

2000 Census of Population and Housing: The Philippine NSO Experience

Carmelita N. Ericta
Officer In Charge (Deputy Administrator)
National Statistics Office
Solicarel Bldg. 1, Ramon Magsaysay Blvd.
Sta. Mesa, Manila, PHILIPPINES
C.Ericta@mail.census.gov.ph

I. Introduction

The 2000 Census of Population and Housing, more popularly known as Census 2000, was the 11th census on population and the 5th census on housing in the Philippines. It was conducted in May 2000 in all the 42,000 *barangays* (smallest political subdivision in the Philippines) in the country. The Philippine census placed the population of the country, as of May 1, 2000, at 76.5 million. This figure is higher by 7.9 million than the 1995 census figure of 68.6 million and by 15.8 million over the 1990 census count of 60.1 million.

Around 44,000 public school teachers made the house-to-house visits and interview of the 15.3 million households nationwide. The enumeration was expected to last for about a month but there were areas where the operations was extended, due to the large increase in population size like in the growth areas of Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan and Rizal; to peace and order conditions like in a few areas in Mindanao; and typhoons,.

Because of the huge task of census-taking, the NSO ventured into various approaches in mobilizing and partnering/linking with government and non-government agencies as well as with the general public. NSO coordinated with various national and local government agencies, universities, key individuals, private organizations and media groups to enjoin their support and participation in the Census 2000. Active participation in the various phases of the census was deemed necessary for its success. This paper discusses selected activities and/or stages in the Philippine Census 2000.

II. Consultation with Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders played a vital role in the success of the census, especially on decisions on issues concerning census data items for inclusion and definitions/classifications. In the Philippines, a series of consultations and meetings with the data users or stakeholders were considered vital to census planning. The first of such consultation was done through a public hearing sponsored by Committee on Population and Family of the House of Representatives. Two sessions were conducted and participated in by about 18 government agencies and universities/organizations participated. The public hearing had the following objectives: (a) to recommend the concept on household membership to be adopted; (b) to discuss the definitions and categories to be utilized for urban and rural classification; ethnicity and disability; and (c) to come up with a list of items to be included in the census questionnaire. Another approach was the organization of an inter-agency Task Force where the involvement of government offices was enjoined. These offices were consulted as to the indicators needed for their policy and plan formulation. Furthermore, meetings with the religious organizations and agencies concerned with special groups like the ethnic and indigenous communities and disabled were convened. These meetings served as a venue for clarifying concepts and categories to be utilized for the census taking that would best respond to the needs of special sectors. Meetings with the National Commission on the Indigenous Population, the National Commission on the Welfare of Disabled Persons and the Philippine Council for

Evangelical Churches helped in the finalization of categories for ethnicity, the definition and coverage of disability and the further classification of the Protestant category for religion.

III. Publicity and Information Campaign

One of the other more important aspects of every undertaking the Census 2000 was the conduct of an extensive publicity and information campaign. Aside from being a huge undertaking, the diversity of the people and the geography of the country necessitated an extensive and effective information and communication drive to publicize the census and to reach, if not all, the greater majority of the population. For the Census 2000, NSO forged an agreement with the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communications Foundation, Incorporated (UPCMCFI) in its information, education and communication (IEC) campaign. The UPCMCFI is considered the haven of experts in the said field.

UPCMCFI came up with a publicity plan for Census 2000 based on selected target groups identified by NSO. These special target groups included those considered difficult to reach for interview, or those afraid of being listed by any government-based undertaking, or prone to population padding, etc.. The target groups included the politicians in Mindanao, Filipinos of Chinese descent, the upper income class/elite group and the youth. These four target groups became the focus of the TV/radio/print ads and information campaign developed. Complementing the conceptual design for the census ads were the Census 2000 slogan and mascot called C2k.

The slogan chosen was “*Count me in!*” which evolved in a pro-active mode from the “*Be Counted!*” slogan of the 1995 Census of Population. The mascot, called C2K, wore a helmet with a bar graph artwork and a jumpsuit with street map illustrations. The C2K mascot depicted the “high-tech” - age and at the same time projected a human appeal to the general public.

IV. Sponsorship

Through the UPCMCFI, NSO was able to tap many private firms to sponsor the placement of ads on TV, radio and print. The NSO, again through the UPCMCFI, was able to get a private sponsor, Unilever, to put in resources in exchange for advertising its product logo in census stickers. The same was done for Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) or Central Bank of the Philippines. This strategy was seen as a good return on their investment since census stickers were posted in every housing unit in the country. The product logo of Unilever and the BSP slogan and a bankbook were printed on the sticker. This strategy, aside from revenue generation, somehow depicted the support and partnership between private and government agencies in undertaking government activities. In addition, for highly urbanized cities in the country, packets of Del Monte recipes were distributed to selected households which provided a marketing opportunity for the private company in advertising their product.

V. Census Coordinating Councils/Census Boards

To better solicit support from government and non-government agencies, census boards/ coordinating councils were created in each province, city and municipality in the country. Members included officials of the local government units (LGUs) and agencies. The NSO provincial and district officers acted as the Executive Officers in their respective census boards. The direct involvement and roles of local officials in the census boards increased their support in the undertaking. The creation of census boards was provided for under the Census Law.

