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Dissemination modes at Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE, in Guatemala*

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* The views within this document are those of the individual author and shall not be taken to reflect the official opinion of Sida, of Statistics Sweden or Instituto Nacional de Estadística of Guatemala

Table of contents

1. Background
2. INE's dissemination today
3. Activities and ideas to improve the dissemination process
4. Conclusion

1. Background

The Guatemala project

Statistics Sweden (SCB) and Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) in Guatemala are engaged in a three-year cooperation project. The project was initiated in February 2006 and is funded by Norway and Sweden (via Sida/Asdi). The Swedish-Guatemalan cooperation project will support INE in a consolidating process which aims at taking full responsibility of the official production of statistics in Guatemala.

Two long-terms consultants are at present in Guatemala, one within the management area and one within the IT area.

Financial support and technical assistance

Half of the project funding is financial support to cover local costs for data collection and production facilities concerning important surveys. This support will mainly be used for the Agriculture survey, The Labor Force survey, The Income and Expenditure survey, and a survey to follow up the UN Millennium goals.

The other half of the funding will be spent on technical assistance, i.e. the long-term consultants and a series of short-term consultancies. The main objectives are to support the Head of INE in the development process in line with the national strategy concerning statistics. This includes strengthening INE in its role as coordinator of national statistics and strengthening the quality of the statistical production and the staff. The technical assistance concerning general areas includes courses and seminars for the staff.

INE and The Statistical Network

INE is a Government Agency under the Ministry of Economy and performs its tasks semi autonomously. INE has about 250 employees in the main office and about 80 in the regional offices. They are connected to government offices in 22 regional centres.

INE is the head producer, disseminator and coordinator of the official statistical system.

There are 26 governmental agencies producing statistics in Guatemala and they cooperate within the SEN, the national statistical system. INE is the leading agency and works jointly with the other producers in four statistical sectors: Security, Environment, Economy, and Social affairs.

The responsibility of INE is mainly in the area of Social Statistics. The most important statistics are The Population census, The Agricultural census, Agricultural surveys, The Survey of Living conditions, and The Consumer Price Index. INE also conducts some continuous statistics based on administrative registers and on data from the municipalities.

The Guatemala society

According to the census of 2002 Guatemala has about 13 million inhabitants of which 40 % is younger than 14 years. There is a big difference between the Guatemala City Metropolitan Area with nearly 3 million inhabitants and the rural area concerning living standards. A very big part of the inhabitants is defined as poor according to international standards. A smaller part is very rich and owns the large farms and “fincas” as well as enterprises. There is a growing middle class in Guatemala but it is not yet a big part of the economy. To live in the rural area and in poverty means almost the same as belonging to the original inhabitants. More than 40 % of the population belongs to the original inhabitants, mostly Maya. Maya has 22 different languages and together with two other ethnic groups there are 24 different ethnic languages except Spanish. Still there are many persons that only speak their native language and not Spanish, The illiteracy is very high in large parts of the rural area, as much as 40 - 60 % of the population with the highest percentage for the women.

There is a strong demand for information about the situation in the society, both from the government and public sector as well as from different international organizations. That puts strong expectations at INE both concerning household surveys and economic statistics. These demands however are not accompanied by adequate financial resources.

