

NEWSLETTER

BELIZE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS



"Making Belize Sustainable"

Statistics in Planning

by Barbara Tillett-Abdulhadi



Photo by dreamstime.com

What are statistics? The textbook definition says, "statistics is the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, in order to investigate or discover relationships among phenomena so as to explain, predict and control their occurrence." (Mcgraw-Hill) That is a mouthful, however, it captures the primary reason for which planners and others collect and use statistics, which is to see more clearly what phenomena or problems exist within a target population, seek out the cause, and come up with a plan of action to address or rectify the problems. Do you know the target population being served by your organization or institution? Many businesses or institutions collect data on the people they serve, whether it is for reporting purposes or because they wish to more accurately measure and anticipate the size and choices of products and services

required to advance the goals of the organization. However, we often look at our city or town and view its problems by the symptoms that are most evident, then draw our conclusions. For example, we see the proliferation of squatters living in swamps on the edge of the city and conclude that they have no access to land of their own and are too poor to afford the rents in the inner city. However, is that the root of the problem? How can we find out?

Research and statistics would reveal much more about this phenomenon. Where did they live before? How did they find this location? How many own/owned land or applied for land? What is their income? The answers to these and other questions would provide a much greater understanding and allow urban planners to arrive at better solutions for this select population. Some information may be obtained from the Statistical Institute of Belize. For example, data on economic activity for the enumeration district within which the area falls, especially with a relatively homogenous neighborhood, could provide valuable insight on household incomes and wealth. Administrative data could be sourced at the Lands Department to determine the number of land applications and land ownership. Other data could be obtained by taking an actual survey of the area.

As you can see, there are many ways to obtain reliable statistics and data on a particular area. The Statistical Institute, many ministries and departments, as well as institutions like the Central Bank, collect and compile statistics on a regular basis on behalf of the government. These statistics are primarily used for planning and reporting on the state of the economy and the social welfare of the country. However, anyone can use these statistics and can supplement it with targeted research and survey information to gain a greater understanding of the population under study and so arrive at more pragmatic solutions.

BAP Participates in UNDP's Virtual Discussion on Green Recovery



On August 27, the Executive Director of BAP, Carolyn Trench-Sandiford participated in the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) Global Policy Network virtual morning coffee chat on the Green Recovery.

During the session, participants discussed how relevant working together with UNDP Belize is, in addressing immediate needs resulting from the socio-economic impacts from COVID, and how these efforts also translate into longer-term sustainable, and low carbon pathways.

Specifically, Mrs. Trench Sandiford's intervention focused on how the Belize Association of Planners is pioneering the building of community resilience for social, environmental and economic and livelihood sustainability, by using disaggregated

data to first, identify gaps and deficiencies in service delivery and development opportunities at the community or neighborhood level.

Additionally, she spoke on how BAP is addressing these gaps by incorporating urban and building design principles for energy efficiency, mobility and connectivity, for housing solutions and containing urban sprawl. This is expected to reduce degradation of natural ecosystems and the urban heat effect; as well as decrease the risk to disasters and climate change, while at the same time creating green jobs, improving air quality and increasing CO2 sinks. Additionally, it will strengthen state, civil society and community partnerships to bring about the changes the communities desire.

BAP recognizes and thanks its partners for support in the organization's journey. Through their support, the public is able to recognize the value of our profession, to the sustainable growth and development of Belize.

Special thanks to the GEF Small Grants Program.

Statistics in Planning

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Note however that statistics are also time sensitive and relate to a particular period in time. So using the most updated information, or extrapolating outdated statistics based on trends, or incorporating recent administrative data from other reliable sources may be necessary. Case in point is the 2010 Census which puts Belize's population at 324,528. However, the last Labour Force Report for September 2019 puts the estimated population of the country at 410,695, a difference of 86,167 people.

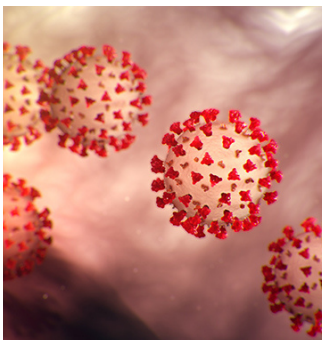
So, delve into some statistics and see what it will reveal about your target population before drawing conclusions just based on a cursory observation of a situation. Even if it supports your earlier perceptions, you will gain a better understanding of the situation.



MISSION – To address relevant planning and development issues in Belize by working in partnership with the public and private sector and civil society organizations, and the people of Belize through research, education, advocacy and action.

FOR UPDATES ON COVID-19

Contact Ministry of Health - Belmopan



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Email: Minister or CEO at
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VISION – BAP is a proactive professional planning organization committed to assuring social justice and promoting sustainability in the natural and built environment.

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