

Implementation of a Community-Based Poverty Monitoring System in Tanzania: A Proposal

*Rangya Muro**

Abstract

The Government of Tanzania has sought to encourage participatory bottom-up planning since 1961. In 2004, the Government developed The Opportunities and Obstacles to Development Methodology (O&OD), which defines a process for municipalities to follow to achieve decentralization. The O&OD methodology is a holistic participatory planning process. In line with this, the Dodoma Municipal Council wishes to implement a Community-Based Poverty Monitoring System that concurs with the O&OD methodology. Good planning and decisionmaking requires a comprehensive municipal information system that captures pertinent data and produces meaningful reports. The development of a “statistical database” was identified as a priority item in Dodoma Municipal Council’s 2003-2007 Strategic Plan. The Dodoma Municipal Council (DMC) has recently entered into a partnership with the City of St. Albert in Alberta, Canada. The partners are working on developing a municipal database that will enhance the financial management, budgeting and planning processes of the municipality. The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS), with its aim to provide a good information-base for policy-making and project-impact monitoring, is highly complementary to both the O&OD methodology and the current partnership that DMC has with the City of St. Albert. As a means, therefore, to improve program

* Municipal Town Planner, Dodoma Municipal Council.

designs within the wards and to achieve a higher standard of living for the population, by fighting illiteracy, diseases and poverty, the DMC submits the following proposal to the CBMS International Network for its consideration.

Background

The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) for Tanzania in 2004 was 162, which is two points worse than the previous year's ranking of 160¹. *"Tanzania is one of the world's poorest countries. Around half of the population live below the poverty line, one in six children dies before the age of five, and almost one-third of the population will not live until the age of forty. These human welfare indicators are the culmination of almost two decades of slow growth and under-investment in basic social services. Economic reform programmes have succeeded in raising per capita growth rates during the 1990s, winning praise from the IMF and the World Bank. However, there is little evidence of the resulting benefits 'trickling down' to the rural and urban poor. On current trends, over 40 percent of Tanzania's population will remain extremely poor at the end of the decade, even with strong growth performance."*²

The capital city of Tanzania is Dodoma, which is close to the geographical centre of the country and home to Tanzania's Union Parliament. However, Dar es Salaam remains the de facto capital, with virtually all government ministries and other major institutions, including diplomatic representation, still based there.³ Dodoma Municipal Council (DMC) is located at 486 kilometers west of Dares Salaam and 441 kilometers south of Arusha, the headquarters of the East African Cooperation. It covers an area of 2,669 square kilometers, of which 625 square kilometers are urbanized. Based on the 2002 National Population and Housing Census, the population of Dodoma

¹ <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/lhc/HDI-LDC2004.pdf>.

² http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/debt_aid/debt_tanzania.htm.

³ <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019745099478>.

was 324,347, 157,469 or 48.5 percent of whom are male and 166,878 or 51.5 per cent are female. The estimated total number of households is 74,914, with an average household size of 4 people.

The Government of Tanzania has sought to encourage participatory bottom-up planning since 1961. During the early 1960's, chiefdoms were abolished countrywide. The objective was to give the process of decisionmaking to the people. The goal was to achieve a higher standard of living for the population by fighting illiteracy, diseases and poverty. People were encouraged to work hard and involve themselves in self-help projects. The catchphrase "UHURU NA KAZI" describes this era, which means "Independence and work." The late president, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, summarized this concept by saying "It can be done, play your part".

From the late 1960s to the early 1990s, the focus was socialism and self-reliance. The Arusha Declaration articulated the strategy. In 1972, the Local Government Authorities of the colonial administration were abolished. This paved the way for the introduction of the Regional Decentralization Act of 1972. In 1982, the Local Government Authorities were re-established in order to facilitate the transfer of authority back to the people. Local Government Authorities have the right and power to participate, and to involve the people in planning and development programs.