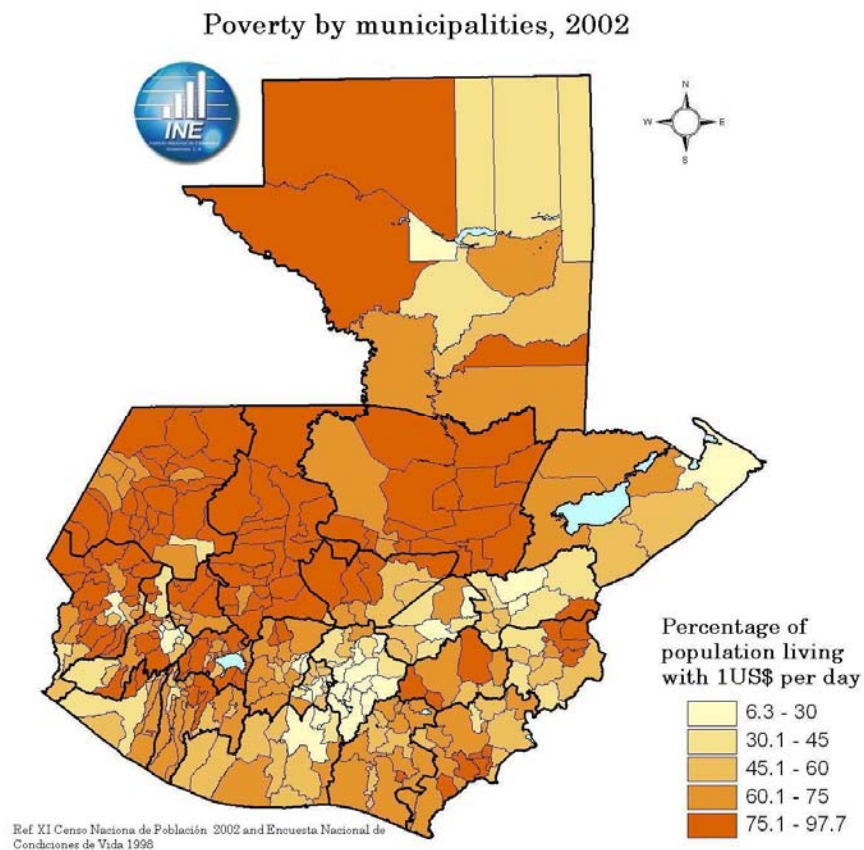


Fig 1. Example of thematic map, generated by the combination of data from the population census and living conditions survey from 2002 and 1998.

2. INE's dissemination today

First some words about the data collection. INE is dependent on interviewers or "fieldworkers" as they are called. All data collection has to be done by interviewers directly from the respondents, often the whole household, and bilingual interviewers are needed to cope with Spanish and the 24 different languages. Also data from the enterprises have to be collected by personal visits. That is due to the not functioning post delivery system and, for small enterprises, also due to the language problem.

INE is trying to reach their users in several different ways. The users are mainly found within the area of government authorities and other public institutions, universities, private organizations as chambers of commerce and different industries (sugar, coffee, milk etc) and international organizations. INE has **user groups for different areas** as agriculture, living conditions and labor force surveys. These groups mainly meet to discuss the content and variables of a new survey but can also be a channel to distribute the result of a survey.

The first step to present data from a survey is often to produce a **CD** of the result and then have a **press conference** and present the result. If it is a big survey like the Agriculture survey and Survey of living conditions INE arranges presentations in different places of the country. It can be a **breakfast meeting** or a seminar at a hotel with special invited users including the press. The CD will also be presented at INE's website and can be bought from INE.

The most common way of dissemination is by **printed publications**. These generally contain tables and a few graphs but without any comments. There are also very informative publications about poverty done in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Government and with technical support from the University Rafael Landivar and the World Bank. INE has contributed with figures but also with very good maps. INE has a good **system for producing maps** to present the statistics, for example, to get a picture of the poverty distribution in the country.

INE is using **the website www.ine.gob.gt** both as a marketing tool and as a way to present their figures and results. Consumer Price Index is presented every month. Figures from the censuses, both regarding population and agriculture, are presented in tables and graphs. The information is presented at regional level when possible. Some results from the surveys are also available in Excel format at the website. Some publications are available in pdf-format.

INE has **22 regional offices**, one in each department. In these offices work 2-4 persons. They are also a link to the users. They help with the contacts within the local area both concerning collection and dissemination of data.

INE has a **weekly electronic newsletter**. Every week INE sends one page of statistical information to those who are interested. The Newsletter is also published on the website. Most often it contains figures in a table format and a

graph but also a short text. The content is often chosen to give attention to a special issue in the society. For example the last week of May the “Estadística de Semana” gave information about violence against children.

3. Activities and ideas to improve the dissemination

INE is presently discussing a dissemination policy but it will take some time until a decision is reached. However, there are a lot of ongoing activities that will improve the dissemination. INE is putting more focus on quality issues and that will also give more attention to dissemination issues. Several recommendations from the Swedish project are giving attention to dissemination issues.

3.1 More focus on user groups

INE has already a lot of contacts with users. INE has arranged meetings with several users to discuss the content of the statistics but also the dissemination, together with short term consultants from Statistics Sweden. INE has a well working network of users. This contact net of users is not only important for the production of statistics but also for the dissemination of the statistics and for improvements of the dissemination.

