbers. The only exceptions to this are: 1. On the front page you will write the name of the parish, the name of the school, and your name; 2. In a few questions you are asked to describe unusual answers.

Rule 3: Always obey the skip codes for each question, which are given in brackets after some questions.

Rule 4: Do not show any emotions when certain responses are given, and be polite to the respondent, even if he or she is not polite to you.

The school administrator questionnaire is divided up into 10 sections, each of which is indicated by a letter. The first section (A) asks some general questions and the last section (J) asks questions on communication. You should be able to complete the questionnaire going through the questions exactly in the order they are on the questionnaire. In cases

where the school administrator needs to look up information to answer the question, allow him or her one or two minutes to look it up. If he or she still has trouble finding the information, ask him or her to continue with the rest of the questionnaire - the missing information can be searched for after the questionnaire is completed. In extreme cases you may have to return to the school at a later time to get the necessary information.

Skip Codes. Skip codes are instructions in brackets to skip over several questions which turn out to be unnecessary or irrelevant to the school being visited. They are designed to make your work easier (and also easier on the school administrator) by allowing you to ask only the questions that apply to the school. There are two types of skip codes. The first type apply only to certain answers (response codes) of a question. For example, in question 15 on page 5 of the questionnaire, if a school does not have electricity (the answer to question 15 is NO), then one should move to question 17. However, if the answer is YES one has no special instructions and thus moves on to question 16. The second type require you to skip questions regardless of the answer is given to a certain question. For example, on p. 6, after question 21 one should go to question 24 if the school has no pit latrines. If the school does have pit latrines this instruction is ignored and one goes to question 22 after question 21. The reasoning behind the skip codes should be clear in most cases, but even if it is not clear the skip codes must be followed.

Several questions require answers in terms of Jamaican dollars. In general, it is not necessary to put down the cents after the dollars. The only exception is if the figure is less than one Jamaican dollar. In that case, write a zero for the dollar followed by a decimal point and then the

number of cents (i.e. eighty cents should be written as 0.80). This should happen very infrequently.

Finally, on a few pages (p.12, p.13, p.18 and p.19) of the questionnaire there is a grid (i.e. a set of connected boxes) to fill in. Those filled in on pages 12 and 13 should be self-explanatory - the only thing to remember is to write in the grades yourself, and if there are not enough boxes for the grades draw in additional boxes as needed. The grid filled in on p.18 is also fairly simple, you must simply read the question in the long box at the top for each of the grades in the school. The grid on p.19 should also be self-explanatory. For all of the grids, any unused rows of boxes should simply be left blank.

## Chapter 7: Administering the Teacher Questionnaires

### A. General Procedure

The teacher questionnaire, unlike the school administrator questionnaire, is to be filled in by the teachers themselves, not by you. In schools with ten or fewer teachers, all teachers should fill out the questionnaire. In schools with more than 10 teachers, choose an equal number of teachers from each grade so that the total number is close to ten. Because a principal may try to "randomly" choose his best teachers, you should institute this simple randomization rule: within each grade choose the teacher whose surname (last name) comes first in alphabetical order. For example, if there are 3 teachers for a certain grade with surnames Brown, Smith and Jones, choose Brown if you need one teacher and Brown and Jones if you need two.

After the teachers have been chosen, you explain to them how to fill in the questionnaire and let them sit down to fill it out in a nearby room. You should be nearby so that if they have any questions they can come to you for an explanation. After they have finished, quickly look at each question that it has been completely and correctly filled out. If any questionnaire that is not filled out correctly, politely ask the teacher to try again, and explained clearly any mistakes he or she has done.

### B. Specific Instructions

Once all the teachers have been gathered together in one room, explain to them that the purpose of the exercise is to gather data for research purposes for the Ministry of Education and other ministries. The data will not be used to evaluate any particular school or teachers. You should show them a letter to this effect from the Ministry of Education. If they are still doubtful, they are not required to write their names, but it is very important that they fill out the questionnaire accurately, because the information will be used for planning by the Ministry of Education.

Once you have explained the purpose of this exercise, you need to explain how the questionnaire is to be filled out. First, have them fill out the name of the parish and the school on the front page, as well as the date. The school code can be supplied by you. Then take them through page 2 question by question, stressing the following points:

1. All answers must be in boxes, and they must be code numbers, not words. The only exception are code numbers that are circled.

2. They should follow the skip codes. You should show them the first example of this in question 6 on page 2.
  
3. If there are any difficulties in filling out the questionnaire, they should come and look for you in a nearby room.

After this is done, the rest of the test should be fairly self-explanatory. Tell them that when they finish they should bring the questionnaires to you in a nearby room. When they do so, quickly check them to see that they have been filled out correctly. If there are any errors, politely ask them to correct them. Do not forget to thank them for their cooperation before they leave.