



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USER GUIDE: USAID POVERTY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MALAWI

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DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

This document is intended to guide users on the proper use of the USAID Poverty Assessment Tool (PAT) for Malawi. A copy should be given to each interviewer during the training, and it should be reviewed thoroughly by all those involved in the interviewing process, including those who will be doing the quality control and data processing.

This PAT survey is divided into 5 sections with *Interviewer Instructions* spread throughout. The sections are:

- *Client Information* (page 3)
- *Quality Control Checks Box* (page 4)
- *Household Roster* (page 6)
- *Black Box* (page 7)
- *Household Questionnaire* (page 8)

The following page outlines each of these sections on the Malawi PAT. The remainder of the guide contains detailed information on each section, including information on asking questions, recording answers, beginning and concluding the interview, and general interviewing procedures and techniques.

Data from the 2004-2005 Second Integrated Household Survey was used to develop the Malawi PAT, which closely replicates the poverty results of the 2004-2005 survey using a smaller number of carefully chosen, statistically derived indicators.

For more information on, or to download the PAT Surveys, Data Entry Templates, or other implementation materials, see www.povertytools.org.

Interviewer Instructions

These are throughout the survey, indicated by "Interviewer:"

Client Information Includes "Survey Number" at top right

Client Assessment Survey - Malawi

Interviewer: Fill out the information below before the survey begins. Do not ask the respondent for this information.

Date of Interview _____
 Interviewer (code) _____
 Branch (code) _____
 Location/Region _____
 Northern Region.....1
 Central Region.....2
 Southern Region.....3
 Client Location: _____ Urban=0, Rural=1
 Time in Program: _____ Months
 Client or ID # _____

Quality Control Checks
 Field Supervisor
 Date _____ Initials _____
 Headquarters
 Date _____ Initials _____
 Data Processor
 Date _____ Initials _____

Quality Control Checks Box

Interviewer: Introduce the survey to the respondent. Say: "Hello. My name is ____ I work for the organization _____. We are trying to learn a little bit more about the clients we work with, and so I have a few questions I would like to ask today. It should only take us about 20 minutes, and the answers you provide will be put together with answers from other households. All of your answers are completely confidential and your name will not be given with your answers. Are you willing to take some time to answer these questions today?" After he/she agrees, proceed with the dialogue below.

Interviewer: "I would like to ask you some questions about the people in your household. Let me tell you a little bit about what we mean by 'household'. For our purposes today, members of a household are those that live together and eat from the 'same pot'. Each person contributes to and benefits from the household. It should include anyone who has lived in your house for 6 of the last 12 months, but it does not include anyone who lives here but eats separately. Do you have any questions about that?" Answer any questions the respondent has before proceeding.

Interviewer: Ask the respondent to list all members of the household, using the definition above. After completing Column A, then ask for the information in Columns B-G, filling out each row completely before moving to the next household member. Write the information down in the chart as he/she relays it to you. Say to the respondent: "Now I would like you to identify each person in your household and then answer some basic questions about each person."

A. Household Member	B. Sex	C. Relation to household head	D. Age	E. What is [NAME]'s present marital status? (If under age 12, write zero 0)	F. Can [NAME] read a one-page letter in Chichewa? (If under age 18, write 0)	G. What is the highest educational qualification [NAME] has acquired? (If under age 5, write 0)
1	Female.....0 Male.....1	Head.....1 Spouse.....2 Child.....3 Parent.....4 Grandchild.....5 Grandparent.....6 Other.....7	(use 12 spaces)	Monogamous married or non-femal union.....1 Polygamous married or non-femal union.....2 Separated.....3 Divorced.....4 Widow or widower.....5 Never married.....6	No.....0 Yes.....1	Never attended / None.....1 P.B.C.....2 J.C.E.....3 M.S.C.E.....4 Non-univ. diploma.....5 Univ. degree.....6 Post-grad degree.....7
2) Respondent						
3)						
4)						
5)						
6)						
7)						
8)						
9)						
10)						
11)						
12)						
13)						
14)						
15)						

Household Roster

Interviewer: Skip this section and return to fill in the answers after the interview. Do not ask the respondent these questions; fill in the answers from the information in the preceding table.

