

BENEFITS OF PHILIPPINE STATISTICAL PROGRAM AS TRAINING AREAS FOR CENSUSES

By

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S U M M A R Y

In 1956 the Philippine Statistical Program was launched with the cooperation of a number of operating statistical activities. Technical assistance and arrangements for financing the projects included in the program were channelled through the Office of Statistical Coordination and Standards of the National Economic Council.

At the close of the first year of the program, the following benefits can be cited with satisfaction:

1. The statistical projects included in the program served as training areas for —

- a. The organization of competent staff for major statistical operations;
- b. The development of sound concepts, definitions and methodology required in census operations;
- c. Census budget estimation and cost control;
- d. Compilation of maps and related materials required in census operations.

2. Up-to-date, accurate and reliable data needed in government administration and for many aspects of economic and social planning were produced, and

3. A reporting system to maintain such data on a current basis was established.

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The Statistical Program

A statistical program to improve over-all statistical operations of the government was initiated during the early part of 1956 by the Office of Statistical Coordination and Standards with the cooperation of the other operating statistical entities of the government.

The statistical activities included in this program cover a wide range of subjects — demography, vital statistics, foreign trade, agriculture, nutrition, prices, industrial and national income statistics. In this paper, the benefits of some of these projects as training areas for censuses are presented.

Among the projects that have started to produce a direct impact on the various aspects of census planning and operations in the country are the following: (1) the Philippine Statistical Survey of Households (PSSH), (2) the Philippine Statistical Survey of Manufactures (PSSM), and (3) the Agricultural Statistics Project. The first project provides wide opportunities for training in the complex operations of a *population census*, the second project in *economic and business censuses*, while the third project in an *agricultural census*. In the PSSH project, four surveys designed to produce up-to-date data on the size, composition and distribution of population, labor force, economic activities of the people and other related information were conducted quarterly during the past year. The PSSM which was started in February this year was conducted to obtain by means of a mailed questionnaire data on employment, payroll, manhours, output, cost of production, investments and inventories, labor turnover, sales and other related information. The Agricultural Statistics Project was undertaken to obtain through sample surveys data on the structure of Philippine agriculture, agricultural production, land utilization, tenure, cost of production, value of farm equipment and other assets, prices of agricultural commodities and other important agricultural information. Technical assistance and arrangements for financing the projects included in the program were channelled through the Office of Statistical Coordination and Standards of the National Economic Council.

AREAS OF TRAINING COVERED IN STATISTICAL PROJECTS

1. *Personnel Training*

Early and adequate provision for recruiting and training competent staff in any statistical operations is necessary. The preparatory and post-enumeration work generally require office employees possessing specialized knowledge and skills such as computers, verifiers, punchers and others, while the enumeration stage requires competent personnel to obtain information in the field according to some definite instructions and definitions. Since the start of the statistical program in May, 1956 up to the present, the total number of persons that have received training and subsequently worked in the statistical projects has reached 1,107.

The breakdown of the number of project personnel into various categories is shown below:

Central Office staff:

Professional	35
Technical (IBM)	40
Statistical clerks	55
Other clerks and related administrative personnel	88

Field Service:

Regional Supervisors	27
Interviewers and other categories	862

Of the above number, 576 persons worked in the PSSH, 21 in the PSSM and 379 in the Agricultural Statistics Project. Many of these persons have already demonstrated their competence in various aspects of statistical operations. These technically trained personnel of the projects can be readily absorbed in the census organization once it is set up.

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2. *Development of sound concepts, standard definitions and methods required in census work.*

One of the most significant achievements of the projects that can be cited with satisfaction is the development of sound concepts, standard definitions and methods employed in collecting and processing quantitative data. Since most of the essential features of a sample survey are similar, if not identical, to that of a complete census, the statistical standards developed at the projects, it is believed, can be put to good use in the next census.

Immediately after the launching of the current statistical program, intensive studies and investigations were made by the survey staff on various subjects relating to data collection and processing. Whenever possible, concepts, definitions and the methods prescribed as standards by the United Nations were adopted. Recommended procedures were examined and tested in rigorous detail. To insure uniformity in the treatment and handling of specific situations at the projects, instruction manuals were prepared. At the PSSH alone, three kinds of manuals, namely: a field administrative manual, an interviewer's manual and a training guide were prepared. Similar manuals were prepared for the other surveys.

Prior to the final adoption of these manuals, tests were conducted to determine the weaknesses of the questionnaires and the instructions or enumeration procedures. The efficiency of the field organization to obtain information in accordance with definite instructions and definitions were also looked into. Thus, through such studious inquiry and careful field tests, sound concepts, standard definitions, and methods were established and adopted. On the basis of the valuable experience gained and the advances attained in the development of adequate statistical standards, it is reasonable to expect that more meaningful and high quality data can be obtained in the next census.

3. *Budget Estimation and Cost Control.*

Statistical projects provide training in budget estimation and cost control. Data on the rates and cost of each operation involved in current sample surveys serve as basis for estimating financial requirements of a complete census.

The budget is an essential tool of any statistical organization. There is hardly a phase of the statistical project operations which is not affected by the budget. This explains the usual big importance attached to the consideration of the budgets of existing statistical projects. Through careful preparation of the budget and its judicious implementation, a balance in the activities contemplated and a control of expenditures are effected. The training and experience accorded the key men of the statistical projects in budget planning, formulation and control should prove invaluable to a number of these men who may be elevated to positions of responsibility in the coming census organization.

4. *Compilation of Maps and other Materials required in Census Operations.*

The preparation of accurate and dependable maps is basic to sample survey and census operations. The determination of political boundaries of the national territory and its detailed subdivision into enumeration areas is vitally needed to prevent omissions and duplications in census enumeration. Since the start of statistical projects in 1956, 200 A.M.S. maps, 950 other maps of municipalities and about 500 whiteprinted precinct maps and 42 provincial maps from DPW district engineers have been compiled. In addition, 90 Republic Acts and 23 Executive Orders pertaining to the segregation, abolition and/or merging of political subdivisions of the Philippines were collected. The barrio lists of a number of municipalities are likewise being updated. Work has been started to update and reproduce barrio maps obtained by the Commission on Elections from barrio officials. The number of such maps available at present in this office is about 6,000. The number is still increasing, thanks to the cooperation of barrio mayors, teachers and other local officials. Despite limited resources presently available, compilation of maps and other materials required in survey and census operations has been going on continuously. This vital activity will be accelerated as more funds become available. The next census will undoubtedly be conducted efficiently and economically when reliable maps shall have been made available for the use of census personnel.

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Conclusion

At the close of the first year of the Philippine Statistical Program, the following benefits from the program can be cited with satisfaction:

1. The statistical projects included in the program served as training areas for —
 - a. The organization of competent staff for major statistical operations;
 - b. The development of sound concepts, definitions and methodology required in census operations;
 - c. Census budget estimation and cost control;
 - d. Compilation of maps and related materials required in census operations.
2. The production of up-to-date, accurate and reliable data needed in government administration and for many aspects of economic and social planning were produced, and
3. A reporting system to maintain such data on a current basis was established.