



**GHANA ASSOCIATION OF FORMER
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS**

**2019 Ghana Association of Former
International Civil Servants' Public Lecture**

**NUMBERS COUNT:
STRENGTHENING DATA-BASED PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT**

BY

Dr. Andrew Ananie Arkutu

(Former Director of UNFPA and Former Chairman, National Population Council)

**At the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Auditorium
Accra**

23rd October, 2019

Chaired by

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WELCOME ADDRESS BY

Ing. Kwaku D. Osei- Bonsu, President, GAFICS

I recently read an article by a veteran Ghanaian journalist who lamented that some speakers at functions devote a lot of their allotted time to salutations - trying to recognize all important dignitaries and ending the salutations with "All protocols observed." This, according to the writer, incurs the wrath of those not recognized.

I am not going to make that mistake as there are many dignitaries in the auditorium this evening. So, please permit me to say, "Distinguished Chairperson, Dr. Nana Susubribi Krobea Asante, Paramount Chief of Asante Asokore; Excellencies; Eminent dignitaries; Ladies, Gentlemen and Students:

On behalf of the Ghana Association of Former International Civil Servants (GAFICS), I welcome you all to the re-launch of the GAFICS Annual Public Lecture series. This first lecture is titled "Numbers Count- Strengthening Data-Based Planning for Development". The topic is apt at this crucial moment in our development. The choice of person to deliver the lecture is also apt. Dr. Andrew Arkutu, a founding member of GAFICS and its first President, is a former Chairperson of the National Population Council, a retired Director of the United Nations Population Fund and an accomplished entrepreneur. The Chairperson, Nana is also a GAFICS member.

GAFICS is re-launching the Annual Public Lectures starting this year 2019. For this new series, each year, a selected member of the Association or an accomplished Ghanaian in a chosen field will be invited to deliver the lecture.

GAFICS constitutes a pool of highly qualified Ghanaians with extensive experience and expertise in many scientific, social, economic and related fields. This store of knowledge has been garnered from working with Governments across the globe, the UN, its departments, funds and specialized agencies, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as other reputable international organizations.

GAFICS has produced a brochure which outlines the rationale for its establishment and the assistance executed to date in giving back to society. The brochure has been distributed to all; thus I will not bore you by going through it. However, it is important to re-emphasize some of the contents. Indeed, the primary aim of GAFICS is to give back to society.

Members are appreciative of the sound education they received in Ghana which helped to open doors of employment for them in major institutions inside and outside the country. These men and women played key roles in diverse positions throughout the world. Having retired from their formal employment and now settled in Ghana, they are desirous to give back to society by placing their skills and expertise at the disposal of the nation.

Simply put, the nation has made us **who we are now**. The other equally important aim is to foster the welfare and social interest of members, especially assisting new members with their resettlement and adjustment after being away and working abroad for years.

Nana Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished dignitaries, Ladies, Gentlemen and Students, to better position GAFICS to contribute to the social and economic development of the nation, members have been grouped into **six clusters** by discipline as follows: Economy, Trade, Investment; Health, Population, Nutrition, Social Development; Education and Administration; Peace, Security and Governance; Infrastructure and Environment; and Food and Agriculture. The clusters provide a forum for focused analysis and deliberation on topical issues by experts in the respective fields. The clusters will make recommendations and propose measures and strategies to boost policymaking and implementation. In short, GAFICS is committed to sharing its technical knowledge and expertise with various Government entities and other institutions and would welcome any collaborative ventures.

We acknowledge the support received from the UN system through the Acting UN Resident Coordinator Mrs. Sylvia Lopez-Ekra and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for allowing this Public Lecture to kick start the celebration of the UN Day, which falls tomorrow. We also wish to thank the Planning Committee¹ chaired by Dr. Alex Aboagye for their sacrifice in putting together this event.

The question on the minds of many gathered here, I believe, is, what next after the lecture? Is it another talk-shop? The transcript of the lecture will be produced and the strategies to enhance policymaking and implementation submitted to the Government. Once again, GAFICS is ready to give back to society and to paraphrase MHB400 stanza 4 "Take our intellect and use it in the development of Ghana."

Thank you for honoring our invitation.

¹ The Planning Committee comprised Dr. Alex Aboagye, Mrs. Kate Aboagye, Dr. Eugene Date-Bah, Mr. George Nsiah, Ms. Adwoa Sey, Dr. Peter Acquah, and Ing. Kwaku Dua Osei-Bonsu. Notably, this document was edited by Ms. Inez Randolph.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Counting the numbers, conducting population censuses was a well-established practice during the Roman Empire and pre-dates the birth of Christ.

