Census and ICT: Insights and Opportunities

This presentation will provide a comprehensive overview of the inclusion of ICT-related questions in the latest census, the motivations behind this decision, and the potential insights and opportunities that the resulting data can unlock.

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Brief Background on the Census

1

Comprehensive Data Collection

The census is a vital tool for gathering comprehensive data on the population, housing, and other key indicators within a country or region.

2

Informing Policy Decisions

The census data is used by policymakers and planners to make informed decisions about resource allocation, infrastructure development, and social programs.

3

Tracking Demographic Trends

The census allows for the tracking of demographic trends over time, such as population growth, migration patterns, and changes in household composition.

While maintaining the quality of traditional survey data, we are eager to leverage new data sources such as MPD to complement our survey data. We regard the census data as critical inputs for addressing typical challenges of new data sources such as representation biases.

Rationale for ICT Questions

Policy priorities

- Growing importance of ICT in daily life and their impact on economic and social development
- Significance of understanding the accessibility and utilization of ICT for informing policy decision

Reporting obligation

- National, regional and international frameworks that Gambia subscribes to requiring reporting on ICT indicators such the NDP, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs

Addressing the challenge of new data sources such as MPD

- The Census is a useful data source to understand population landscape in terms of ITC-device access and usage for utilizing high-frequency data, e.g. representation-bias adjustment

ICT Questions and Wording

1 **Question Design**

The specific wording and structure of the ICT-related questions were carefully considered to ensure they were clear, unambiguous, and relevant to the local context.
Active collaboration with related agencies and domain experts provided useful insights and opportunities.

2 **Pilot Testing**

The questions were pilot tested with a sample of the population to gather feedback and make any necessary adjustments before the final census questionnaire was developed.

3 **Alignment with International Standards**

The ICT questions were designed to align with international statistical standards and best practices, allowing for cross-country comparisons and data harmonization.

Why ICT questions are useful in the context of high-frequency data

Questions about access to ICT facilities and devices

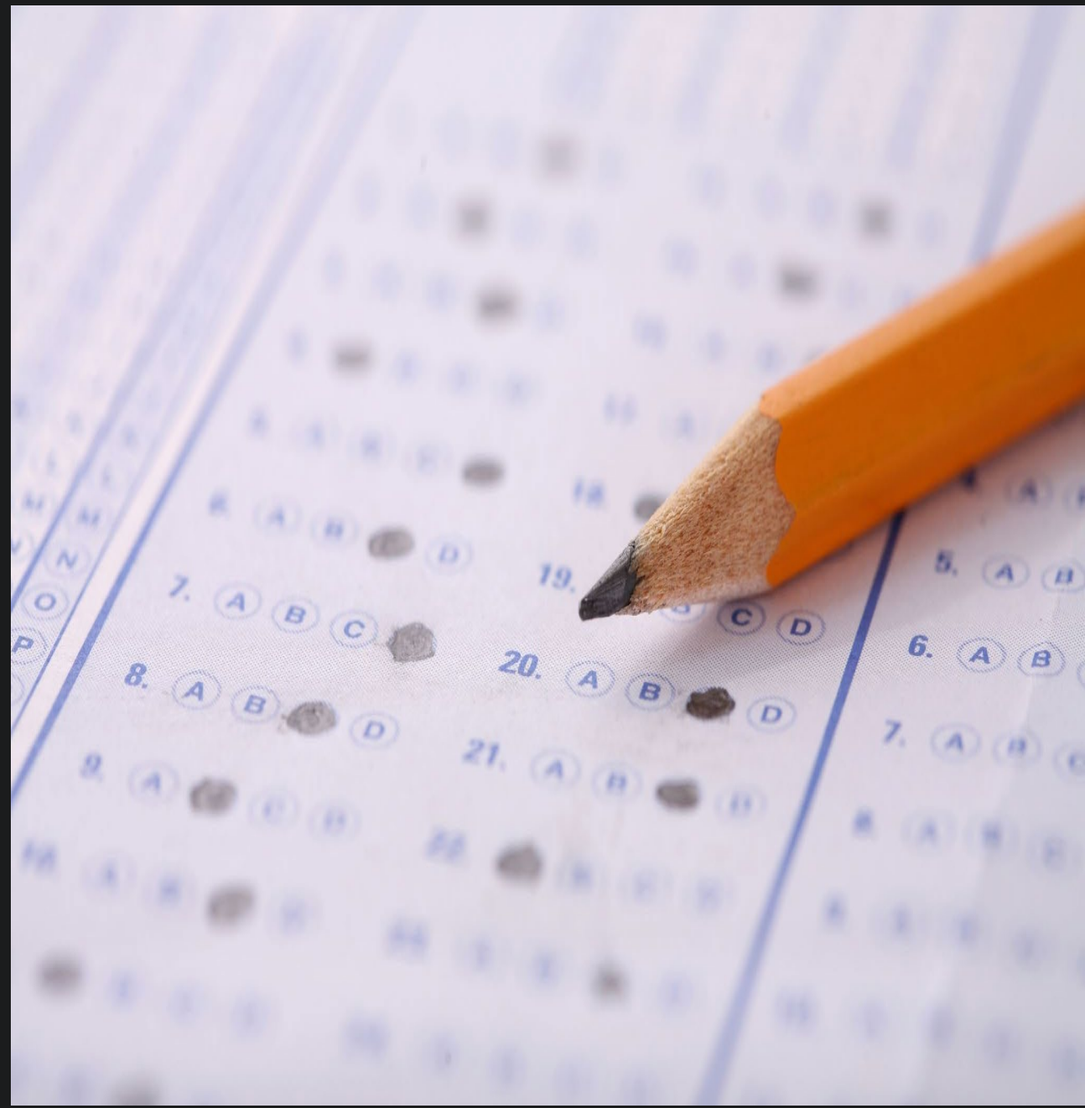
- High-frequency data such as MPD is useful data source, but it usually represents limited part of society
- There are no other population data than the Census data that can provide the population landscape of ICT access/ usage at the national level and in internationally comparable format

