



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Cabinet Office
Department of Statistics

A graphic showing several interlocking puzzle pieces in shades of blue and white, arranged to form a map of Bermuda. The map is centered on a dark blue background.

Completing the Census Picture:
*Bermuda's Experience Counting
the Non-sheltered*

Prepared by
Melinda Williams
Social Statistician

Presented at the
CARICOM Meeting of Population and Housing Census Experts
17 – 19 March, 2008
Ocho Rios, Jamaica



Introduction

A census is a snapshot of the population at a particular point in time, similar to the picture on the box cover of a puzzle. The process of conducting a census is much like completing a giant jigsaw puzzle. The data that we collect from the field is a puzzle piece that must be fitted into the picture. The pieces of the puzzle are mixed with hundreds of other pieces and must be organized first before they can be fitted together. Where pieces are missing, guesses have to be made as to where they can be found.

Gradually, the puzzle comes together. As more and more data replace guesses and anecdotal information, the gaps are filled in and the puzzle begins to take form. And as anyone who has put together a jigsaw puzzle knows, as the work draws closer to the actual image the faster it is to put the pieces together.

The primary focus of this paper, therefore, is to look at the new puzzle piece – the non-sheltered population – and see how this segment of the homeless population fits into the census picture.

Defining the Non-sheltered Population

There is no universally accepted definition of homelessness. The Australian census, for example, used four categories of homelessness ranging from absolute homelessness to third degree relative homelessness.¹ In contrast, Bermuda used a dichotomy – the non-sheltered and the sheltered – to categorise the homeless population.

In the Bermudian context, the non-sheltered population comprises persons who have no fixed abode and who do not stay temporarily in shelters or persons who are not otherwise institutionalized. Such persons have no habitable dwelling to call home or are not institutionalized and usually sleep outdoors or in derelict buildings. In 2000, the non-sheltered comprised part of the civilian non-institutional population but they were not included in the in-depth analysis of the de jure population. The “roofless” were excluded from this analysis because only limited questions from the main questionnaire were asked of this population.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1996). 1996 *homeless enumeration strategy*. pp. 53-55.



The Bermudian Experience in Counting the Homeless

Counting the homeless is just as challenging as deriving a common definition of the homeless. The transient nature of the homeless makes it difficult to ascertain the size of the population and often sparks debate between advocates for the homeless versus government officials and researchers. As a result, there have been stark variations in the estimates of the homeless. For instance, since the 1980s, the United States of America's estimates of the homeless ranged from 250,000 to 3,000,000.²

The Bermuda Government has made sporadic attempts to count the homeless. Traditionally, this work has been part of the mandate of the Ministry of Health and Social Services which collaborated with non-government organizations to assess the magnitude of the problem. Since the 1970s, there has been at least one initiative every decade by this Ministry to assess homelessness; the last one occurring in 2001/02. Some of these projects entailed generating a list of persons known to be non-sheltered while other initiatives conducted surveys; but there are no official data on homelessness in Bermuda outside of the 1991 and 2000 decennial censuses.

In 2005, Bermuda's daily newspaper, *The Royal Gazette* reported that the Salvation Army, which operates a homeless shelter in Bermuda, was "...compiling a comprehensive database of the island's homeless population ..."³ Two years later, "the Salvation Army has been forced to ditch efforts to compile a database of the Island's homeless – because of the 'monumental' scale of the problem."⁴ In this newspaper article, Community Service Worker, Mr. Lionel Cann, stated: "...the challenge was finding the time to interview all the people we came in contact with – the process is time intensive."⁵

² Lyne Casavant. (1999). *Counting the homeless*. <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/modules/prb99-1-homelessness/counting-e.htm> (accessed March 4, 2008).

³ Unknown. (2005). *Salvation Army hopes database will get homeless off streets*. <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=49&articleId=7d5c81230030047> (accessed March 5, 2008).

⁴ Unknown. (2007). *Salvation Army scraps homeless database plans*. <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=117&articleId=7d73bbf3003000a> (accessed March 5, 2008).

⁵ Unknown. (2007).



Census Background

1991 Census

The sheltered enumeration was to provide people without conventional housing an opportunity to be included in the census. The 1991 Census included homeless persons who resided in institutional shelters (expecting or young mothers and adults) but it did not target people living on the streets or in public places, and hence it did not represent a complete count of people experiencing homelessness.