Since 1992, the Government of Tanzania (mainland) has undertaken to change the role of the Central Government from service delivery to that of policy formulators, coordinators and advisors, thereby allowing the Local Government Authorities to assume the role of service deliverers and facilitators of community development activities.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) guides the country's efforts to reduce poverty. It is the blueprint through which the Government of Tanzania achieved or qualified for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, leading to cancellation of debts and application of the savings (revenue that would otherwise go for debt servicing) to the provision of social and economic services

to the needy. It was a three-year program, which has been completed as phase one of the initiative, and a new phase has just taken off under a slightly different title; the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). Swahili being the National language in Tanzania, the Strategy is known in Swahili as “Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kuondoa Umaskini Tanzania-MKUKUTA. Almost everyone in the country knows what MKUKUTA is.

NSGRP is overseen at the policy level by the Vice President’s Office, which holds the portfolio for Poverty Reduction but at the operational/implementation level, it is the responsibility of the LGAs overseen by the Presidents Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG).

Built in the strategy is a Community-Based Poverty Monitoring System (CBMS) to ensure that the people participate not only in planning for their development through the nationally accepted methodology, the Opportunities and Obstacles to Development Methodology (O&OD) but also participate in measuring the outcomes of their efforts through the CBMS. In this regard, the PORALG oversees the rolling out of the O&OD methodology to the Local Government Authorities (LGAs). To date, about 50 percent of the LGAs have been covered.

The development of O&OD began in 2001 through the collaborative efforts of the PORALG, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Presidents Office – Planning and Privatization, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, University College of Lands and Architectural Studies, and Regional Secretariats of Iringa and Rukwa.

The O&OD methodology is an intensive consultative planning process that uses participatory tools to come up with village and district plans that focus on the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025 (TDV-2025), whose main objective is to guide economic and social development efforts up to the year 2025.⁴ Together the O&OD

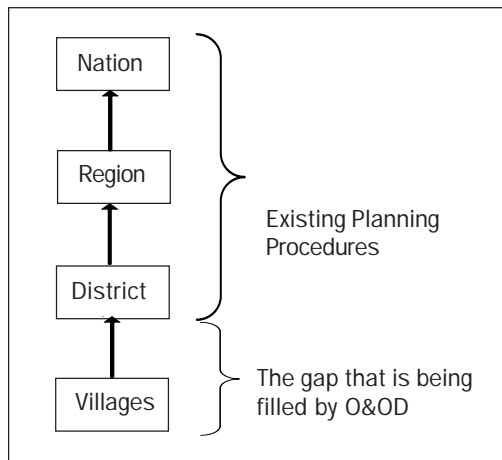
⁴ <http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/0/FBBAE9C780BB479AC1256A620025537F?opendocument>

methodology and the TDV-2025 form the basis for implementing poverty reduction efforts. The O&OD methodology was developed in line with the government’s aspiration to devolve powers to the communities, in an effort to restore the spirit of self-reliance, local resource mobilization, transparency and accountability whereby communities take ownership of their development initiatives. This is a departure from the former top-down planning approaches, where there was no planning linkage between the District and the Village/ Ward levels. The new O&OD methodology is illustrated in Figure 1.

The O&OD Participatory Planning Methodology is supported by Articles 145 and 146 of the Constitution of Tanzania, which requires empowerment of the people in making decisions on their development endeavors. Furthermore, the Regional Administration Act No. 19 of 1997 and the Miscellaneous Amendment Act No. 9 of 1999 provide for the process of devolving power to the people. The overall objective is the improvement of service delivery by the public sector for the ultimate eradication of poverty in the communities.

The government aspires to strengthen planning by increasing people’s participation through integrated bottom-up development

Figure 1. O&OD planning methodology



planning. The O&OD, which defines a process for municipalities to follow in order to achieve decentralization, is a holistic participatory planning process which has the following significant features:

- It has a positive outlook on the community where the community is encouraged to identify available resources to overcome obstacles, thereby fostering self-reliance.
- It defines participatory tools which assist with the bottom-up planning process; e.g., a village map, transect walk, historical time lines, seasonal calendar, institutional analysis, daily activities calendar by gender, household wealth ranking, focus groups and identification of sources of income and expenditure.
- It is a Planning Model which enables the community to identify, in a logical framework, specific objectives, opportunities, obstacles, and steps for implementation, among others.
- It helps members of the communities become aware of their own resources and how to make better use of them.
- And finally, data are the basis for formulating the plans. During the process, secondary data is collected from village registers, files and institutions. Primary data is collected using participatory tools, including spatial data, historic-/time-related data, and socioeconomic data.