But it was Thomas Malthus, an English gentleman, cleric and demographer, who in his work entitled “AN ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION, published in 1798, established the correlation between the rate of population growth and the increase in available resources to sustain the population.

This lecture makes a case that development programmes and social intervention strategies that are intended, and have the power, to transform the lives of people, communities and society at large, should not be launched on a whim and a prayer. Sentiment and good intentions are no substitutes for rigorous data-based planning, execution and evaluation. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that the conceptualization, planning, execution and evaluation of such programmes and activities are firmly and solidly based on the realities on the ground, especially the numbers of intended beneficiaries.

During the past two decades, partly in response to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals but mainly on national long and medium term development aspirations, Ghana has launched a number of social transformation programmes, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), The School Feeding Programme, Free Basic Education through Senior High School, Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP).

The lecture draws on the experience from some of these iconic national programmes to demonstrate how failure to take critical data into account in planning can lead to challenges and difficulties in implementation and unexpected outcomes. In all of the programmes reviewed, there was clear evidence that most of the challenges faced during programme execution could and should have been anticipated and appropriate remedial actions taken to avoid or reduce their negative impact if available data had been taken fully into consideration in planning before rolling out these programmes.

The lecture also explores and identifies major sources of population-related data, as well as mechanisms for coordination and sharing of data among users for planning and research purposes.

The lecture concludes with a number of recommendations for developing and strengthening a culture of data-based planning for national development. These include.

1. Establishing a National Data-Base

2. Strengthening and Building Up the Operational Capacity of the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Information System throughout the Country;
3. Strengthening the Role of the National Population Council in the Coordination of Data Management among Stakeholders including Academic and Research Institutions;
4. Establish A Programme at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) or The Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), University of Ghana, for Training in the Integration of Population Data into Development Planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the President, the Executive Committee and Members of GAFICS for inviting me to give the first Lecture of what is to become an Annual event. My friends, I am deeply honoured. But I am also mindful of the usual fate of the guinea-pig.

"In those days, Caesar Augustus, issued a decree that a Census should be taken of the entire Roman World.

This was the first Census that took place while QUIRINIUS was Governor of Syria.

And everyone went to their own town to register.

And Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him....."

St. Luke's Gospel; Chap 2: Verses 1-5.

Why? Because it was considered important to know not only the numbers of people living in a city but also how many were immigrants from other regions. When the population of a given region passed a certain number, for reasons of good governance, a Governor had to be appointed to administer that region. Before Jesus was born, they knew that the numbers counted.

MALTHUSIAN THEORY

Thomas Malthus, an English gentleman, cleric, demographer and economist was the first person to draw attention to the fact that there was a correlation between population size, and especially, the rate of growth of that population and the resources available for survival, growth and development.

In "AN ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION" published in 1798, Malthus postulated that because the production of the means of survival (e.g. food production) increased arithmetically while the size of the population grew geometrically, unless there were what he termed "preventive and positive" checks, a point would be reached when population growth would outstrip food supply. Famine and death would ensue. His predictions, based on the agrarian economy of the England of his day, did not materialize because he did not foresee the positive impact on food availability as the result of improvements in farm management and the application of new technologies such as improved seeds and reductions in post-harvest losses. The Malthusian Theory

however, established the need and practice of integrating population dynamics into development planning.

What happens when we fail to make the numbers count in our decision-making?

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen, I live in East Legon. Many of you, I dare say, know the tunnel which connects the Shiashie- Boundary Road in East Legon to the Spintex Road. Under normal traffic conditions, it takes me five minutes to drive from my house to the tunnel. During the rush hour, particularly early in the morning when parents drop their children off at school, it could take me up to an hour. That was before a new tunnel was built to ease the traffic congestion during peak hours. The new tunnel was officially commissioned with the usual fanfare several months ago. So, what has happened? The congestion has become worse. It now takes me no less than an hour and half to get to the tunnel from my house during the rush hour.

I believe that the new tunnel was planned and executed by the appropriate and competent authority with the best intentions for the benefit of the people who have to use the tunnel every day.

So, as the Chinese may ask, what went wrong?

