



Final report

from a Long-Term Consultancy in Social Statistics

From 15 June 2002 to 29 February 2004

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the Terms of Reference for the Bridging program, the main tasks of the consultant during June 2002- July 2003 was to assist in consolidating the integrated household survey program, including advice in design of survey instruments, pilot tests, planning and implementation of field work, data entry and processing, preparing tabulation reports and dissemination. During the final parts of the mission (July 2003-February 2004 (Phase II of the Scandinavian program)) the main tasks were to advise and carry out in-house training on how to increase relevance and reliability of existing and new statistics, carry out quality control of data and publications, and apply methods for data analysis

Since the beginning of the consultation the following major results have been achieved:

- The planning of the Household Budget and Income Surveys (IAF 2002/03) were finished before the consultant arrived in Mozambique. The main tasks in connection with IAF have therefore been quality control of fieldwork, data processing and reporting. The consultant has also contributed during the production of the final reports, including been the lead author of two reports published by INE based on IAF 2002-03 (on crime and local communities in Mozambique). The results are recently used in an update of the poverty indicators in Mozambique.*
- The Demographics and Health Survey 2003 is finished and the planning of the new Labour Force Survey is underway with some preliminary contribution from the consultant.*
- The first part of an evaluation of the consolidation of the household survey program has been done with assistance from Statistics Norway.*
- Formal courses in practical statistics are established with assistance from Statistics Sweden. In-house informal training in data analysis and production of reports have been given.*

Recommendation:

The relevance and reliability of demographic and social statistics is a major problem. One way of improving the relevance of existing and future statistics will be to make the reports more user-friendly. This requires more sector insight and analytical competence among INE staff. It is necessary with more informal training and follow-up over a longer time. Experts should to a larger degree be repeatedly visiting to make sure that necessary knowledge levels are reached and recommendations are used.

2 INTRODUCTION

This report gives a short summary of experiences from a long-term mission to the National Statistical Office of Mozambique (INE) as advisor in demographic and social statistics. The mission in Mozambique covered June 2002 - February 2004, and included two support periods; the final part of the Bridging support program that ended July 2003 and first parts of the Scandinavian Assistance program that started July 2003.

The long-term consultant stayed 18 months at INE's headquarter (including field work). Two months were in addition used on language course in Portugal, but separated on two periods (October 2001 and April 2002). A serious accident in the family made it necessary to be in Norway parts of July-September 2003.

3 ACTIVITIES DURING THE MISSION

3.1 Situation at the beginning of the mission

A "state of the art" analysis done during the beginning of the mission showed that the demographic and social statistics produced by INE had varying qualities.

The collection and processing of data from social surveys had high quality and most data had also relatively high reliability. The relevance of survey data was, however, not of the same standard. It was a need to improve the internal competence in survey planning and testing of instruments, especially involvement of user groups and the use of pilot surveys. Statistical reports could also be made much more user friendly and relevant by increasing the staff's insight in the relevant fields and in analytical methods.

The production of regular social and demographic statistics was often based on administrative records and had several shortcomings, with problems both with reliability and relevance. Parts of the problems were based on low competence among data suppliers and that data was delivered late and had low reliability. But INE's staff at central (and regional) level needed also substantial increased insight in practical statistics, including key concepts and techniques. Important users and data providers did in addition not see the relevance of the results and their own contribution. It was therefore necessary to make reports much more useful and relevant.

It quickly became clear that the workload of INE staff was higher than capacity, and changing priorities made implementing approved plans more difficult.

3.2 Situation at the end of the mission

The workload of the staff increased during the mission because of new obligations, including a new database for UNICEF and increased in-house

training possibilities. The production capacity increased only partly because of short- and long-term missions of the staff, including trips also abroad for educational purposes. During the final part of the mission it was in addition an increased number of seminars, partly given by an increased number of short-term experts, which reduced capacity for daily tasks.