In an effort to achieve a higher standard of living for the residents of Dodoma, the DMC wishes to implement a CBMS that concurs with the process as described by *The Opportunities and Obstacles to Development Methodology*.

Objectives

The objective of the CBMS is to develop a comprehensive municipal information system that will capture municipal, ward and village level data, and produces reports and analyses that will facilitate good planning and decisionmaking.

The expected short-term result will focus on having in place a CBMS that increases the knowledge of community leaders, staff and council on the socioeconomic realities of the community. The training and implementation surrounding the database and revised planning and budgeting processes will increase the capacity of community groups, staff and council.

Groups like the marginalized women, widows and youth, can be identified and mentioned by the pilot CBMS and programs may be developed to assist them. The short-term results will be achieved within the span of one year.

In a long run (i.e., three to five years), the council expects to have a comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date CBMS that incorporates spatial, time-related, and socio-economic data, as described in the O&OD methodology resulting in improved program designs within the wards and departments. This will help in poverty alleviation within the municipality.

Research activities

The development of a "statistical database" was identified as a priority item in the Dodoma Municipal Council's 2003-2007 Strategic Plan to help various departments build meaningful information for program planning and budgeting purposes. In response, the CBMS was proposed to capture spatial time-related and socioeconomic data at the village, ward, and municipal levels.

The CBMS will be developed and test piloted in one Mtaa (urban area) of Mlimwa, which has a population of approximately 800 people, and in one Kitongoji (rural) of Barabarani in the village of Nala, which has a population of approximately 400 people.

Local government structure

The Tanzanian local government system dates back to pre-colonial times when Communal Unions (Kommunal Verbandes) were established in 1901 in some parts of the then German East Africa.

Since then, local government in Tanzania has had a range of roles and responsibilities and experienced evolving structures.

The independent Tanzania inherited the colonial structure of local government which lasted until 1972 when local governments were abolished and replaced by a system of decentralization. This essentially entailed extending the central government structure down to the village level with no elected local representatives or what is known as Deconcentration.

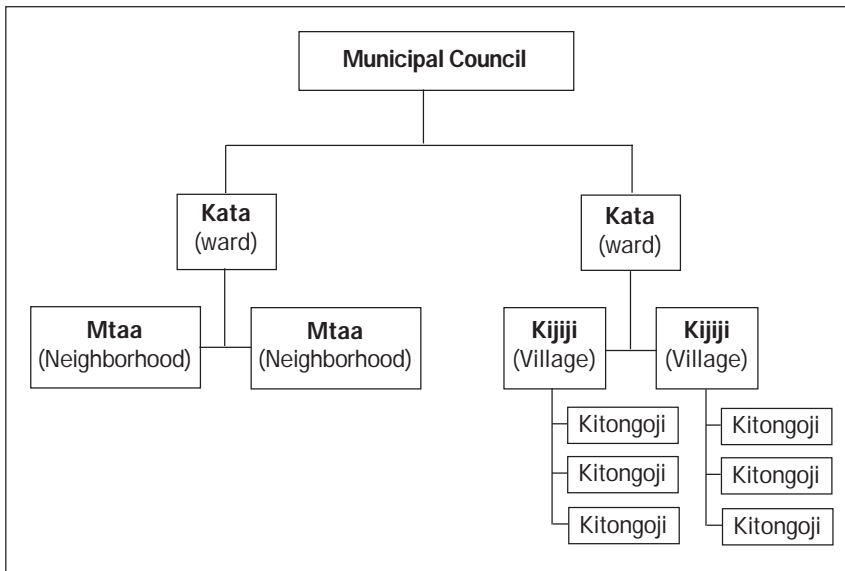
In 1982, legislations were enacted re-establishing the local governments in the form of Devolution as opposed to Deconcentration. Village councils, township authorities and district councils were established as the local government authorities in rural areas; and town, municipal and city councils as local government authorities in urban areas. These became fully operational in 1984.