2000 Census

On 20 May 2000, Bermuda held its 10th national Census of Population and Housing. This Census was the first to address Bermuda's non-sheltered population by using a special enumeration strategy. The impetus for this initiative was sparked after reviewing an enumerator's manual obtained from the United States Census Bureau that focussed on the non-sheltered population.

After launching successfully the enumerators for private households and special areas (group dwellings and institutions), the Bermuda Census Office decided to embark upon a new project – enumeration of the non-sheltered. This project was recommended and spearheaded by the Assistant Census Superintendent, Mrs. Melinda Williams, who oversaw the training manual and liaised with "Hands of Love Mission", a charity that works with the non-sheltered and needy.

The objectives of the non-sheltered enumeration strategy were as follows:

- Expand the coverage of the census
- Understand the magnitude of homelessness
- Collect benchmark data
- Provide information to enhance policy formulation and planning

Obtaining a comprehensive perspective on homelessness in Bermuda entailed a two phase operation – sheltered and non-sheltered.

1. Sheltered Phase

The Census Office pre-identified persons living temporarily in shelters, such as, Teen Haven for pregnant teenagers or young mothers and the Salvation Army facilities for homeless



persons 18 years or older. These persons were then enumerated and formed part of the institutional population. For the purposes of the Census, the sheltered homeless did not include children placed in children's homes on court orders by a judge. In 2000, 65 persons were enumerated in shelters down from 87 persons in 1991. This notable decrease in the sheltered population "...was attributable to the temporary closure of two bedrooms in one of the Island's shelters, which reduced the number of available beds by 25."⁶

2. Non-sheltered Phase

Persons at camping sites, caves, railway trail, "car world", parks and places where non-sheltered people stayed were enumerated. These locations were identified by persons who had a working relationship with the non-sheltered. By the end of the enumeration, interviewers had counted 39 persons extending from St. George's to Sandys' parish and from North Shore to South Shore.

Enumeration Procedures

On 17 July 2000, enumeration of the targeted non-sheltered sites began. The same main questionnaire, supplementary questionnaire and Visitation Record that were used to enumerate persons living in private households were also used to list and interview the non-sheltered. This process was facilitated by the Census Office adjusting the collection procedures for the respective documents.

The Census Office recruited and trained a small group of community advocates who were familiar with the locations of homeless individuals. A team of two enumerators and their supervisor visited each location. Initially, the supervisor introduced herself and the team to a key (non-sheltered) contact person. The enumerators then proceeded as follows:

- Introduced themselves and greeted respondent.
- Listed each respondent and street in the Visitation Record, marked non-sheltered locations and completed the documents as illustrated on the next page.

⁶ Census Office. (2000). *Report on the 2000 census of population and housing*. p. 99.



2000 CENSUS OF POPULATION & HOUSING BERMUDA Visitation Record

Parish	Town/City	Census District

NAME OF PARISH: *Non-sheltered Outdoor Locations*

TOWN/CITY: -

ENUMERATOR NAME: *Beth Foster*

SUPERVISOR NAME: *John Wright*

2000 Census of Population and Housing Bermuda Visitation Record																				
Date of First Visit		Bldg. Number		Household Number		Business Unit Number		Name of Household Reference Person/ Establishment Name		Address Apt., St./Rd. Number and Name		Number of Usual Members of the Household			Unem- ployed (16+ Years)	Census Day Count May 20,2000 (those physically present in Bda.)			Remarks	Date Enumera- tion Completed
(1)		(2)		(4)		(5)		(6)		(7)		Total (8)	Male (9)	Female (10)	Not Attending School (11)	Total (12)	Members (13)	Visitors (14)	(15)	(16)
17 JULY		FOSTER, BETH		5		5-270		STUART, FRANK		MARSH LANE		1	1	0						17, JULY
17 JULY		WRIGHT, JOHN		5		5-310		WINGLER, STEVE		FRONT STREET		1	1	0						17, JULY
17 JULY		WILSON, OMAR		1		1-030		TACKER, MARK		ORDNANCE ISLAND		1	1	0						17, JULY
18 JULY		TRAIT, LYDIA		1		9-100		POND, VIDAL		SOMERSET ROAD		1	1	0					SAMAH CAMP	18, JULY
18 JULY		FAUKES, GRAY		1		4-040		BARKER, JAMES		FROG LANE		1	1	0						18, JULY
Total												5	5	0						

- Completed a separate main questionnaire for each location.
- Printed the non-sheltered location on the front cover of the questionnaire in the space provided for the household number.