2. Number of people living in household (record number of members from column A in the roster): _____

3. Age of household head (record age from Column D of person identified as household head in Column C): _____

4. Marital status of household head (record from column E the marital status of person identified as household head in Column C) _____

5. Number of household members 18 years and older who can read (add up those with "1" in Column F) _____

6. Number of household members (not including head) who have never attended school or have no education as their highest educational qualification level (add up those with "1" in Column G, not including the household head) _____

Black Box

Household Questionnaire

This consists of all of the remaining questions on the survey

Interviewer: "Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your home."

7. How many separate rooms do the members of your household occupy, not including bathrooms, toilets, storerooms, and garages? Number _____

Interviewer: For questions with multiple choice answers, do not read the answers. Ask respondent the question and match the answer to the most similar option on the survey. If respondent's answer is unclear, probe until you find an adequate answer.

8. The floor of the main dwelling is predominantly made of what material?
 Sand.....1 Smooth cement.....3 Tile.....5
 Smoothed mud.....2 Wood.....4 Other.....6

9. What kind of toilet facility does your household use?
 Flush toilet.....1 Traditional latrine with roof.....3 None.....5
 Ventilated, improved latrine.....2 Traditional latrine without roof.....4 Other.....6

10. Do you have electricity working in your dwelling? no=0, yes=1 _____

Interviewer: "Now I would like to ask you about a few household items that members of your household may own."

11. Does your household own a bed? no=0, yes=1 _____

12. Does your household own a coffee table (for the sitting room)? no=0, yes=1 _____

13. Does your household own an iron for pressing clothes? no=0, yes=1 _____

14. Does your household own a tape player, CD player, or HIFI? no=0, yes=1 _____

15. Does your household own a bicycle? no=0, yes=1 _____

16. Over the past month, did anyone in your household purchase or pay for powder clothes soap? no=0, yes=1 _____

17. Did anyone in your household cultivate a dimba garden in the last completed dry season (Interviewer: give year)? no=0, yes=1 _____

18. Has any member of your household raised or owned livestock or poultry during the past 12 months? (Interviewer: if answer is "no", write 0 for questions 19 and 20 and end the interview) no=0, yes=1 _____

19. During the last twelve months, has any member of your household raised any goats? (Interviewer: if answer is "no", write 0 for question 20 and end the interview) no=0, yes=1 _____

20. How many goats does your household own at present? Number _____

Interviewer: Look over the survey to see if you have missed any questions. If you have, please ask those questions of the respondent. If not, it is the end of the interview. Remember to thank the respondent for his/her time in helping you answer these questions!

Now return to the questions in the box at the top of this page and fill in the answers.

General Instructions

Except where noted, **all** the information on the survey form must be completed and entered into the data processing software, or that record/interview will not be included in the poverty calculation. Thus, it is extremely important that all interviewers are sufficiently trained, have an opportunity to practice applying the questionnaire, and will ensure that each survey is complete and legible before leaving the interview.

Interviewer Instructions – In numerous locations throughout the survey instructions are included for the interviewer. These instructions are in *italics* and are preceded by “Interviewer” in bold letters. The portions of the instructions enclosed in quotation marks are recommended phrases to be read to the respondent. They usually introduce a new section. Other instructions are NOT to be read but are for the interviewer’s information.

For the purpose of this guide, we will provide additional information on Interviewer Instructions as they appear throughout the survey.

Client Information

Complete the top section of the questionnaire with the appropriate information before beginning the interview. Most of the information in this section can usually be taken from the program records (MIS), and should be filled out prior to the interview, whenever possible.

“Survey Number” – Each questionnaire **must** have a **unique** survey number that is written on each page of the survey (in case pages become separated) before the interviewer goes into the field. It is essential for each survey to have its own, unique number, with no repetitions, in order for the data cleaning and analysis to function properly. Sequential numbering (001, 002, 003...) is recommended and additional coding can be included, if desired, to help identify when and where an interview took place. For example, the first 2 digits of a survey number could represent the year in which the interview was done, the second 2 digits could represent the branch number, and the final 3 digits could be the sequential numbering system. With such a design, survey number “0711001” would indicate that it was administered in the year 2007 to a client of Branch 11 and that the respondent was number 1 (001) on the list.

“Date of Interview” – (optional) Record the date of the interview. This is useful for tracking the survey process, including having the option of comparing results from different time periods.

“Interviewer (code)” – (optional) A unique code should be assigned to each interviewer before the interviewing process begins. During the quality control process, it is helpful to know which interviewers are making mistakes so that it can be brought to their attention, and additional training can be provided, as needed.

