

# **Minnesota Population Center**

## **Editing and Coding Instructions Population Census: 1977 Malawi**

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POPULATION CENSUS 1977  
Census Data Processing Unit  
EDITING AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Census enumeration collects a vast quantity of data: thousands of enumerators collect the information from millions of respondents.

1.2 After the enumeration is carried out the collected information in the form of completed questionnaires is handled by a few hundred persons in the process of manual editing, coding and transcribing the data on magnetic tape. The need for accuracy is as great now as at any stage of Census operation; speed, accuracy and neatness are the essential elements in coding procedure. Since the coded data are the base for tabulation by the computer system, the coding function requires **not** only careful attention in selecting the right codes, but also great care in recording them on the Schedules (Census Questionnaires). A coder/Checker should adhere to the following general rules:-

- (1) Coding should be prominent and distinctive;
- (2) Coding should be neat and legible;
- (3) Extra care should be taken while coding the like digits; viz '0' written as ' ' can be mistaken as '6', or '7' written as ' ' can be mistaken as digit '1';
- (4) The coders will code the information on Questionnaires in the pencils presented for this purpose. No colour other than the presented one will be used for coding;
- (5) Never attempt to scribble over or scratch out any entered codes;
- (6) No correction may be made by the coder to the original description as recorded by the enumerator; corrections, if any, must be made to the codes;
- (7) Erasing in coding is not allowed. In case of corrections strike out the wrong code (neatly and so that it can still be read) and rewrite the new correct code;
- (8) Coding should be done within the proper columns and boxes presented for the purpose and codes should not ride over the descriptive information;
- (9) For the least doubt the Supervisor should be consulted immediately;
- (10) The coders must be careful to ensure that they are performing their job correctly, otherwise the checkers who are checking the coders job will be continually pointing out their omissions/errors and the Supervisors in turn will have to be correcting them;
- (11) All the coded documents will be checked in full in a pencil of different colour from the one used for coding;
- (12) Mistakes in the coded documents should be neatly crossed through and the correct codes written by the checkers in legible hand close to the earlier coding (wherever possible within the appropriate box and preferably above the original codes);
- (13) The checked documents should be marked with a small neat tick at the end of each line;
- (14) In the actual process of coding and checking the coders/checkers may not find suitable codes for some information in the documents. The coders/checkers will then approach their Supervisor, who will instruct them and if necessary will get a new code assigned by the Assistant Statistician in charge of coding. He will take care to see that all copies of the coding manual are amended accordingly. No amendments or modification may be made by the coders, checkers or Coding Supervisors on their own.

2. MANUAL EDITING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

2.1 You will receive a complete E.A for coding at one time, bundled with an Index Slip. You must:-

- (1) Check that the identification details on the slip agree with those on the front of every pad;
- (2) Check that the number of pads on the slips agrees with the number of pads you have been given;
- (3) Check that the sum of the number of DUs on the front of each pad agrees with the number shown on the slip;
- (4) Check that the pads are in correct DU number sequence (re-arrange them if they are not) and that the DUs on the pad covers are a complete sequence with none missing.

2.2 Every time you start a fresh pad check that the identification details on the pad cover agree with those on the top of every form and that there is at least one form for every DU specified on the pad cover.

2.3 Every time you finish a pad record the details on a Work Sheet which will have following form:-

District :..... T/A..... EA.....

Pad Number	Number of DUs	Number of Persons	Number of Vacant Units
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
.			
.			
.			
TOTAL			

2.4 When you finish the batch, total the columns, sign your name at the bottom with the date, see that all the pads are neatly bundled in the correct sequence with the Index Slip on top and then hand the bundle with your Work Sheet to your Supervisor.

2.5 Before inserting any codes it is essential to check that all the information on each questionnaire is consistent. For example check that:-

- (1) Relationship to Head of DU information agrees with the sex in each case;
- (2) That sex also agrees with the name and the question on 'number of wives' and 'number of children' ;
- (3) That if age is less than 5 years the entries marked beyond column 27 of the Questionnaire should be blank;
- (4) That educational details are consistent with age and accupation.

2.6 The best way to do this is to visualise the 'family unit' living in the DU: firstly look at the Relationship to Head; for example say to yourself (not out loud or you will disturb other coders): "here we have a man, a wife and two children - one son and one daughter. The man (check his sex) is aged 30, has one wife, is a graduate and works as a doctor, his wife (check sex) is aged 25 and has 2 children living and 1 who is dead. The son (check sex) is aged 7 and is in Standard 2 and the daughter (check sex) is aged 3 and not at school (and check that there are no entries after question 'i') Both parents were born in Karonga district but their children were born in Lilongwe (where they are now living)."