The simple answer is that the planners did not make the numbers count. This tunnel was conceived as an engineering project without taking into consideration the steadily increasing volume of vehicular traffic even during "normal hours" The authorities could have used existing technology to accurately establish the flow of traffic during "normal" and peak hours over a period of say six months. They would have found out what many residents in East Legon already knew, that the volume of traffic was increasing even during "normal hours". They didn't.

By failing to make the numbers count, and at significant cost to the taxpayer and to the frustration of the intended beneficiaries, the planners have succeeded in making an existing bad situation worse.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this evening, I wish to present the case that **programmes and interventions that are intended, and have the power, to transform the lives of our people, communities and society, should NOT be launched on a whim and a prayer.** There is too much at stake.

The development and implementation of social intervention programmes require, among other factors, clear vision, the investment of significant financial and material resources, personal and political capital as well as the participation and commitment of stakeholders including beneficiaries. These pre-requisites, however, Mr. Chairman, do not, in, and of themselves, in isolation or together, necessarily secure or guarantee

desired outcomes. Sentiment and good intentions are no substitutes for rigorous data-based planning.

To achieve their goals, it is critical that serious and conscientious efforts are made to ensure that the planning, execution and evaluation of such programmes are firmly based on the realities on the ground, **the numbers and evidence before our eyes**. We need to develop and strengthen a culture of data-based planning for development. **We must count the numbers.**

Any social development policy, programme or intervention should begin with the critical question: who are the primary beneficiaries or target of this intervention? What are their numbers, ages, gender, spatial distribution, levels of education, special needs, etc., of the population to be specifically targeted to achieve desired outcomes?

It is also pertinent to address the issue of resource requirements from the beginning. In doing so, one must take into consideration the potential contribution of beneficiaries.

Elizabeth Adamson (1937) is credited with the quip that: "*a baby is an alimentary canal with a loud mouth at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other*" From a development policy perspective, however, it is significant to note that this alimentary canal arrives with two legs, a pair of hands and a brain. Development is first and foremost about, for, and by people. The people are therefore not only the beneficiaries of development (i.e. consumers) but also the agents, initiators and drivers of development. **A good reason why their numbers count.**

2. GHANA'S SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMMES AND INTERVENTIONS

In the past two decades, Ghana has invested heavily in several major programmes with the goal of achieving social transformation.

These programmes or social intervention strategies included, The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Free Maternity Services, Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), Free Basic Education, which now includes SHS, School Feeding Programme, the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) and a range of other interventions aimed at reducing extreme poverty.

They were based on a vision of a society in which every child was protected against the ravages of childhood disease and early death from malaria, diarrhoea or malnutrition; where every pregnant woman received the care and attention she needed to avoid death or long-term complications such as obstetric fistula; where the elderly received affordable social and health care.

It included the right of every child to basic education and the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential. At the end of a period of formal, informal and traditional education, to secure a meaningful employment that offers the means for decent living and self-fulfillment.

A society that makes provision for the care and support of the elderly, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

There was a general belief that the programmes initiated by various governments had the potential of transforming our society within a generation or two, provided effort matched expectation.

Sustainable Development Goals: The United Nations General Assembly in 2000 adopted the Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs). In 2015, upon review, they were refined and expanded to include climate change, peace and security and became known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ghana is signatory to the SDGs.

The ideals and concepts and strategies embodied in the SDGs provide a framework for Ghana's social transformation programmes and interventions.

Review of Social Transformation Programmes and Interventions: -It is probably too early for an objective impact assessment of these social intervention strategies. Undoubtedly, some progress has been made. Enrolment in the NHIS has reached 40 per cent of the population. (*Kotoh, M.A. et al: Int'l J. Health Policy Management; 2018; 7/5*)

Healthcare-seeking behaviour, especially among vulnerable groups, has improved. More women are taking advantage of the NHIS including Free Maternity Services to seek pre-natal care and to deliver in health facilities.

School enrolment is up. Thousands of children now have at least one square meal a day, thanks to the School Feeding Programme. LEAP has lifted thousands of families out of de-humanizing poverty.

But, on close examination, Mr. Chairman, **we can also see the numerous hurdles, obstacles, challenges and bottlenecks that have had to be negotiated as these programmes were rolled-out.** Some of these are what I call 'congenital birth defects.' They arose out of the processes of developing these programmes. They could have been predicted and avoided.

Let us now look at a few of these programmes and see if we can identify the challenges they faced and how these could have been addressed.

Basic Education Including Free Senior High School

This important sector is operating under severe duress from every perspective. The biggest challenge the sector faces is in accommodating the NUMBERS of beneficiaries.