“Branch (code)” – (optional) This number identifies the branch to which the respondent belongs. This can be useful for tracking the forms and also allows for comparison of branches if one is doing additional data analysis.

“Location/Region” – Indicate the region of the country in which the respondent lives. If the Location/Region response options (Northern, Central, Southern) are not well known by your interviewers, then it is recommended to create a master list of all municipalities or branch offices where your clients are located, along with the regional codes corresponding to each of the municipalities or branches.

“Client Location” – The determination of the respondent’s status as either urban or rural should match the definition used by your country’s national statistics office for classifying the population.

“Time in Program” – (optional) This is the amount of time in months, not years, the respondent has been involved in the program according to your records. If the information is not available, the respondent may be asked. If the response is given in years, then translate that into months. Do not include periods of time when the respondent was not a client (if they left the program and came back). This field can be used when doing additional analysis, for example, comparing client attributes by amount of time in the program.

“Client or ID #” – (optional) Use the same client identification number that you use in your client records (MIS). Some organizations create unique ID numbers, while others use the client’s national ID number. This can be used to help verify that the correct respondent is interviewed. The Client ID number is used instead of the respondent’s name in order to maintain confidentiality. However, to ensure complete confidentiality, the ID number should be crossed out (made illegible) once the Sampling and Survey Tracking Coordinator has confirmed that the proper respondent was interviewed.

Quality Control Checks Box

This is to be completed as follows:

- The Field Supervisor signs and dates it while still in the field, after he/she has reviewed the survey for missing, illegible or inconsistent answers.
- The Project Manager or Sampling and Survey Tracking Coordinator signs and dates it at headquarters after confirming that the survey is properly completed and that it is consistent with the sampling plan.
- The Data Processor signs and dates it to confirm that he/she was able to enter the data into the database accurately and completely.

Interviewer Instructions – Introduce the survey. The introduction printed on the original PAT survey is recommended; your team will have customized the introduction for your location and cultural appropriateness. The introduction should include the following components:

1. Introduction of yourself (the interviewer)
2. Request to speak to the client / beneficiary to be interviewed
3. Description of the survey’s purpose and how long it will take
4. Request permission to conduct the interview
5. Ask client / beneficiary if they have any questions
6. Description of the definition of household

Intro Parts 1-3: Many PAT implementers have reported that the initial client approach and introduction are the most important parts of the interview so be sure to be clear and courteous and to respect all appropriate cultural norms.

While introducing the survey, be sure to describe the purpose of the survey as agreed upon by the survey team and supervisors. While it is important to be honest and open with respondents about the purpose of the survey, giving too much detail could bias their responses. If respondents think that their answers will have an impact on their program participation, they may try to give answers that make them look more or less poor. It is usually sufficient to let respondents know that you are ‘trying to learn more about our clients.’

Also understand that the poverty assessment survey uses a limited number of questions to estimate which households are below the extreme poverty line, but it does not try to capture ‘all’ assets or dimensions of poverty. This is why it may seem at times that specific questions are not ‘good’ indicators of poverty, or that other questions that seem as though they would be good indicators of poverty do not appear on the survey. It is the specific *combination* of questions that predicts a household’s wealth status.

Intro Parts 4 & 5: Asking permission to proceed with the survey and answering any questions are important for building trust with the respondent.

Intro Part 6: Since some people may attribute different meanings to the word “household,” a standardized definition of the term must be used to maintain consistency in the survey. An explanation of this definition will provide the respondent with an understanding of who should and should not be included when listing the members of the household. As the interviewer is recording the names of the household members in the roster list, he or she should remind the respondent of the definition to make sure the list is accurate according to the definition. It is a natural tendency to just list the immediate family members, so it is important to ensure that the respondent is using the definition provided in the survey introduction (and explained below).

In order to be considered part of the household, a person must meet both of the following criteria:

1. Generally speaking, a household member is someone who both contributes to and uses the resources (food, materials, and other household items) of the household. If someone stays in the house but does not both contribute to it and take from it, he or she is not a household member. People with limited capacity to contribute to the household (because they are too old, young, or ill) are still considered part of the household.