2.7 If you find an inconsistency consult your Supervisor (for example, if a 'son' is shown as a 'female') but do not alter anything on your own and remember that because something looks improbable it may still be correct (for example, a man as head of DU with a wife of 18 years and six children - but some of them may be from a former marriage - check the children born to her and his age). If the data looks highly improbable then consult the Supervisor - though there will rarely be anything he can do about it. Repeat : do not alter anything without instructions and unless you are absolutely sure that you are right and the enumerator was wrong. Note the difference between an inconsistency, that is, logical impossibility (for example, a female son, or a 5 year old wife) and an improbability (that is something which is unlikely but not logically impossible).

### CODING

After editing the inconsistent entries in the documents the coding procedure will start as described below:

- (1) Code the Region/District Code in columns 1 - 2 of Block 'A' as per the code list Annex I;
- (2) Within each district code that T.A or Ward Code in columns 3 - 4 of Block 'A' as per code list Annex II;
- (3) Code the village number in columns 8, 9, 10 of Block 'A' as per the village Code list in Annex III;
- (4) Line number in columns 14, 15 of Block 'C' must be in sequence within each DU (columns 11, 12, 13). In case of a line number exceeding '10', check for Entry of "X" and the serial number of sheets in Block B. In case of error report to Supervisor immediately;
- (5) The identification information in Blocks 'A' and 'B' of the questionnaires and the line number (columns 14 - 15) must be checked before starting the coding of the other information items, that is, columns marked from 16 to 68 in the questionnaire. In case of any disturbance in sequence of above mentioned items it must be immediately reported to coding Supervisors.
- (6) Description of names and relationship to Head is not to be coded by the coders. The information in column Relation to Head of D.U. should be used for editing/checking the consistency of other items as discribed above.
- (7) Sex. Coders must write M or F in column '16' for each line separately (after checking for consistency) in accordance with the enumerators answer to question (d).
- (8) Race In column '17' code the enumerators answers to question (e) as follows:-

For Entry 'A' code 1 in column 17

For Entry 'AS' code 2 in column 17

For Entry 'E' code 3 in column 17

For Entry 'O' code 4 in column 17

For missing answers to question (e) report to Supervisors and code as per his instructions.

- (9) Age. The age of each respondent has been already inserted by the enumerators in columns 18 - 19. The coder has to check this entry for its consistency with Relation to Head of DU, Education, Marital status, Fertility, and Industry and Occupation items. For no entries in columns 18 - 19 code ' X X '. Make sure that two digits have been shown by the enumerator and if not insert a zero as applicable.
- (10) Parents Alive. The enumerator should have inserted the coded answer, either a '0', '1' or '9' in each position (that is columns 20 & 21). In case of any other digits (or blanks) then amend them to (or insert) 9.
- (11) Migration. Code the answer to the place of birth (question (h) ) in columns 22 - 24 and the answer to the place of residence in September, 1976 (question (i)) in columns 25 - 27 as follows:-
- (i) If 'Abroad', that is, 'A' : use country code in Annex IV;
- (ii) If 'District', that is 'D' : use the two digit District codes (Annex I) in columns 22/23 and 25/26 and code columns 24 and 27 with a zero;
- (iii) If 'Town', that is, 'T' : then code as follows:-
- (a) If the town name is the name of a district (for example Chitipa Town or Zomba Town) use the District Code in columns 22/23 and 25/26 as above but code columns 24 and 27 with a '2' (not a zero).
- (b) If the towns are one of the following code accordingly:-
- Mzuzu 053                      Ngabu 283
- Balaka 213
- Liwonde 214
- (c) Otherwise, that is for all other 'towns' simply insert the District Codes with a zero in column 24 and 27 (that is treat them as a 'D' answer and not as a 'T' answer).

A few examples will make this clear:-

Place of Birth					Residence in Sept. 1976)				
		22	23	24			25	26	27
Blantyre	T	2	4	2	USA	A	4	1	4
Blantyre	D	2	4	0	Mzuzu	T	0	5	3
Zomba	D	2	2	0	Zomba	T	2	2	2
Phalombe	T	2	7	0	Mulanje	T	2	7	2

- (12) In School. This column should have been coded '0' or '1' by the enumerator for all persons of 5 years or over. If it has been coded with any other number or left blank (other than for under 5's) then provided the next question (Highest level attended') is answered 'NO' then code column 28 as '0'; otherwise refer the matter to your Supervisor.
- (13) Educational Level. Use the code at Annex V (checking the age limits given in the Annex - if outside these limits then refer to the Supervisors).