Available figures indicate that there are some 21,438 public basic schools, 8,850 Junior High Schools and 900 Senior High Schools (including private schools) in the country. If media reports are correct, there is a severe infrastructure deficit. Many existing schools, including many SHS are in such deplorable conditions as not to be fit for purpose. Over 7400, representing 35% of public basic schools have no toilet facilities. (*Ghanaian Times, retrieved on 8th October, 2018*). The majority of Senior High Schools are overcrowded and their dormitories are completely full.

Last month, as Schools reopened, we were greeted on social media with the news that hundreds of hopeful new students had been turned back at Mfantshipim Senior High School. Similar harrowing scenes were to be played out at Wesley Girls High School, Prempeh College, Achimota School, Adisadel College, etc, etc.

In the days to follow, we were all to witness the melodrama played out at the Independence Square as hundreds of students, parents and guardians from almost every corner of this country, gathered to find out if they had secured admission into any, preferably, their choice of Senior High School under the Free Senior High School Programme.

Undoubtedly, other factors including technical problems with the Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) and poor communication contributed to the ensuing chaos.

But, Mr. Chairman, regardless of where one stands on the issue of the Free Senior High School Programme, **the underlying and inescapable fact was that there were not enough places in the "right" schools where parents and guardians wished to send their children.**

Let us count the numbers, Mr. Chairman. Between 2005 and 2019, the number of BECE candidates who qualified for placement in Senior High Schools had more than doubled from 177,000 to 490,000 without corresponding increases in the number of places or facilities.

Many of the challenges faced on the first day of school this year, and the frustrations and distress that many Ghanaian families experienced could and should have been foreseen, and possibly, prevented, if the planners and implementers of the Programme had **counted the numbers.**

You do not have to pay me Tithes for prophesying that unless urgent steps are taken, our tertiary institutions will face a TSUNAMI as cohorts of beneficiaries of the Free SHS come seeking admission to University in 2020.

The numbers are there for those who have eyes to see.

The number of new students the University of Ghana can admit each year depends to a large extent, on the number of students it can accommodate in its Halls of residence and off-campus residential facilities. The total number of rooms available and the number of students per room are known... These numbers should be used as a basis for determining how many new undergraduates can be offered residential accommodation each year. **Let the numbers count.**

The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)

The NHIS, set up in 2003 to provide equitable access and financial coverage for basic health care services and achieving universal coverage within five years, now faces a crisis of confidence among key stakeholders, difficulties in enrolment (40%) and retention and funding. One study reported in 2018, found that NHIS was implemented within an over-burdened health care system without adequate resources to handle the growing number of participants" (KOTOH, M.A.et al; 2018)

The crushing pressure on hospital out-patients' departments and wards, the near-empty shelves in hospital pharmacies, the frustration of health service providers struggling to cope with increasing numbers of NHIS -card holders seeking medical attention were predictable.

The numbers of service delivery points and personnel were known. If these numbers which are readily available within the health sector had been taken into account, the roll out of the NHIS could have been phased out so that available resources could be more effectively targeted at pressure points in the system.

The goal of "achieving universal coverage within five years", is difficult to evaluate because the goal posts keep moving as the population grows every year. The planners could have set more specific key performance indicators such as reaching 100,000 new recruits each year for five years. This would have made it easier to evaluate progress each year and adapt strategies accordingly.

Unemployment

Mr. Chairman, without doubt, unemployment remains one of the most serious developmental challenges facing the country. This is due, partly to the perceived

pervasiveness of the problem, the segment of population most affected and the potential risks to national security, peace and stability.

Unfortunately, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is one subject area where hard facts are particularly difficult to find. Several agencies and institutions collect unemployment data based on their peculiar needs. These include various Ministries, the Trade Union Congress as well as various academic and research institutions

Earlier this month, The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations put the Unemployment rate in Ghana at 7.1 per cent of the labour force. By some accounts (Hormeku, 1998), 80% of the Labour Force are engaged in the Informal Sector.

Sixty seven per cent of working people are employed in the private sector and only 28.5 per cent in the public sector. According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey Report (2008) by the GSS, 75% of informal sector employees living in the rural areas are engaged in agriculture compared with 43% of those living in urban areas.

The lack of a solid database has resulted in a rather weak and fragmented national response to the problem. At the last count, in addition to three Ministries, led by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, there are at least four government agencies, namely, The National Youth Authority (NYA) The Youth Employment Agency (YEA), The Youth Employment Support Programme (YES) and the Nation Builders Corps (NABCO) all involved in dealing with this problem. Effectively coordinating the mandates and activities of so many agencies must present its own challenges.

Mr. Chairman, if 80 per cent of the working population are in the informal sector, shouldn't the focus of government efforts be directed to addressing issues in that sector?

Ghana's Historical Population Profile:

- Ghana's population has grown from 6.7 million in 1960 to an estimated 30 million in 2019. In other words, during the past 59 years, the population of Ghana has grown 4.5 times.
- Currently the population is estimated to be growing at the rate of 2.5 per cent which means that the total population of Ghana will reach 45 million by the year 2040.
- Ghana has a youthful population. Young people aged 25 years or under constituted 58.3 per cent of the total population in 2010, slightly down from 61.3 per cent in 1960.
- Rate of Urbanization: Ghanaians are no longer village dwellers in rural areas. Mr. Chairman, according to a report by the Ghana Statistical Services based on figures from the 2010 Population and Housing Census,

- By 2017, more than half (55.41 per cent) of Ghanaians were living in towns and cities.
- Greater Accra alone already has over 4 million people, making it the 11th largest metro area in Africa.
- Urbanization is increasing at the rate of 3.07 per cent per annum due to both natural increase and rural-urban migration.
- The Report also found that one-third of urban dwellers did not have access to potable water and only 25 per cent of households had access to water closets (W.C.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, do these numbers count? What are the implications of these numbers on urban planning, housing, waste disposal and the environment?

3. SOURCES OF DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In Ghana, the main demographic data are captured in decennial population and housing censuses as well as from national demographic sample surveys such as the Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys that are periodically organized in the country. Ghana has conducted population and housing census every 10 years since 2000. Currently, preparations for the 2020 population and housing census are ongoing to provide the country with an update of the demographic situation with new indicators for planning.

Many agencies are involved in the collection and management of social, economic and demographic data for national development planning.

Ghana Statistical Services (GSS)

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) is the government institution mandated to collect, collate, assess, and disseminate official statistics in Ghana. This mandate includes collaboration and coordination with Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and other statistical organizations to compile data critical for the planning and management of the growth and development of the country. The Office was established in 1948 in a bid to institutionalize the collection and dissemination of statistical information, and with the vision of providing statistical services for evidence-based decision-making, good governance and national development

Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

Apart from the GSS, almost every government ministry, department or agency collects data relevant to its mandate and operations. Principal among these are the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ghana Health Service (GHS); Ministry of Education (MOE) and the

Ghana Education Service (GES); The Ministry of Finance (MOF); Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD) and District Assemblies. Other agencies collecting data include the Ghana Immigration Service, the Electoral Commission.

National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)

In the context, of our discussions this evening, the NDPC ranks among the most important institutions in Ghana. Established under Articles 86 &87 of the 1992 Constitution, its core mandate is “to advise the President on development planning policy and strategies” Among other functions, the NDPC makes proposals for the development of multi-year rolling plans taking into consideration the resource potential and comparative advantage of the different districts of Ghana. In discharging its mandate, the NDPC relies heavily on data from a wide variety of sources including the GSS, MDAs, academic and research institutions as well as its own studies. The NDPC has the responsibility to ensure not only that relevant information is collected but that it is efficiently processed, analysed, and consciously integrated into the development planning process at all stages. It must also facilitate the sharing of information and the transfer of the necessary skills for integrating population variables into development planning at all levels.

The National Identification Authority

The National Identification Authority was established under the National Identity Register Act, 2008 (Act 707) and is mandated to register all Ghanaians and to create and maintain a national identity database. In the medium to long term, this Authority should become a major source of demographic and social data for development planning.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

Established more than 100 years ago, the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and Information System in Ghana remains under-developed and under-utilized due to lack of awareness and compliance. It is almost impossible to overstate the critical contribution that a well-functioning system of registering births and deaths can make towards developing a national database for development planning.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2014-2017) "considers the quality and completeness of vital events registration and associated services to be critical for evidence-based decision-making. It would also enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and delivery of Government services including health and social welfare benefits".

The Births and Deaths Registry is currently poorly resourced. Although it has staff in almost every district in the country and collects mountains of important data, it does not publish any regular reports.