- Wrote “Non-sheltered” and inserted an oval as the eleventh option under the type of building question. (See illustration below).

HOUSING (HOUSEHOLD REFERENCE PERSON)			
H1. RECORD TYPE 1 (0) ● (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	H5. C.D. NUMBER 5 (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) ● (6) (7) (8) (9) 3 (0) (1) (2) ● (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) 1 (0) ● (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) 0 (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)	H7. USUAL HHLD SIZE (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)	H9. HOUSEHOLD TYPE (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)
H2. PARISH 5 (1) (2) (3) (4) ● (6) (7) (8) (9)	H6. HOUSEHOLD NUMBER (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)	OFFICE USE H8. NO. OF FAMILIES (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)	
H3. CONSTITUENCY 5 (1) (2) (3) (4) ● (6)	H4. TOWN/CITY (1) (2)		
H10. How would you describe the type of building that your household occupies? (1) Cottage (2) 2 Apartments (3) 3 Apartments (4) 4 - 6 Apartments (5) 7+ Apartments (6) Residential / commercial premises (7) Attached to group dwelling (Go to H12) (8) Group dwelling (Go to P1) (9) Other (Specify) _____ (10) Not stated ● Nonsheltered			

- Filled in a supplementary questionnaire if there were 5 or more persons at the same location.
- Transferred the book number from each main questionnaire to each supplementary questionnaire.
- Collected information on 17 items from the questionnaire:
 - Record Type
 - Parish
 - Constituency
 - Town or City
 - Census District Number
 - Person Number
 - Name of Individual
 - Sex
 - Date of Birth
 - Age
 - Race
 - Marital Status
 - Country of Birth
 - Highest Level of Schooling
 - Physical or Mental Health Condition
 - List of Health Conditions
 - Location on Census Night
- Converted refusals, if possible, by estimating based on visual observations and response of companions.
- Supervisor provided support to enumerators and, if necessary, conducted interviews.



Strategies for Success

It is perceived that a high proportion of Bermuda's non-sheltered population have mental health issues and or substance abuse problems.⁷ Fortunately, the temporary staff did not experience any notable incidences during the first implementation of the non-sheltered strategy. Risk was minimized and the coverage maximized by the Census Office adopting the following guidelines: the supervisor ensured the surroundings were safe and observed that all persons were interviewed; the Census Office hired community advocates who conducted interviews for a six-week period; and the temporary staff were advised to dress to suit the circumstances and not to awake anyone but to complete a partial interview instead.

Recommendations

Despite the low number of persons counted in the 2000 non-sheltered enumeration, it is imperative that the Bermuda's Census Office continues to develop this initiative. According to *The Royal Gazette*, "...an increasing number of people in Bermuda – including children – are living on the breadline and even on the streets as soaring rents, low paying jobs, and social ills are squeezing them out of their home."⁸ Additionally, another article published two years later reported that the Salvation Army, an organization that offers "soup, soap and salvation" to persons living on the streets, estimated "...that there are 200 - 350 (homeless) people across the Island ..."⁹

In light of the foregoing revelations, the Government, in its 2008 Speech from the Throne, proposed to develop facilities "...designed specially for families who have been housed in emergency facilities for extended periods."¹⁰ The Government also proposed to replace old shelters with "... a purpose-built emergency shelter whose focus will be the return of individuals to active participation in the community."¹¹ On account of this, it is imperative that the Government and private organizations have the necessary data to guide intervention and prevention initiatives for the homeless.

⁷ Unknown. (2008). *Long-term plan need to tackle island's homeless problem, says Salvation Army*. <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=117&articleId=7d8209330030172> (accessed March 5, 2008).

⁸ Rene Hill. (2003). *Homeless numbers on the rise*. <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d3458e30030063> (accessed March 5, 2008).

⁹ Elizabeth Roberts. (2008). *Up to 350 persons may be homeless*. <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d5cb923003006a> (accessed March 5, 2008).