However, INE is recommended to

- make a list of main users for each product
- decide upon most suitable way to start (deeper) dialogue with users, e.g. user groups or direct interviews
- implement more regular contacts with the users, e.g. twice a year.

3.2 A Statistical Metadata System

INE has started a project of documentation including statistical metadata for the external users. A draft template is constructed covering the most important information about each statistical product, including quality concepts. The template will be tested from May to September. After that there will be an evaluation of the documentation done and how well this template suits INE's demands.

The documentation of each product will be published at INE's website. The documentation will be a good tool for the dissemination of data to the users. They will know more on how the statistics are produced and about the availability of the INE statistics.

3.3 Publishing Plan

The users need to know when and how the statistics are going to be published. INE has today one fixed date and time for the Consumer Price Index; the 7th or the first working day after the 7th every month at 10 in the morning.

INE is planning to make a publishing plan for all statistics at the website. That can be an important information tool for the users.

3.4 The website

INE has recently revised their website. However, the website is a tool that needs continuous updating and revision. The website is without competition when it comes to disseminate data rapidly to the users. And, as in other countries the users are impatient to get up to date information free of charge from the web.

For INE it is not easy to make the right priority between how much resources should be given for the development of the website and how much for the development of the printed publications. Both ways of dissemination are of importance.

INE makes continuous changes of the website but has no agreement on a long term plan for improvements. But there are at least two goals: 1. To publish more data free of charge at the web, 2. To make the site more user friendly.

3.5 Printed publications

The INE publications of today are of different style, format, color and ambition. There is an ongoing discussion about how to make them more homogenous in style and format. There is a need for a more uniform layout of the publications; a layout that communicates to the users that the source is INE, one single institution, and not several ones. Not only the layout but also the format inside the publications has to be more standardized and homogeneous, for at least most of the publications. The publications from some of the comprehensive surveys may be more unique.

To be able to make this transformation - to make the publications more standardized and homogeneous – maybe there is a need for a more centralized publishing process. Today the responsibility for the publishing process is decentralized. Another way can be to use standardized tools for the publishing process, tools which have to be used by all the subject matter areas.

3.6 A new dissemination tool

INE has decided to use the dissemination tool PC-Axis. In parallel with the transmission to SQL servers and new knowledge of database modeling, within the IT area, there will also be an implementation of the dissemination tool PC-Axis. The first steps will be to use the PX-Web with the aim to present data on the website. The first phase will be to present data from the last census of 2002. Even

if the next census (2012) is five years ahead, it is an advantage to use the new dissemination tool some years before the challenge the next census may be.

3.7 A Publishing Policy

INE has the goal to establish a publishing policy. So far it is more or less on the discussion level. But the following topics will probably be included

- a. All users should be treated equal

That means for example that all users should be able to get the new results at the same time.

- b. Statistics should be disseminated free of charge at INE's website

For example all statistical products should present at least some figures, in tables and/or graphs, and with a short text

- c. The result should be presented in a standardized way, both standardized publications and in a standardized way at the web site.

For this INE has first to decide on a common layout and standardized format.

- d. All statistical products should be documented in a standardized way and these documentations will be presented at the website

This is something that can be done rather soon, probably from the beginning of 2008

- e. A publishing plan

INE will create a publishing plan for all statistical products. The plan will be published on the website. There should be possibilities to make changes in the time table, if necessary, but clear information should be given about all changes.

4. Conclusion

There is a long way to go to establish an efficient dissemination system for INE. However, there are already some good tools in the dissemination process and there are several activities going on that will strengthen the dissemination in the near future. Very short, as a summery, the situation is as follows:

- a. Dissemination tools today:
 - User groups
 - Press conferences and breakfast meetings
 - The website www.ine.gob.gt
 - Electronic Weekly Newsletter
 - Printed publications and CDs
 - A system or producing maps
 - Dissemination through regional offices
- b. Ongoing activities that will strengthen the dissemination
 - More focus on user groups

- A Statistical Metadata System
 - Documentation on quality concepts
 - Continuously improvements of the website
 - A new dissemination tool, PC-Axis
- c. Ideas that are discussed for further improvements
- A clear and concise Dissemination Policy
 - A Publishing Plan on the website
 - More data free of charge on the website
 - More standardized and homogenous printed publications and CDs.