Academic and Research Institutions

There are scores of public, academic and research institutions involved in data gathering and management. All these could benefit from technical and financial support as well as greater coordination and collaboration.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Ghana has made some remarkable progress in evolving several important social intervention policies and programmes to enhance the quality of life of the population. It is apparent, however, that where the conception, planning, development and implementation of these programmes had not been adequately informed by the socio-demographic data which, in this lecture has been defined *literally and figuratively as numbers*, problems and challenges arise which may negatively affect desired and expected outcomes.

There is the need to develop and strengthen a culture of data-based planning involving the systematic integration of social and demographic variables into planning for development.

(i) National Database

To facilitate the process, we recommend that priority be given to improving access to reliable data by investing in the creation of a full-fledged National Database preferably within the Ghana Statistical Service. It would be much cheaper to maintain one comprehensive database than several parallel ones.

(ii) The Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Information System

The Civil Registration and vital Statistics Information System should be strengthened through adequate funding and technical assistance to ably discharge its important mandate.

(iii) National Population Council (NPC)

A key role of the NPC is to coordinate the activities of several government agencies and research institutions involved in collecting and processing demographic data and to facilitate the dissemination and access to relevant data for planning purposes. It also has the mandate to assist in training personnel in the integration of demographic variables into the development process.

The NPC, must, above all, strongly advocate for the creation of the National Database and improved access to quality data for development planning.

Developing and Sustaining a Culture of Integrating Population into Development Planning

A huge amount of data is collected and stored on a regular basis by a host of agencies. The problem is that the majority of institutions, agencies and individuals collecting data seem unaware of the value of the information they gather or how the information can be used for planning purposes or for improving performance and outcomes. If aware, the staff seem to lack the skills to use the data for planning.

Awareness is important. Acquiring the skills for integration is key. Staff at all levels, especially those involved in policy formulation and planning should be properly trained for the purpose.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of effort is being made by many agencies to collect data. Much of this effort needs to be better coordinated. We may have issues about the relevance, completeness or quality of some of the information available. But what we can say is that at least some of the numbers are being counted.

We have greater concerns about how much use is made of the numbers available for policy formulation, strategy development and decision making with respect to development planning. There are issues around awareness, capacity and skills for integration of social and demographic variables into development planning.

I have made a couple of recommendations to deal with some of the challenges and consequences we face in making the numbers count.

But Ladies and Gentlemen, a more fundamental question remains. WHERE AND HOW FAR DO WE AS A NATION WISH TO GO IN MAKING THE NUMBERS COUNT? WHAT PRICE ARE WE WILLING AND ABLE TO PAY TO GET THERE?

It is recommended that a training module be established at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) for the purpose. This will require active participation and collaboration among key stakeholders including the Ministry of Planning, Ghana Statistical Services (GSS), National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) and the National Population Council (NPC).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for your patience and endurance. Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for your attention and kindness.

5.0 CLOSING REMARKS BY NANA DR. S.K.B. ASANTE

Dr. Arkutu deserves our highest commendation for delivering a fascinating paper. I will not presume to summarize his lecture, but I thought it would be helpful to dwell on some of the central themes of the paper, i.e. we need to develop and strengthen a culture of data-based planning for development. We must count the numbers to achieve our development goals. It is critical that serious and conscientious efforts are made to ensure that the planning, execution and evaluation of such programmes are firmly based on the realities on the ground, the numbers and evidence before our eyes.

Our lecturer has made his case. Numbers count and therefore we must count the numbers in our planning for development.

The case is valid even though I recognize that there is room for initiating bold and imaginative measures without much planning, such as the establishment of the Ghana Medical School by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

My sources indicate that after a protracted debate as to whether the proposed medical school should be sponsored by American or South African sources, Osagyefo decreed that the medical staff of Korle-Bu Hospital should establish a medical school relying exclusively on Ghanaian sources. This venture paid off.

I would however like to raise two fundamental questions.

1. What do we do when we have all the necessary data i.e. the numbers?
2. How do we handle the data in long term development planning?

Any discussion of our development efforts invariably leads to an examination of the endeavours of other countries, notably the Asian countries. How did Korea or Malaysia for example handle long-term planning?

In 1968, I was sent to South Korea on a mission by the World Bank in connection with the establishment of the Korea Development Finance Corporation. In view of the spectacular development achievements of South Korea, it may be helpful to consider how that country (one of the newly industrialized countries of Asia) approached some of these challenges. The following account of South Korea's performance in the educational sector by the World Bank is instructive:

The Drive for Universal Primary and Secondary Education in Korea.