The legislation, enacted in 1975 to establish village councils effectively, made the villages part and parcel of the legal local government system with the re-establishment of local government authorities. Local government elections have taken place in an interval of five years since the re-establishment of the local governments in 1983.

Structural set-ups for these authorities exist starting at the grassroots–kitongoji in the case of rural councils or mtaa level in the case of urban councils–upwards to the ward and council level as shown in Figure 2. Various committees are provided for, as are management structures. On the one hand, citizens participate in the decisionmaking process through local assembly meetings and are represented at the various higher local government levels. On the other hand, the management set-up is meant to reflect the various operational departments within the councils. Among major problems that local authorities face at lower levels include limited resources and low capacity for the effective formulation and implementation of their plans and for the efficient and equitable delivery of basic services.

The project will be implemented in one urban community/neighborhood (at mtaa level) and one rural area (village) at kitongoji level.

Figure 2. Structure of the local government authorities



It is expected that council staff at these levels will benefit from the training of trainers workshops completed by the higher-level council staff. This approach will enable staff and community personnel to effectively and efficiently carry out database information gathering to be transferred to the council level (bottom-up).

Current collection activities

Statistical information is currently collected at the vitongoji and mitaa using a form referred to as the Fomu ya Takwimu. The data collected on the Fomu ya Takwimu include basic priority aspects such as demographic, educational, health, agricultural, and public works information about the kitongoji and mitaa.

The Fomu ya Takwimu conforms with the Local Government Reform Program which stresses the need to improve basic service delivery, and with the O&OD which is a holistic process that uses data as the basis for formulating plans.

As pointed out earlier, under the O&OD methodology, villagers or dwellers of a mtaa or kitongoji are fully involved in the identification of the opportunities (or strengths) at their disposal and how they can be put to the best use in order to overcome their obstacles (or weaknesses) to development. They identify the objectives, targets, activities and verifiable indicators. It is through monitoring the implementation of their development plans that the communities are expected to make use of the CBMS information. For example, they may decide to design a project that ensures food security within the village and the information that would be relevant for monitoring this project would be the number of households requiring food assistance or the amount of food surplus sold to other villages.

The current collection procedures of the information contained on the Fomu ya Takwimu are as follows:

1) Collection and first aggregation of data:

- a. In the urban communities, the Mtaa Leader gathers the information, records it on the Fomu ya Takwimu, and submits the form to the Kata (ward) office.
- b. In the rural communities, the Kitongoji Leader gathers the information, records it on the Fomu ya Takwimu, and submits the form to the Kijiji (village) office. The Village Executive Officer then consolidates the information from all of the Vitongoji, and submits the consolidated form to the Kata (ward).

2) Second aggregation: The Ward Executive Officer then consolidates the information from all of the Mitaa or Vijiji, and submits the consolidated information to the municipal office.

3) Third aggregation: Finally, the municipal office consolidates all of the forms to produce municipal totals and analysis.

Proposed CBMS project

It is proposed that the current manual procedures entailed in the collection and consolidation of the Fomu ya Takwimu be automated. The new automated procedure would require the Vitongoji and Mitaa leaders to travel to Dodoma municipal office to key the information on the Fomu ya Takwimu into a municipal computer program. The computer program would then automatically generate summary reports and analysis for all of the various levels of government, i.e., the vitongoji, vijiji, mitaa, kata and munispaa.

The new procedure will free up staff time at all governance levels which can now be spent in other more productive activities.

The use of the computer will also simplify the storing and retrieving of the data, improve the accuracy and integrity of the information by reducing the potential for clerical errors, and increase the ability to analyze and summarize the information, thereby enhancing the planning process at each level of governance. The new reports produced by the CBMS will greatly enhance the ability of the various committees and councils throughout the municipality to plan and set priorities.

The new CBMS process will also bring transparency in the decisionmaking process at all levels and in all sectors. It will likewise enable the community members to verify information and improve the monitoring of the community and projects. With direct access to the CBMS information, common people will gain an understanding of the needs and opportunities of the kitongoji or mtaa and thereby provide informed input into community planning. Potential users of the new reports and analyses will include but not be limited to women's groups, home-based care groups, orphaned children's groups, youth groups, waste management groups, environmental groups (planting trees), and working groups at the ward level that provide training for employment opportunities.