The pending production needs made in-house formal and informal training more difficult to organise, as participants had no time to join training as often as planned and required during normal workdays. Therefore, informal training was given during several weekends - on request from a member of INE staff.

Production needs may also explain that participants in the formal training in practical statistics did not always follow up the course. The main problem with the formal training is probably that courses and seminars were not followed up, to make sure that the participants reached the level where they can use key concepts and methods in their daily work. At least, "hands-on" training of participants at the formal course in practical statistics did show afterwards that it was participants who had not learned what was needed to use the knowledge in practise. It is therefore a clear need to give more training, to be sure that the staff know how to use concepts, techniques and programs. Such training requires more time than a short seminar or course, but can be organised as several (3-4) short courses during for example a longer period of time (4-8 months or longer), with advise activities in between.

One effect of the lack of follow up until the needed knowledge level is reached is that INE depends too much on short-term (and partly long-term) foreign expertise that has to "do the work". This problem may have no short-term solution, but should be reduced if short-term (and long-term) experts to a larger degree are involved in follow-up missions. Experts should in other words come more on repeated visits with responsibility to make sure that the needed level of know-how is reached. Such repeated missions from the same consultants can probably also prevent that short-term recommendations are not used (as for example the recommendation from a crime experts that visited INE in 1999, but which has not been followed up and used).

Repeated missions should also reduce the existing problems with lacking documentation of data and the use of criteria, definitions etc. INE has to prevent the situation where data sets from expensive surveys are lost or missing, or that nobody knows how the sample was drawn, or which definitions or criteria were used. Repeated missions will not prevent, however, such problems, but may reduce them (one consultant with experience from several missions to INE claimed that the local community data in IAF 1996/97 was not processed. Investigations showed, however, that the data was available via a foreign scientist, but not in Mozambique). Missing documentation is a problem also when writing this report, as all e-mails to/from this author stored at the computers at INE was destroyed shortly afterwards together with several text-files.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Reliability and relevance is a major problem in parts of the statistics that INE produces in the fields of demographics and social statistics. But relevance for the users may be more important than reliability in several cases.

One problem is that statistics can be more relevant than potential users understand, and in that case the important task is to show the users the relevance by "educating the users". Another problem can be that the producer of statistics does not understand what the users need, and in that case the important task is to educate the producers. In both cases the validity (and reliability) of sector statistics can be increased by analysing and reporting the existing statistics in cooperation with the main users.

One recommendation, therefore, is that INE should produce an annual analytical report on each of the main social sectors (prisons, courts, cinema etc) and demographic issue (gender, mobility, regional differences etc). This production should be a cooperative effort between a staff member, a subject matter expert (locally or from abroad) and representatives from the main users. The purpose should be to give both training in how to improve relevance and reliability of the existing statistical data, follow up of key personnel and involving the main users in clarifying the needs for sector information.

The analytical reports should be included in all future survey plans, and be a central element also in the plan and budget for the new Labour Force Survey.

APPENDIX 1. Main counterparts in INE and in other institutions

Mr. João Dias Loreiro, President
Mr. Manuel da Costa Gaspar, Vice-President
Mr. Arão Balate, Director of the Directorate of Census and Survey
Ms. Fátima Zacarias, Director of Directorate of Demographic, Vital and Social Statistics
Mr. Cristovão Muahio, Chef of Department of Sampling and Methodology
Mr. Cassiano Soda Chitembe, Chef of the Department of Demographic and Social Studies
Mr. David Megill, Consultant in sampling
Mr. James Otto, Consultant in data processing
Mr. Erwin Triebkorn, Consultant in survey design and analysis
Mr. Hans-Erik Altvall, Team leader Scanstat

Ministry of Planning and Finance

Mr. Arndt Channing, Consultant in Poverty studies

The Scandinavian Embassies

- Mr Lars Ekman, Norwegian Embassy
- Mr Anton Johnston, Swedish Embassy
- Mr Thomas Thomsen, Danish Embassy