Emerging from a bitter war in the early 1950s, the Republic of Korea, at that time one of the world's poorest countries, achieved nearly 100 percent coverage in primary and secondary education in just four decades. Korea now has a tertiary education sector comparable to that in

developed countries. Average years of schooling almost doubled between 1970 and 1995, from 5.74 years to 10.25 years. The illiteracy rate fell dramatically, from 13% in 1970 to 2% in 1999. Results from the most recent PISA and TIMSS studies (1995 and 1999) show that Korean students are among the top performers in both mathematics and science in OECD member countries. It is no coincidence that Korea has become the world's 12th largest economy.

How did Korea achieve this?

1. In the 1950s, South Korea embarked on a comprehensive development plan that provided for the expansion and strengthening of the education system. The plan emphasized universal primary education in the 1960s, secondary education in the 1970s, and tertiary education in 1980s.
2. South Korea ensured equity in access to schools by abolishing the entrance examination system for the middle schools in 1968 and by introducing a lottery system for student admission. The lottery system was perceived as fair because it was based on residence and not on examination results which could be affected by economic means or other socio-economic factors. This system has virtually eliminated the elite middle schools.
3. Government expenditure increased substantially to finance this major expansion.

Many economists have observed that the South Korean economic take-off was substantially attributable to the availability of an educated work force. As Frimpong-Ansah (1996) observed, "The Government of Korea had to make a special effort sparing no fiscal resources to push education, particularly, in the field of technology, in order to qualify for the large injections of domestic and foreign investment capital in modern industry."

The critical importance of human resource development, particularly, the acquisition of technology is also underscored by Pianim as follows:

There is now some consensus on the broad factors that contributed to the success of the East Asian and Latin American industrialization process. First and foremost, as a necessary but insufficient condition, they did get their macro-economic and enabling environment and incentive systems right. They invested significantly in mass and technical education. Not only general mass literacy and numeracy education, but the recent South

East Asian example seems to suggest that one of the keys to their success is that they “targeted their skill development programs to the critical areas where competitiveness could be improved.”

The public sector provided technology support and extension to the industrial sector. The state intervened using the traditional infant industry arguments. The key is that the intervention was selective targeted, and commensurate with the managerial and administrative capacity of the state.

It will be evident from the above that South Korea successfully executed a long-term educational plan.

What about Ghana?

Our Constitution envisages a long term development plan with respect to basic education.

Article 38(2) states:

“The Government shall, within two years after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of this Constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education.”

Unfortunately 26 years after the promulgation of the Constitution, we cannot confidently assert that Ghana has successfully implemented a ten year plan for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education. Basic education may be free, but it is neither compulsory nor universal in Ghana.

What elements are lacking in Ghana’s development planning endeavours?

How can we achieve effective long-term planning from a national point of view in the face our cyclical partisan competition in policies and programs every four years?

It will be recalled that Koreans planned a thirty-year educational reform as follows.

In the 1950s, South Korea established a comprehensive development plan that provided for the expansion and strengthening of the education system. The plan emphasized universal primary education in 1960s, secondary education in the 1970s, and tertiary education in the 1980s.

Government expenditures increased substantially to finance this major expansion.

Both South Korea and Malaysia were able to meticulously execute long term development plans.

I think our failure to execute a long term development plan is summed up by the following mathematical formula:

“The numerical implications of effective long-term planning are not congruent with the dictates and exigencies of partisan politics.”

Thank you.

APPENDIX

ADJUNCT LECTURE

Presentation by Dr. Leticia A. Appiah

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, friends from the media; I am humbled to be given the opportunity to be part of this maiden lecture organized by GAFICS. My sincere thanks goes to the President and the Executive Committee members of GAFICS for this honor done me. I must say, in the era of sustainable development goals and Ghana beyond Aid, the organizers' could not have chosen a more appropriate theme for this maiden lecture; **Numbers Count; strengthening the culture of data based planning for development.** I dare say, making data based planning our national culture will really accelerate our socio-economic development agenda as other developed countries because this focuses on the path of transitioning data into information, knowledge and ultimately wisdom. Wisdom is applied knowledge for individual and community good. *Indeed, the Bible entreats us to get wisdom and everything else will be added.*

Mr. Chair, permit me to illustrate this linkage between data and applied knowledge by telling the story of Adolphe Quetelet a Belgian astronomer, mathematician and a poet who lived in the 18th century. He was the first to apply statistics characteristics to human population and set forth to measure the height and weight of people.