VI. Monitoring

Being the largest mobilization activity on a nationwide scale, the need for progress tracking and continuous monitoring for Census 2000 was inevitable. Census 2000 field operations were monitored by central office management using an Internet-based monitoring system. The Progress Tracking System produced progress reports based on the Quick Count System (see part VII) database which was regularly updated through report submissions from field offices. The system provided map-based displays as well as tabular presentations of the reports. This was a web-interface developed by NSO using public domain software to enable viewing of the results and progress of enumeration through a password-protected area in the NSO website.

VII. Data Processing

Data processing for Census 2000 was done with the objective of coming up with (a) the preliminary population counts three months after completion of enumeration; (b) the final population counts before the end of year 2000; and (c) with other detailed socio-demographic characteristics by the middle of year 2001. For the preliminary counts, a Quick Count System was developed by NSO which enabled it to release the preliminary population counts last August 22, 2000, barely three months after the conduct of the census operations. This system used summary forms for all enumeration areas, which were encoded into handheld PCs by NSO district statistics officers. The encoded data were uploaded to the PCs in all the NSO Provincial Offices, where summary reports were generated for data evaluation. The summaries were transmitted to the NSO Central Office where the Quick Count Database was stored.

For the final population counts and other socio-demographic characteristics, NSO utilized digital processing technology using Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) in data processing. NSO acquired more than 20 scanners distributed in four Data Capture Centers (DCCs), located in Manila, Pampanga, Cebu and Davao. The Data Capture System is an out-sourced LAN-based system developed to utilize document imaging technology for capturing more than 15 million census questionnaires, departing from the usual keyboard data entry method. The system includes form scanning, data interpretation, data verification, file preparation and transfer. In the DCCs, the questionnaires are scanned and undergo automatic mark and character recognition. Since the ICR processing is sensitive to the quality of forms, the shade of ink used in printing the questionnaires, the quality of paper and the presence of specific markings on a page were given particular attention. Using this data processing technology, the final population by *barangay* together with basic data on growth rates, sex ratio, average household size were released in April 2001 after the President of the Philippines proclaimed it as official. Given the relatively new technology for census processing, problems in the interpretation of the scanned forms were encountered that resulted in the delay of the processing of the population counts and a foreseen delay in coming out with the other socio-demographic characteristics.

VIII. Conclusion

The Census 2000 with all the new approaches in the preparation and processing stages is considered a success. The experiences of Census 2000 are being documented in two volumes of Procedural History, the first on the preparatory and field operations activities, and the second, on the data processing and dissemination of results. This documentation, together with the results of the Census Evaluation Survey, will serve as basis for improvement in the next round of the census.

REFERENCES

- Africa, Tomas P., "NSO: Towards Good e-Governance and Good e-Business", a lecture delivered during the forum :Shaping the Future of E-Businessmen" in De La Salle University on 2 March 2001.

Africa, Tomas P. and Esquivias, Minerva Eloisa P., “Establishing Ownership in the Philippine Census 2000”, paper presented during the 19th Population Census Conference in Beijing, China on 26-28 April 2000.

Ericta, Carmelita N. and Nogales, Elpidio Jr., “Latest Technology in Methods and Tools for Census Data: Technological Lessons from the 2000 Round of the Philippine Census”, a country paper presented during the Workshop on Population Data Analysis, Storage and Dissemination Technologies in Bangkok, Thailand on 27-30 March 2001.

The Philippines Census 2000. A report submitted to the UN Symposium of Global Review of 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses: Mid-decade Assessment and Future Prospects.

2000 Census Procedural History, Volume 1, National Statistics Office.

2000 Census of Population and Housing Highlights of the Final Results.

RESUME (short version, as of July 3, 2001)

Name CARMELITA NUGUID ERICTA
Nationality Filipino
Qualifications Master of Statistics, University of the Philippines
Bachelor of Statistics, University of the Philippines
Government Service: 30 years of progressively responsible positions in statistical agencies
From: Statistician I, Bureau of the Census and Statistics (now known as National Statistics Office)
To Present Post: Deputy Administrator, National Statistics Office (NSO)
Currently Officer In Charge-Administrator, NSO
Positions held in the past ten years:
Executive Director, Statistical Research and Training Center
Acting Director, Establishment Surveys Department, NSO
Director III, Economic and Social Statistics Office (ESSO), National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)
Deputy Executive Director V (Assistant Secretary General), NSCB

Membership In Professional Associations:

Philippine Statistical Association:
Member
1st Vice President, 1996-1998
President, 2001
PSA Assist Foundation:
Founding Member
Member, Board of Trustees, 1998-2000
Philippine Social Science Council:
Member, Board of Trustees, 1996-1998
Member, Governing Council, 2001
Treasurer, 1998, 2001
National Research Council of the Philippines:
Associate Member
International Statistical Institute:
Member

Countries of Work Experience

Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam