

KIRIBATI

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COUNTRY PAPER

The Population Census is an undertaking that the Statistics Offices in countries carried out from time to time. In Kiribati for example the Population Census is consistently conducted every 5 years since 1985, our last census was in 2005.

The short term objectives of the population census in Kiribati, was primarily to update the count of the population.

Resources were always limited in terms of funding and expertise within the National Statistics Office (NSO) itself so there were plans tailored towards the carrying out of the census and the capturing of data on outer islands and remote islands as well as easily accessed islands.

Despite the difficulty in the conduct of the Population Census, planning was one important task to be achieved prior the undertaking. A work plan was setup to direct the activities of the undertaking. Training manuals were prepared for supervisors and enumerators; CSPro was designed by the Census commissioner and fine tuned by SPC experts to catch the data collected. Data users played a significant role in the carrying out of the census in their commitment in the questionnaire designs. For the 2005 Population Census, Kiribati had decided to involve a broad range of sectors of data users from the ministries of the government to the churches in the non-government sector in the design of the questionnaire

The deputy Census Commissioner utilizes her knowledge on MapInfo to draw up map of South Tarawa (the densely populated island) with the assistance of an expert from the Lands department. This was a result of the close collaboration with the Lands through the training in general GIS and POPGIS.

The long term objectives, includes building the confidence in the National Statistics Office in conducting censuses and surveys. The National Statistics Office in Kiribati had been campaigning to target the public and private sectors so as to be given the trust to collect, process, store and disseminate quality data without breaching the confidentiality of the respondents.

NSO has a full legal support in the Census Act (Cap 8) and Statistics Act (Cap 96) in the constitution however the understanding of the respondents still hesitated to give out information as needed by this office. Even the positioning of the NSO in the government is still yet to be committed for by the government as shown by the Kiribati statisticians often missed chances to undergo practical trainings under the JICA-SIAP which was bypassed as a norm by simply not submitting or conveying training needs from the NSO. Staffing had always been one obstacle in the running of the National Statistics Office to productivity.

The effect of attitude such as these contributes to the way the office achieves its goal whether successfully or unsuccessful. Along with the statisticians in missing out on opportunities to update the skills on methodologies of collection, and compiling of current and new statistics. Moreover, it creates the burden to the statistics management with current skills within the office. As statistics is a crosscutting matter in both social and economic aspect, the impact is that there is a risk in not achieving goals (unproductive) with timely and quality data and could be costly to the society.