

Considerations for Planning the Philippines' 2010 Census

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2010 Census of Population and Housing (2010 Census) will be the 13th census of population and the 5th census of housing since 1900. Planning for the 2010 Census involves the entire process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analyzing and publishing data about the population and living quarters in the country. The 2010 Census operation entails the listing and recording of the characteristics of each individual and each living quarter as of specific time and within specific territory.

The 2010 Census aims to provide government planners, policy makers, and administrators with data on which to base their social and economic development plans and programs.

Careful planning and implementation of various census activities are necessary so as not to waste the gargantuan financial resources it requires. Census results offer meaningful information as basis for the formulation of programs to improve the welfare of the Filipinos. Success in the undertaking can only be measured how widely the census results will be used.

Critical decisions during census preparation phase are those with respect to timing and method of enumeration, scope and coverage and census advocacy, among others.

2. TIMING OF ENUMERATION

The census law (Batas Pambansa Blg. 72) mandated the National Statistics Office (NSO) to conduct a census of population and housing every ten years starting 1980. Section 6 of the law designated May 1 of every regular census year as the reference date of the census.

Since 1980, censuses are conducted for a period of around 20 days throughout the country. This duration is deemed manageable and allows the public school teachers, who serve as enumerators as provided for in the law, to finish their tasks before reporting back for schoolwork. The 2010 scenario requires an appraisal of the timing of the enumeration considering that local elections.

3. METHOD OF ENUMERATION

As in the previous censuses, the unit of enumeration will be the household. Enumeration will be done through house-to-house visit and personal interview with the head or any responsible member of each household using a Common Household Questionnaire or short form or Sample Household Questionnaire or long form.

The use of systematic cluster sampling in previous censuses has yielded positive feedback and maybe adopted to select households to which the Sample Household Questionnaire or long form will be administered. The Sample Household Questionnaire contains all the data items in the Common Household Questionnaire and other relevant data items about population and housing. To ensure reliable information at the municipality level, the sampling rate maybe flexible i.e. 100 percent, 20 percent or 10 percent, depending on the size of the municipality. In the previous censuses, the sampling rate varied depending on the number of households in the municipality as shown in the table below:

No. of Households in the Municipality	Sampling Rate
1 to 500	100%
501 to 1500	20%
1501 and above	10%

The use of the short and long form has yielded a rich archive of census results. Whether this strategy will be duplicated for 2010 Census may have to be reviewed

considering approaches to implement sample surveys, with the census as frame, focused on specific sectors.

For households residing in areas identified with potential high rate of refusal and do not have an available eligible respondent after the required number of visits by a census enumerator, the Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ) will be provided and collected on the date indicated by the census enumerator. In the previous census, many of the items were left blank when returned by the respondent. The design of the SAQ may have to be reviewed to be user-friendly.

Population in institutional living quarters will be enumerated using CPH Form 4 (Institutional Population Questionnaire). The strategy for the enumeration of the institutional population may have to be appraised to ensure its complete enumeration at the end of the census operations.

The Barangay (Village) Schedule will be used to gather information on the characteristics of the barangay. The team supervisor will accomplish this form through a personal interview with the barangay (village) chairperson or his/her designated representative. Information from the Barangay (Village) Schedule is used to classify villages into urban and rural. Questions on the other basic services and landmarks in the barangay (village) have been incorporated in the Barangay (Village) Schedule to respond to the need for community-based information. However, its utilization for planning and policy formulation may have to be reviewed to lessen the burden to the respondent as well as the data collectors.

4. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

The concept on usual place of residence has been adopted in previous censuses to determine household membership. For continuity and comparability, the use of this concept in the 2010 census may have to be adopted. Overseas contract workers have been included in the household membership following certain cut-offs in the census due to the phenomenon of temporary labor migration in the Philippines. The use of this procedure is unique to the Philippines. However, with the criticisms received that the number of overseas workers from the census is grossly under enumerated, use of the

administrative data to get this information may have to be explored as an alternative source.

One important activity during the preparatory phase of a census undertaking is the selection of topics to be included in the census questionnaire. In order to come up with the list of priority data items to be included in 2010 Census, consultative meetings at the national and regional levels were conducted. The national data users forum was conducted on June 2008 and the regional data users' fora, from August to October 2008. Stakeholders from government and non-government agencies, academes, among others were invited to the forum.

