

Samoa Experience in Census Planning

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

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Samoa 2011 Census Planning and Design and Coordination
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PURPOSE

1. To briefly summarize census planning and design practices in Samoa comparing the experiences of 2001, 2006 and 2011; and discuss lessons learnt in 2006 that were incorporated into the 2011 census planning and design with a view to improving quality and timeliness;

PAST LESSONS LEARNT TO PLAN THE PHC 2011

Lesson 1: Design census early and secure government support first

1. Every country has its own way of census-undertaking hence what is done in one country is not necessary the same in others. In general securing government's support ensures a steady flow of funds to implement activities. It also helps to gain public support and improve the level of census response. To gain government support, the census organization must be well prepared to produce a solid project design, detailed costing and a realistic work plan. Knowing how busy the government is with many other important projects, it is very crucial to submit the census proposal very early.
2. For Samoa, we learned from the 2001 and 2006 Population and Housing censuses (PHC) that the early submission of the census proposal which was two years before the census enumeration was successful in gaining the early support from our government and AusAID in funding both censuses.
3. In preparation for the PHC 2011, we followed the same "early bird" strategy. Though the census design has changed considerably in terms of new adopted technology, equipment and costing, still to date, we have already secured our government's full support for the PHC 2011. We have also secured SPC's technical assistances in required areas, as well as funding support from UNFPA for July-December 2010 and more in the future. Our Ministry of Finance also gave the assurance that they will continue to secure more census donors for this 4-year project (2010-2013).

Lesson 2: Produce accurate listing and maps of household buildings

4. The accurate listing of households in the enumeration area and the correct identification of the household buildings on the map will greatly help the Enumerator to know his/her directions quickly within the allocated area. If the listing is incomplete, then the Enumerator will not enumerate the missing households. Similarly, if the map does not identify the correct household on the list, the Enumerator will have problems on the field and will most likely missed out households with location errors on the map.

5. In the PHC 2006 we learned that the Listing of households was incomplete in some areas. This was caused by the addition/deletion of households after the listing fieldwork, and also because the fieldworkers missed some households during the listing fieldwork. We also learned that in many cases the listed household number did not match the mapped house on the field. These problems created unnecessary frustrations on the part of the Enumerator causing under-coverage of households in the census. In consequences, the sampling procedures based on the PHC 2006 Household List also suffered some errors.
6. In planning the PHC 2011, we took these lessons into serious considerations. In order to reduce errors and improve the listing and mapping issues, Samoa will put into practice for the first time, the application of the new GIS technology via the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and satellite images to capture more accurate listing and house images on the field.
7. We learned from SPC GIS specialists that these technologies have greatly improved the census mapping and listing in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. We are hoping this new technology will also produce better quality results for Samoa's PHC 2011.
8. In preparation of the PHC 2011 budget, we have allocated special funds to purchase more GIS equipment, and it is worth-noting that UNFPA has also given their funding support for GIS equipment, and, will also help to re-mobilize some GPS resources from other countries for use in Samoa.
9. To date, we completed a special training on GPS and satellite imagery in February 2010, with technical assistance provided by Scott Pontifex of SPC. Since then, we have practiced these skills on the field using six GPS, and, we have also been applying these skills to locate business buildings when we conducted our Business Survey in April-May 2010 and had since continued to practice more these technologies.
10. In terms of partnership, we've signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) at the end of June 2010 to work in partnership with our local GIS user Electrical Power Corporation (EPC) and possibly MNRE if needed and we also have the great support from our regional partners SPC and SOPAC. We've learned that the sharing of GIS resources and expertise will go a long way in reducing costs and the sustainability of GIS and cartography for future survey purposes.

Lesson 3: Lessen data processing time and dissemination of census reports

11. Census data is the most important output in any census-undertaking. The data will provide the most up-to-date national indicators pertaining to population changes, population development, accessibility to socio-economic services, political administration, technological growth, environmental indicators, and, so forth. If the organization is not able to meet the target time in releasing the census data, then all plans that depended on census data will be greatly affected.
12. In the PHC 2006, Samoa experienced several problems in meeting their output target time. The foremost problem was a lot of households were reported unavailable during the enumeration period in the urban areas in addition to missing/refusal households. As a consequence, the office re-organized another fieldwork and then extended the enumeration time to another 3 months to follow-up non-response households. As shown below, the target times had fallen far short of the census expectations. The extension of the enumeration time caused major delays in all other areas that followed. Though late, we still managed to complete and delivered the outputs.