➡ **Useful for adjusting representation biases**

Questions about the usage of ITC facilities and devices

- Estimation results derived from high-frequency data tend to represent the feature of those who generate more data points
- It is impossible to know their socio-economic attributes directly from the dataset

➡ **Useful for understanding correlations between usage behavior and socio-economic characteristics**



Leveraging Census Data

Informing Policy Decisions

The ICT-related data from the census will be used to inform policy decisions and guide the development of strategies to promote digital inclusion and the adoption of new technologies.

Monitoring Progress

The census data will serve as a baseline for tracking progress and changes in ICT access and usage over time, allowing for the evaluation of the effectiveness of related policies and programs.

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities

The census data will help identify underserved areas and population groups, enabling targeted interventions and the allocation of resources to address digital divides and inequalities.

Limitation of the census module module

1 **Not so comprehensive module**

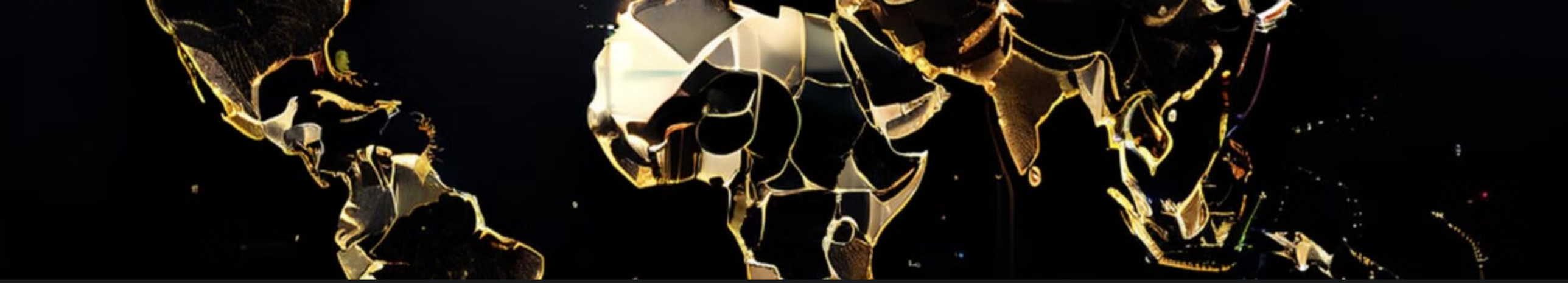
Limited number of questions due to the size of the census questionnaire and the duration of the census exefcise

2 **Only household level questions**

Questions are limited to only household and individual level due to the nature of the census

3 **No chance for Institutional level ICT questions**

The census questionnaire was strictly household level and therefore instutional level ICT questions could not have been included.



World Bank Involvement and Future Plans

Funding Support

The World Bank provided funding for the conduct of the census through the HISWACA project. This project is also funding all other major survey programs for the next 5 years.

Future Surveys

Two specialized ICT surveys have been included in the NSDS and will be funded by the HISWACA project. These are the National Household-level ICT survey and the Institutional ICT survey (which includes schools)

Data Utilization

The World Bank will work closely with the government to ensure the effective utilization of the census data, providing guidance and support for data analysis and dissemination.

Addressing Challenges

1

Resource Constraints

The national statistical agency faced resource constraints, such as limited staff and technical capacity, which required careful planning and the mobilization of additional support.

2

Capacity Building

Questions related to ICT were traditionally limited to access to media. This also means that there was no such time when we had a module that addresses ITU/ SDG indicators. It is therefore natural that such capacity to adequately compute ICT indicators has not been developed.

3

Collaborative Approach

The GBoS has also adopted a collaborative approach, working closely with the World Bank and domain experts such as UN-CEBD to leverage their resources, ensuring the successful implementation of the census and the effective use of the ICT-related data. However, more collaboration is needed especially with ITU as well as sister NSOs to support us on our journey to institutionalize ICT issues.

Conclusion

- The inclusion of ICT-related questions in the latest census represents a significant step forward for Gambia, providing valuable insights and opportunities to drive digital transformation and promote inclusive development.
- By leveraging this data, policymakers and stakeholders can make better informed decisions, address digital divides, and harness the power of technology to improve the lives of all citizens.
- Our efforts utilizing the Census and MPD can demonstrate good practice that can be replicated globally as both datasets are common in comparable formats in many countries/ regions.