The pilot communities

The pilot Mtaa is Mlimwa, which has approximately 800 people.

Mlimwa is in the Kata of K/Ndege. This area consists of modern buildings and fairly distributed infrastructure. Spatial and non-spatial data/information is necessary for property tax assessment and collection. CBMS will form an effective and efficient environment of planning and monitoring of urban development functions, as it is able to link with the grassroots' community.

The pilot Kitongoji is Barabarani, which has an approximate population of 720 people. Barabarani is in the Kijiji cha Nala, and the Kata ya Nala. The village, particularly Kitongoji cha Barabarani, is significantly rural in characteristics but is also in the transition stage of adopting urban features.

Employment opportunities, distribution of water points within walking distance, literacy, maternal services, passable roads and agricultural extension services are but a few of the needs identified in the pilot area. CBMS will be a tool for allowing fast and frequent access to the community in order to qualify and quantify those needs and hence pave way for appropriate strategies for improving the people's livelihood.

The project tasks

Preliminary work on the project will include an assessment of existing information sources, paying particular attention that the dataset designed for the CBMS will concur, as much as possible, with variable definitions found in the other sources. This will allow for meaningful comparative analysis of the CBMS village and ward data with municipal, district, regional and national figures. The plan to automate the Fomu ya Takwimu will satisfy this criteria. An initial list of other statistical surveys and organizations include:

- Integrated Labour Force Survey, 2000/01
- The Tanzanian Household Budget Survey (HBS), 2000/01
- 2002 Population and Housing Census Results
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
- General Data Dissemination System (GDDS)
- Tanzania Demographic and Health Surveys (TDHS)

- Tanzania Socio-economic Database (TSED)
- Tanzania Population Information Network (TPIN)

The first research objective will be to fully review the Fomu ya Takwimu process. The tasks involved here are the identification of all data reports utilized by council, managers and ward representatives; identification of individual staff roles and responsibilities within various departments and wards, relative to the Fomu ya Takwimu; and identification of the technical capabilities of key players.

After evaluating the Fomu ya Takwimu, the second objective will be to identify the core reports to be produced by the Municipal Database (i.e., CBMS) to satisfy the information needs of the manispaa, kata, mitaa, vijiji and vitongoji for program planning and budgeting. In consultation with the municipal director, department managers, council and community leaders, the proposed reports to be generated from the automated Fomu ya Takwimu will be reviewed together with the list of data of *The Opportunities and Obstacles to Development – A Community Participatory Planning Methodology*. The completion of this objective will result in the identification of the core set of data that needs to be captured within the Municipal Database.

After completing the evaluation of the Process Charts, and after identifying the required data and the desired reports, the project team can begin to undertake the third objective; i.e., the designing of the database. The design phase will include a continuing review of the recommended datasets and management reports with the municipal director, department managers, council and community leaders, to ensure the relevance and utility of the final product.

Once the CBMS database design is complete, the fourth objective will be to develop the database. Since the Dodoma Municipal Council does not have an information technology (IT) department nor does it have an IT specialist or staff, a portion of the CBMS budget needs to be allocated to the hiring of a local computer science student or graduate, or the secondment of an IT specialist from a local institute or government office. The IT specialist will work with the key

individuals in the development of the database. The current manual on data collection and processing, as described earlier will be automated.

The following is a general outline of Dodoma's approach to the collection, processing and dissemination on the CBMS database.

1. Data will be collected for all households in the pilot mtaa and kitongoji. Spatial data will be collected using manually drawn maps, various schematics, and digital photographs. If sufficient budget is available, aero photographs will be taken. For the socio-economic information, the existing Fomu ya Takwimu will be used. The data will be collected using this existing Fomu ya Takwimu.
2. The researchers identified in this proposal will process the data using a mixture of manual and computerized methods, with the help of the temporary/full-time IT specialist. At the community level, the data processors will include teachers and community leaders in the ward and villages. The researchers will provide template worksheets and training to the teachers and community leaders.
3. Data validation will occur at two levels. For public issues, the Ward Development Committee and full council sessions, will be used. These are conducted quarterly. For private sector issues, data will be validated by a relevant NGO such as the Chamber of Commerce for business issues.
4. Every sector will be responsible for disseminating its own data. Dissemination will include posting of the information publicly on billboards, the Internet, or will be made available to the appropriate groups and organizations in traditional print format. Frequent sharing of data will ensure that the information is continually updated and accurate. Development Committees will be responsible for disseminating the data to the wards and villages.
5. Every sector, kata, mtaa, kijiji and kitongoji will have access to its own data. Depending on the personal nature of the

information, or the sample size, some information may not be shared publicly. Passwords for particular data sets may also be required to access the information.

