

Challenging the United States Census Bureau's Mission: From Sharing our Expertise Globally to Modernizing our International Cooperative Efforts

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Background

- Purpose is to challenge current thinking on bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the Census Bureau and other National Statistical Offices (NSOs)
- Broaden our vision
- Renewed commitment to the international statistical community and our contribution
- Rethink our organizational culture
- Business processes around and view of international cooperation is stagnant; little has changed in decades



The Need for International Cooperation

- Essential in times of changing census methodologies and technologies
- All facing challenges of funding, data quality with waning respondent participation and increasing privacy concerns
- Fostering effective partnerships can potentially reduce costs, create a stronger knowledge base, strengthen all of our programs and will help frame our collective vision for the 2030 round of censuses.

What is International Collaboration?

International Collaboration is a process when two or more NSOs and/or International Organizations work together to achieve a common goal by sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus.

Throughout this process, participants seek opportunities to learn from each other and share their experiences, optimize existing opportunities, create new collaborative opportunities, and integrate the knowledge gained into their programs. As Census Bureau staff participate in these efforts, it is critical that they communicate lessons learned with other Census Bureau staff.

This is our goal for our international collaborative efforts.



United States Census Bureau Mission Statement

“The Census Bureau serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, **share our expertise globally**, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by scientific objectivity, our strong and capable workforce, our devotion to research-based innovation, and our abiding commitment to our customers.”

(July 10, 2012)

Business Plan for Change and Guiding Change Principles

Change Principle 7:

“Guard against insular thinking. Expand our outward focus to keep current with developments internationally, in other agencies, in the private sector, and academia. The continued regular use of outside experts to provide feedback and recommendations regarding organization, methodological, program, and product proposals outside the walls of the Census Bureau will enable us to benefit from the best advice we can get, regardless of the source.”

Current Census Bureau International Activities

- Reimbursable projects
- Expertise sharing projects sponsored by International Organizations, i.e., United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), and the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) – part of the International Statistical Institute (ISI).
- Bilateral projects or cooperative projects (we reach out to provide assistance or ask for assistance and another country does the same)
- International meetings, workshops, conferences, and trade shows
- International working groups
- Research papers with other NSOs or International Organizations
- Research projects with other NSOs or International Organizations
- International visitors to the Census Bureau
- Information requests from/to other countries, usually through other NSOs

Opportunities for Change



- Encourage staff to think globally
- Integrate international collaboration into our work
- Show potential of incorporating best practices and lessons learned from other NSOs into our work
- Educate stakeholders on benefits and potential direction of bilateral and multilateral cooperation
- As with all change requires support from all levels of the organization, including briefing our operating committee
- Deemphasize travel; with technology the world is getting smaller, emphasize email, teleconferences and videoconferences

Incremental Change and Initial Steps

- Shift thinking from: “Here is how you do this.” to “How did you do that?”
- Constant and consistent messaging to staff:
 - Listen, learn, share.
 - Integrate lessons learned and best practices into everyday work.
- Establish International Collaboration Steering Committee.
- Form Network for International Collaborators (NIC)



Steps for Long Term Change

- Broaden stakeholder engagements to include other NSOs
 - Identifying countries with which to work
 - Being proactive to engage them on joint projects and consultations on our work
- Rethink our role in the international statistical community
 - Evaluating our role
 - Renewing our commitment
 - Providing opportunities for junior staff
 - Making new connections and fostering existing partnerships



Conclusion

All NSOs have the same urgent need for good statistics and most are now working under the same premise of cheaper, faster, with less staff.

Working together to share best practices learned through experience and then communicating these across the organization holds great potential for both the U. S. Census Bureau and our international partners.

THANKS