2. A household member must live in the house the majority of the time. If someone has lived outside the household for more than six out of the last twelve months, he or she is not a household member. Exceptions to this rule are for those who have joined the family recently, such as a newborn, adopted child, or spouse (newlywed) or student who lives at a boarding school and only comes home during holidays. Another exception is that the head of the household is always considered part of the household, even if he or she lives away for most of the year. It is up to the person who is being interviewed to determine who is the head of household. In general, the head of household is the person who provides the prime source of income and/or makes most decisions for the household.

Household Roster

The purpose of the roster is to learn about the members of the household and build trust with the respondent. Collecting household information with a roster will facilitate data collection. It is harder for the respondent to remember and answer questions about all the members of the household without listing them and asking specifically about each member. Using a roster helps identify all the members in an organized fashion, making sure nothing is left out, and also provides a rich level of information that can be used for further analysis.

1. *Filling out the Household Roster* – First, ask the respondent to list all the members of the household. Record this information in column A, and make sure the list of household members is complete before asking for additional information. Then, one member at a time, ask all the remaining questions in columns B through G. Record all the information pertaining to a household member in the same row, and then move on to the next household member (row).
 - A. “Household Member” – Notice the word “respondent” appears at the top of the roster list. Always fill out information for the respondent first. If the respondent is not comfortable giving you the first names of the other household members, you can write their relationship to the respondent, instead—such as “brother1”, “sister 1”, “sister 2”, etc., to help assure the respondent that the information will be treated confidentially.
 - B. “Sex” – When the respondent lists the members of the household, the sex will often be easy to guess. However, you should confirm the proper sex of each household member with the respondent.
 - C. “What is [NAME]'s relation to the head of household?” – BE CAREFUL. This is NOT the relation to the respondent! You may need to probe to make sure you are capturing the relation of each family member to the “head of household.” It is left to the respondent to decide who they consider to be the head of the household. If they are not

sure, do not understand the term “head of household” (which may occur in rural areas), or insist that both the husband and wife share the decision-making and are both heads of the household, then more specific criteria can be used. These criteria could include who provides the most support or who makes most of the decisions for the family.

- D. “How old is [NAME]?” – Record age in complete years only. Do not include decimals or fractions, or round up to the next number. For newborns, put “0” if they have not reached 1 year of age.
- E. “What is [NAME]’s present marital status?” – Only ask this for household members age 12 and over. For those under 12, enter zero. A non-formal union can constitute marriage and is acceptable for selecting the “married” status; a formal marriage is not required. Code 2 (polygamous) should be used to describe both men with multiple wives and women who are married to a man with more than one spouse.
- F. “Can [NAME] read a one-page letter in Chichewa?” – Only answer this for household members age 18 and over. For those under 18, enter zero. This question only asks about reading, not writing.
- G. “What is the highest educational qualification [NAME] has acquired?” – Only answer this for household members age 5 and over. For those under 5, enter zero. This is the highest educational qualification the individual has *passed*. If the individual sat for a qualifying exam and did not pass, select the next lowest level. Note that Adult Literacy has been added as an answer choice as of August 2010, based on user feedback.

Black Box

The five questions that are inside the Black Box after the household roster (#2 - #6) are NOT to be asked of the person being interviewed, but instead filled out by the interviewer *after* the interview has been completed.

Interviewer Instructions – “Skip this section and return to fill in the answers after the interview. Do not ask the respondent these questions; fill in the information from the information in the preceding table.” It is very important that the interviewer does NOT try to complete this section during the interview, as it will not only break the flow of the interview, but will also greatly increase the chance of errors if the interviewer tries to get it all done at the same time.

After the interview is completed, the interviewer will take the information collected in the roster and calculate the answers to the questions in the Black Box beneath the roster. This is an area with a lot of room for human error, so it is very important to review these responses as part of the quality control process. The proper procedures for interpreting the roster responses and filling out the questions in the black box (#2 - #6) should also be reviewed and practiced extensively during the interviewer training.

2. **“Number of people living in household (*record number of members from column A in the roster*)”** – Record the total number of people listed in Column A of the household roster. When collecting the roster information, be sure to probe to make sure that everyone meeting the definition of “household” is included in the list.

3. **“Age of household head (*record age from Column D of person identified as household head in Column C*)”** – Identify which household member is listed as the household head in column C (code = ‘1’), and then record that person’s age from column D. Be sure to record only their age in full years.
4. **“Marital status of household head (*record from Column E the marital status of person identified as household head in Column C*)”** – Identify which household member is listed as the household head in Column C (code = ‘1’), and then record that person’s marital status from Column E.
5. **“Number of household members 18 years and older who can read a letter in Chichewa (*add up those with “1” in Column F*)”** – Verify that only household members age 18 and older are included.
6. **“Number of household members (not including head) who have never attended school or have no education as their highest educational qualification level (*add up those with “1” in Column G, not including the household head*)”** – Verify that only household members age 5 and older are included.