A data matrix that lists the United Nations' (UN) recommended core data items and variables/data items included during the 1980, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2007 censuses were sent to data users at least two weeks before the forum for them to indicate their data needs. Summary of data items recommended by data users and sources of their data needs other than the census were presented in the forum. Information on the availability of the data item in surveys or its likelihood to be collected in a special survey were also given as a justification of the exclusion of the item from the possible census data items. Thus, aside from the UN Recommended Core Data Items and those justified to be excluded from the census data items, the following data gaps may have to be addressed in the census data collection plan based on the consultations:

1. Crime against Persons and Properties
 - a. abused children
 - b. women and children victim of violence
 - c. households with victims of crimes and human rights abuse
2. Labor Force
 - a. population with certification to support their reported skills
 - b. child labor data
3. Others
 - a. location and identification of upland areas and its populations
 - b. housing demand, housing backlog and housing supply
 - c. indigenous people and their ethnic affiliation

Some of the items (crime against persons and properties) maybe collected in the Barangay (Village) Schedule to serve as frame for follow-up surveys. Operational definition for other items (labor force and others) may have to be established to ensure its accurate collection in a census or survey. Resolution of the items to be included in the

short and long form may have to be done in the next quarter to ensure field testing in the pilot census in 2009.

5. CENSUS ADVOCACY

Population and housing censuses require extensive support and cooperation from the citizenry. With this big task ahead, the NSO may have to sustain the established partnerships with government and non-government agencies and individuals. An important aspect to ensure cooperation of the citizenry is to involve the general public, the policymakers, the academe, the politicians, the various sectors of society and the stakeholders, whether directly or indirectly involved, in the census. The importance and the benefits that can be derived from the activity and the active roles of the various sectors and individuals and consequently, ownership of the census are aspects which NSO have to work on.

The use of tri-media for the information, education and communication campaign before, during and after the census has to be balanced vis-à-vis the resources available and to be spent for the census. Radio is considered an effective medium in reaching even the far places of the archipelago like its island *barangays* and mountain villages. It still tops the list of household conveniences found in almost 90 percent of the homes based in the 2000 census. Acquainting the people on how the census will be conducted may also be lined up for publication, following a schedule, in major dailies. Articles related to 2010 Census 2000 may come out as press releases every week and fed to national media as well as to other agencies for their information and dissemination. Print ads may also come out in major national newspaper dailies to inform the populace, specifically those in the urban areas.

Interviews of or endorsements from the President of the Philippines has been requested in the past censuses. In addition, media coverage for the census interview of the President or the First Lady has been arranged. The same strategy is adopted in the provinces. Governors and mayors are scheduled for interview by an enumerator together with the respective provincial and regional heads of NSO during the first week of enumeration. Whether these interviews will be subjects of national or local media coverage may also have to be resolved as part of the census advocacy.

Minimum standard designs have been done for streamers, billboards and posters and other publicity materials for the census. These designs are adopted by NSO local offices whenever there will be such materials to be posted in strategic locations. In most cases, local government officials, other agencies and private firms provide support for the other publicity materials. The use of the standard publicity materials with support from government agencies is common in the Philippines. However, guidelines on the assistance provided by the private firms may have to be properly articulated to ensure support of the business communities.

Communicating directly with the people is always seen as a good way of developing their awareness on the census. One approach used by NSO in the 2000 and 2007 censuses was through its employees. Dissemination session among the employees is the vehicle by which they were made aware of the activity. Employees themselves may be tapped to spread the what, when, where, why and how of the 2010 Census in their respective communities. The diffusion of information at the community level is one of the effective means of establishing the sense of ownership by the people. Further to this, the practice of NSO officials and employees initiating communication with their village leaders to place them in awareness mode and provide a supportive environment during the conduct of the census may have to be refined to be useful for monitoring the operations.

6. ENDING NOTE

The involvement of stakeholders in deciding major issues on the operations is seen as a useful strategy in ensuring that the information generated from the census data will be used for a more effective governance and program/policy formulation. The early resolution of the issues related to census planning ensures that ample time is allotted for the preparing for the field operations, data processing technology and systems specifications, census publication and data dissemination phase of the census.