13. In preparation for the 2011 census, SBS again made serious decisions to solve the delays of work on the field and data processing. In this quest, SBS plans to invest more on publicity and awareness programs to minimize non-response. To solve the delays in data processing, SBS decided for the first time to put into practice the **scanning technology** as used in many other countries to speed up data processing, compilation and dissemination of census results. Technical assistances will be provided by SPC.

CENSUS ITEMS 2006	TARGET	ACTUAL	DELAY
1. Census	November 2006	February 2007	3 months
2. Data entry/edit	March 2007	July 2007	4 months
3. Tabulation	August 2007	December 2007	4 months
4. Analysis/writing	September 2007	June 2008	9 months
5. Report	December 2007	July 2008	7 months

14. To date, we sent our IT personnel in February 2010 to observe and report on the scanning technology in Vanuatu and upon his positive recommendations and Phil Bright of SPC, we tend to believe that this new technology will greatly help to speed up data processing and avoid delays in delivering the PHC 2011 outputs especially the census data.
15. For designing the Listing Forms and Census Questionnaire to suit printing requirements for scanning, we purchased the In-Design software in April 2010 and started learning the software on our own with a few tips from SPC. To date, the census staffs have already re-designed the PHC 2006 questionnaire and the 2011 Listing Form using In-Design and have now started working on the PHC 2011 questionnaire.
16. As part of the printing preparation for the new scanning technology, we worked with Phil of SPC to arrange test prints with the local printers in Samoa, to test whether Samoa can provide the required printing. The printers were given the job in April 2010 and the test prints were sent over to SPC for testing in May 2010. I am glad to say that one of the local printers did this job well. Hence, printing services is available in Samoa for the census.

Lesson 4: Plan more aggressive census campaigns & public awareness programs

17. Effective census campaigns and vigorous public awareness programs are expensive but the rewards are substantial in terms of high census response. Publicity not only helps to educate the public about data use but will also eliminate personal fears of disclosing personal information.
18. In 2006, we learned that the census campaigns and awareness programs were not as enthusiastic as it was in 2001. The publicity was also done very late via radio messages and televised advertisements. We also realized that the allocation for publicity was under-budget.
19. In preparation for the 2011 census, we ensured that sufficient budget had been put in place to produce various publicity programs and we have also extended the duration of publicity throughout the year so that every household will get the messages across before the enumeration.
20. To date, we have consulted various television/video companies to discuss costs and census messages. We also set plans to approach the village councils and village church leaders to relay census messages in due time. We have also started planning other ways of strengthening census publicity like getting

involved in the World Population Day celebration on the 12th of July 2010 to be hosted by the Ministry of Health and will also have radio and television programs throughout next year.

21. In June 2010, we conducted a three half-day workshop to kick-off the PHC 2011 census questionnaire consultations. It is to be noted that in this workshop, we targeted for the first time ever Samoa's 49 members of Parliament which included our Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament to participate in the census consultations. I'm glad to report that the two top men in Samoa never missed the three days consultations and the Speaker volunteered to chair the consultation. In addition to this workshop, thirty different government and non-governmental organizations were also invited of which 70 percent turned up to make power-point presentation of their data needs from the census. The other 30 percent did not have data needs in the PHC 2011. This workshop was fully funded by UNFPA via the Samoa Parliamentarian Group on Population and Development.
22. We learned from this workshop that our parliamentarians are quite willing to play a significant role in the census campaigns in their respective-districts and they have given us their full support for the PHC 2011. We do recommend that you use the same elite group in your countries for your census campaigns.

23. CONCLUSION

I like to conclude this paper by saying that common phrase "no man is an island" because our success mostly came from **Teamwork** and working in partnership with our local and international partners. At SBS, whenever it is PHC time, it is our common practice that **all** the SBS staffs, casual workers and part-time employees get involved in census training, pilot-testing, fieldwork and monitoring mainly to ensure that everyone knows what is going on and that everyone shares the workload. In areas where expertise and resources were lacking, we seek early assistance from our local data users and international partners then work and learn from them.

To end, the most influential position of census-undertaking that makes the project moving towards achieving its goals is the successful role that plays by the Census Coordinator. This person should have the overall knowledge of the progress of each phase of the census from the planning stage to the end. This person plays the leading role in constantly evaluating each stage of the project and quickly put in place amendments to resolve problems/challenges along the way. This person makes sure that the census keeps on rolling even if it's on 'bumpy roads' until it is fully completed and successfully achieved all targets. If this role is poorly performed, then the census will not achieve what it set out to achieve.