Household Questionnaire

Interviewer Instructions – “Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your home.” These transitional comments are important for letting the respondent know when you are changing to a different topic.

7. **“How many separate rooms do the members of your household occupy, not including bathrooms, toilets, storerooms, and garages?”**
 - A room used for both eating and sleeping counts as 1 room.
 - If a room is divided by fabric, folding screens, cartons, plastic or other temporary material, the room is considered as 1 room.
 - Minor rooms in the dwelling should be excluded from the room count. These include bathrooms and toilets, storerooms, carport/garage, khondes, and so on.
 - However, you should include all other rooms, including rooms that are usually unoccupied, such as those that are reserved for guests.
 - Note that many houses in rural areas will consist of a single room. These should be included in the room count.
 - For example, all of the qualifying rooms in the separate houses of dwellings made up of several separate structures should be counted.
 - A room that is occupied by a boarder who is not a member of the household but meets the other criteria above should be counted.

Interviewer Instructions – “For questions with multiple choice answers, do not read the answers. Ask the respondent the question and match the answer to the most similar option on the survey. If respondent’s answer is unclear, probe until you find an adequate answer.”

Reading out the answer options is a LAST RESORT. If it comes to the point where reading is necessary, say: “I am going to read to you a list of several options. Please do not answer until you have heard all [number] options.”

8. **“The floor of the main dwelling is predominantly made of what material?”** – If more than one type of material is used, record the predominant material (the one with the most coverage).
9. **“What kind of toilet facility does your household use?”** - The primary features of ventilated improved latrines consist of an enclosed structure (roof and walls) with a large diameter (110mm), PVC vertical ventilation pipe running outside the structure from the pit of the latrine to vent above the roof. They often will have concrete slabs containing the latrine hole.
10. **“Do you have electricity working in your dwelling?”**

Interviewer Instructions – “Now I would like to ask you about a few household items that members of your household may own.”

Transition to questions on household assets. All of the questions should be asked, even if the respondent appears very unlikely to own such an asset. Include items even if they are broken or not in working order.

Users have reported difficulty in specifying definitions for some of the following questions. For example, they were unsure of what constitutes a ‘bed’ – Does it have to have a wooden frame? Can it be homemade? Because there is no source documentation to support this definition further, the questions should be asked as written and interpretation left up to the interviewer.

Note: Make sure the respondent is speaking for the *entire* household. If you suspect that the respondent is answering only based on what assets he or she has, be sure to emphasize “any member of your household” when reading the question to the respondent.

11. **“Does your household own a bed?”**
12. **“Does your household own a coffee table (for the sitting room)?”**
13. **“Does your household own an iron for pressing clothes?”**

14. **“Does your household own a tape player, CD player, or HiFi?”** – This does not include radios.

15. **“Does your household own a bicycle?”**

16. **“Over the past month, did anyone in your household purchase or pay for powder clothes soap?”** – Do not include information on other kinds of soap (such as bar soap).

Interviewer Instructions – “Now I would like to ask you about your household’s farming activities.” These transitional comments are important for letting the respondent know when you are changing to a different topic.

17. **“Did anyone in your household cultivate a *dimba* garden in [last completed dry season]?”** – State year of the last completed dry season or give some other reference.

18. **“Has any member of your household raised or owned livestock or poultry during the last 12 months?”** – If the answer is “no,” write 0 here and for questions 19 and 20, then end the interview.

19. **“During the last 12 months, has any member of your household raised any goats.”** – If the answer is “no,” write 0 here and for question 20, then end the interview.

20. **“How many goats does your household *own* at present?”** – Only include animals that are currently owned; past ownership does not count.

Interviewer Instructions – “Look over the survey to see if you have missed any questions. If you have, please ask those questions of the respondent. If not, it is the end of the interview. Remember to thank the respondent for his/her time in helping you answer these questions!”

“Now return to the questions in the box at the top of this page and fill in the answers.”
After ending the interview, go back to the Black Box and fill in the response boxes with the appropriate answers from the roster. Double check to be sure that all the values were calculated correctly.