- (14) Marital Status. This question, and all subsequent ones, should not have been answered for persons under 10 years of age. Code by repeating the letter N, M, W or D in column 31. (It should be consistent with age, relationship to head of DU, and the answers to questions(m) and (n).
- (15) Number of Wives. This should be completed only for men; it should be blank for women. The enumerator should have coded it '0' (that is, no wives, not consistent with marital status = M) or 1 to 9; if it has been left blank for a male then insert X if he is recorded or married in question (e) or '0' if he is never married, widower, as 'divorced'. If the enumerator has put down a number larger than 9 (eg. 12) then cross it through and correct it to '9'.
- (16) Number of Children. Columns 32 - 38 must be blank for all males but must contain some number in every column for every woman of 10 years or over - even if they are only zeros. Note that the number 'born alive' (columns 33 - 34) is the total number of live births which therefore cannot be less than the number still living (columns 35 - 36). One mistake the enumerators might make is to put their figures in the wrong column : for example, if he has put a '1' in columns 33 and 35 it is more likely that he has put them in the wrong column than that he has omitted the zero from 'ten'. In such cases discuss with your Supervisors. Columns 37 and 38 show the number of male and the number of female children born to the women in the previous 12 months: they will usually be shown as '00' by the enumerator (that is no children during the year), 10 (that is one son) or 01 (that is one daughter). Higher numbers are possible (for example, twins or two pregnancies in rapid succession) such as '11', '02' or '20' but any higher numbers should be referred to the Supervisor (as also should any EA's where the enumerator seems to be recording higher numbers than one child in more than say about once in every pad).

(NOTE : a check on this item can be made against the age and sex of the child provided that it is living in the same DU : but this may not always be the case : consult the Supervisor if the details look suspicious).

- (17) Work Last Week. Not to be coded.

- (18) Economic Activity.

- (a) Activity Status : The enumerator should have written one of the descriptions given at the foot of question (p) ~~and~~ the answer; if they have then code columns 39 and 40 using the codes given in Annex VI. If it has been left blank but details of occupation and industry have been given then consult the Supervisor as to the code to be used; otherwise code columns 39 and 40 as XX.
- (b) Occupation : Use the code given in Annex VII and insert into columns 41 - 42. If the occupation is not stated in Annex VII either precisely or sufficiently closely for you to be absolutely certain of the code to be used, then consult the Supervisor.
- (c) Industry : Use the codes given in Annex VIII to complete columns 43 - 44 in the same way as the occupation code was used to complete columns 41 - 42.

- (19) Worked Abroad. Code column 45 in accordance with the answers to question (s) as follows:-

NO	:	1
YC	:	2
YO	:	3
Not stated	:	X

- (20) Years Since Return. This should be blank if column 45 is '1', or otherwise columns 46 - 47 should show the number of years since last return to Malawi. If column 45 is '2', '3' or 'X' and columns 46 - 47 are blank then insert X into both column 46 and 47.

NOTE : If the form relates to an institution or other form of 'not a dwelling unit' (in which case columns 11 - 13 should be coded 999), or if it relates to a DU but there is a continuation sheet, then Blocks D to F should be blank. If it is an institution there will only be information in Block F on the final sheet but all the blocks in the case of a DU with a continuation sheet on the final sheet should have been completed. If this is not the case consult your Supervisor.

(21) Block D

- (i) In answer to question (u) the enumerator should have written 'Yes' or 'No' : if Yes code 1 in column 48  
if No code 2 in column 48.

If there is no answer then code 3 in column 48.

- (ii) In answer to question (v) the enumerator should have marked one alternative : if he has then code column 49 as follows:-

- (a) Piped water into DU : Code
- (b) Piped outside DU : Code 2
- (c) Borehole : Code 3
- (d) Other : Code 4

If there is an X in more than one box then code according to the top box so marked. If there is no box marked code column 49 with a '5'.

(22) Block E

If any deaths occurred in the DU over the past year the sex and age of each person who died should be shown. Their age (in years) should have been inserted by the enumerator after their sex (M or F). If a sex has been given insert M or F on the same line under the word 'CODE' and if no age has been given then insert XX in the appropriate line under the heading 'AGE (YRS)'. If no sex data are shown then leave the Block blank (in this case the enumerator should have ticked the square at the bottom right). Note if there were more than 4 deaths in any particular DU then you should insert the details of the fifth or subsequent deaths on the forms of another DU (for statistical purposes it is not important in which DU the death occurred provided it is within the same (F.A.) Therefore if the enumerator has written details of a fifth or subsequent death at the foot of a form (or on the back) then transfer this information to another DU (adding a footnote explaining where the data are from) and code in the usual way.

(23) Block F

- (i) Interview. If the form has been completed with details of any persons this item should have been coded '1' by the enumerator. Only if there is no information after the DU number should it be coded '2'. If this has not been done then insert '1' or '2' as appropriate.
- (ii) Number of Persons in DU. Columns 63/4, 65/6 and 67/8 should show respectively the number of males, females and persons in the DU or institution. Each column should have a digit in it if only a zero; check that this is so and that the numbers shown agree with the number of persons by each sex recorded in Block C. (If the total number of persons is in excess of 99 - for example for a large institution - consult the Supervisor immediately).