Mr. Chair, the height and weight Adolphe Quetelet measured were raw data, they were simply facts that existed irrespective of our minds.

Data are simply facts or figures that have been in existence since the beginning of time like the weight and height, BP levels and age and so on and so forth. When you discover data, it only means we have been able to know what has always existed.

Adolphe Quetelet, being a mathematician concluded that analysis gives better information when related to other variables and so came out with a formula $Kg/m^2 = BMI$. A person's weight in kilograms and height in meters. He calculated the BMI for all the individuals and by so doing, he transformed the data into information.

Information when data is processed, interpreted, organized or presented in a meaningful or useful way to enable us better understand the data. Information is therefore, refined data, which helps to understand something at the basic level. Information provides context for data and exist irrespective of our minds.

Adolphe after calculating the BMIs, began thinking about the information in order to understand the relevant and objective information he had collected. He used both his

cognitive and analytical skills to explain the information based on what he knew. In other words, he sort out to seek knowledge from the information.

He grouped the BMIs into categories and realized that the people who were healthy had a BMI of 18.5 to 24.5, those with BMI of 25 and above were overweight, while those with BMI below 18.5 were underweight.

Knowledge requires both cognitive and analytical skills that help us explain the information based on what we know about the information. Knowledge refers to the awareness or understanding of relevant and objective information on a subject acquired from education or experience that helps in drawing conclusions. It can only be understood through reasoning and reflection.

Finally, transforming the knowledge into wisdom, which is being able to apply the knowledge to transform something, or being able to create something based on the knowledge to ultimately improve quality of life on a sustainable manner.

The transition from data through to wisdom starts with underscoring the critical role of data in strategic decision -making process at all levels; individual, national or international.

Mr. Chair, decision-making is about picking the best alternative faced with choices and data helps in the evaluation of alternatives so that the best practical alternative is adopted. From the above example of weight and height measurements, data helps in identifying high risk of developing a range of conditions linked with excess weight including diabetes and high blood pressure.

For accelerated development, we should advocate for a culture of decisions based on data and not on intuition or anecdotal information. If our intuitions were accurate we would scarcely need research, we will have everything we have to make decisions to obtain an objective, true picture of reality. However, intuitions and emotions are inaccurate and indeed too expensive for decision-making.

Developed countries depend on their culture of using data-driven information to make decisions that enable growth, progress, competitiveness and productivity; while developing countries inability to be competitive, productive and make significant progress is because analyzed data is relegated to the background if what it communicates does not conform to our norms, intuitions and emotions.

Mr. Chair, the theme for this lecture, Numbers Count, is so apt, our focus should be on the transition from data to information to knowledge to wisdom. Certainly, numbers count that is why we should count on numbers in our decision-making process.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, currently, data abounds. Fortunately, we are also able to understand the information from the analyzed data. For data-driven decision-making to be our national culture, we need to work on being able to explain the information and finally apply the knowledge obtained to transform our world. Only then, will data truly count and our culture of data-based planning for development strengthened.

To conclude Mr. Quetelet's story, he suffered a stroke, lost a lot of his cognitive ability way before a Russian Surgeon Nikolai Korotkoff invented the BP machine in 1905. This buttresses the point that we suffer the consequences for our lack of knowledge of the existence or use of data. Thank you.

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Profile of Dr. Andrew Ananie Arkutu

Dr. Andrew Ananie Arkutu was educated at Mfanstipim School and obtained his Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery MB, ChB from Saint Andrews University, Scotland in 1964.

He lectured at the University of Ghana Medical School (1971-1976) and in 1976, Andrew was seconded by WHO to the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as a Senior Lecturer and later as an Associate Professor in 1980.

He joined the UNFPA in 1980 as a Technical Adviser and undertook various assignments including Country Director in several countries including Zimbabwe, Tanzania & Nigeria. He retired from UNFPA in 1998 as the Director of the Country Support Team for Southern Africa.

From 2000- 2006, he served as the Medical Director for Africa with Pathfinder International.

Andrew served as Chair, Boards of Directors of the Center for African Studies (1999-2004), National Population Council (2009- 2014) and also served on the Board of Directors of Pathfinder International

He is a Fellow, West African College of Surgeons (FWACS), Fellow, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, (FRCOG (UK) and Fellow, Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (FGCPS).

He is credited with numerous publications including “Healthy Women, Healthy Mothers” (1995) which was translated into Kiswahili, French and Spanish.