6. The municipality will be establishing an Information Unit, which will assume responsibility for maintaining, updating and enhancing the CBMS database. This unit will serve the Council and the departments as an Information Resource Centre.

After the establishment of the CBMS database for the pilot areas, it will be replicated in other mitaa and vitongoji of the pilot wards and subsequently in other wards of Dodoma. It is expected that the CBMS database will then be implemented in other municipal councils of Tanzania.

Comments

- This is a project proposal from the Dodoma City Council in Tanzania and it is the first CBMS proposal from Eastern Africa. As such, this is a good addition to the geographical coverage of the CBMS network.
- The proposal itself is coming from the municipal council and linked to its overall strategy plan of strengthening the decentralization process and evidence-based decision making at the local level. Certainly, this is a big plus in terms of the potential uptake of the CBMS data.
- In general, the proposal looks promising and the proponents' participation in the meeting will be a learning process on how the CBMS methodology is being implemented in other countries.
- The twinning arrangement with the City of St. Albert should not feature prominently and the justification of the value added in the CBMS monitoring system is not too clear. Maybe a footnote may be added or better yet, the relationship, technical significance and its impact on the project should be explained rather than leaving it in the activity and expense section. The missions to Canada and the workshop in St. Albert may not be too convincing and may be redundant. A field visit to a CBMS project is preferable to learn best practice.
- It will be useful and interesting to know the relationship between the project, the O&OD and the PRSP monitoring process in the context of decentralization and devolution of power to the local government authorities and to identify formal links if they exist. The Tanzania PRSP provides a comprehensive overview on how the country plans to monitor the PRSP process and on current data gaps/information needed. It would be helpful to know more

- about the user groups, the linkages between these groups and the municipality, and ultimately the link to the planning process.
- Provide information on the level of collaboration with national institutions like REPOA, TEHIP and engagement of the local communities at this early stage of the process. It will be useful to get them involved in the decisionmaking process and planning stages.
 - Proposal is relevant to the CBMS system but its technical feasibility needs to be improved. There is very little by way of methodology and of the local government context in the current proposal that allows for an assessment of its feasibility and methodological rigor.
 - The team needs to provide more contextual information on the administrative structures (roles and responsibilities of different administrative units). The proposal indicates that an assessment of existing information sources will be undertaken as part of the project. This needs to be done as part of the proposal development to give a stronger rationale for CBMS.
 - There is a need to give a brief overview of the available data sources and types for local government needs. This needs to be done by the team during the preparation of the proposal to assess where the information/data gaps lie and where the CBMS can fill the gap. A deeper analysis of this could be done within the purview of the project itself.
 - Another useful information at this stage is the existing administrative structure of the country. The plan is to collect CBMS data at the village and ward levels and ultimately aggregated to the municipal/district level. One can see from this the proposal that the village or ward is among the lowest administrative levels. It will be useful to outline the different tiers of local government and at what levels government financial and service delivery decisions are taken.

- The proponents should look at the documentation of CBMS work and other related initiatives on the development of local monitoring systems as a general reference on what has been done and what the best practices are and lessons learned.
- As a new CBMS partner, technical assistance should be extended to the Dodoma city council in refining the technical aspects of the proposal.
- There is a need to include personnel in the team with poverty expertise.
- As CBMS work is useful to the local community, provide explanation on how the CBMS information will be used for decisionmaking and at what level.
- Decisionmaking issues are as important as data issues. As such, it is important to know who makes decisions about what, what institutions are involved and how communication takes place. More information should be provided on the administrative decisionmaking process.
- It was suggested to get the involvement from someone from the Bureau of Statistics.