¹⁰ Bermuda Government. (2008). *Speech from the Throne 2008*. p. 2.

¹¹ Bermuda Government. (2008).



To continue the Census Office's mandate of providing accurate, reliable, timely, and relevant data to its stakeholders, it is imperative that the Office improves upon the pioneer work to enumerate the "roofless" in 2000 as preparation is made for the 2010 census. This can be accomplished by:

- Liaising with other statistical agencies which have more experience with enumerating the non-sheltered, for example, United States, Canada and Australia.
- Collecting more details of the location of respondents in the Visitation Record, for example, Front Street, Hamilton, between Burnaby Hill and Queen Street.
- Pretesting non-sheltered enumeration procedures.
- Including an ethnographic component during the pretest which would provide information to enumerators on the non-sheltered population and their behaviour.
- Exploring the possibility of conducting some of the non-sheltered enumeration during the day.
- Adding a response option for the "non-sheltered" under the question on type of building.
- Asking some additional questions such as economic activity and occupation.
- Developing a communication strategy to gain support among outreach workers and non-sheltered individuals.
- Recruiting more community advocates to work as enumerators and supervisors for the enumeration of the non-sheltered.
- Emailing interviewers an up-to-date list of non-sheltered persons who were interviewed. Interviewers will be responsible for checking this list before conducting interviews.
- Making provisions for personal security for enumerators and supervisors.
- Providing supervisors with cellular phones and or purchasing telephone minutes.
- Establishing temporary "field offices" to enumerate people where the non-sheltered gather.
- Collaborating with the non-sheltered and the following organizations to obtain proposals for questions, identify outdoor sites and alternative strategies for enumeration:
 - Parish Councils
 - Police Parish Constables



- Churches
- Ministry of Culture and Social Rehabilitation
- Bermuda Housing Corporation
- Charities

Conclusion

Twenty-one years ago, the United Nations designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.¹² This declaration was made because "... the living conditions of the majority of people in slums and squatter areas and rural settlements...continue to deteriorate..."¹³

Sydney Carter's song *When I Needed a Neighbour* highlights the living conditions of some of the homeless. The pertinent lyrics are as follows:

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,

Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

And the creed ...

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

And the creed ...

When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there?

And the creed...¹⁴

¹² United Nations. (1982). *International year of shelter for the homeless*. www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r221.htm (accessed March 7, 2008).

¹³ United Nations. (1982).

¹⁴ Peter Horrobin, & Greg Leavers. (1986). *Junior praise*. p. 275.



The United Nations is "...convinced that a special effort to address this fundamental issue (homelessness) will strengthen overall national economic and social development, in furtherance of the goals of the International Development Strategy..."¹⁵ One of the objectives for 1987 was "...to demonstrate by the year 2000 ways and means of improving the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor and disadvantaged..."¹⁶

One step towards addressing homelessness involves defining and counting the population which is an arduous task. As noted previously, Bermuda's 2000 Population and Housing Census attempted to complete the puzzle by counting all groups despite the obstacles. It is important, therefore, that countries accept the challenge, as Bermuda did, to develop or improve the strategy to find the missing piece of the puzzle – the non-sheltered population. As the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses approaches, this is a charge to CARICOM Member States and Associate Members to consider completing the census picture so that all members of a population, from the "roof" to the "roofless" can be counted.

¹⁵ United Nations. (1982).

¹⁶ United Nations. (1982).



References

- Bermuda Government. (2008). *Speech from the Throne 2008*.
- Census Office. (2000). *Targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations enumeration manual*.
- Census Office. (2000). *Report on the 2000 census of population and housing*.
- Casavant, L. (1999). *Counting the homeless*. Retrieved March 4, 2008, from <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/modules/prb99-1-homelessness/counting-e.htm>
- Chamberlain, C., & MacKenzie, D. (2004). *Counting the homeless 2001: South Australia*. Australia: Swinburne University and RMIT University.
- Farrell, S. J. , & Reidding, E. D. (2005). Picking up the challenge. Developing a methodology to enumerate and assess the needs of the street homeless population. *Evaluation Review*, 28(2), 144-155.
- Hill, Rene. (2003). *Homeless numbers on the rise*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d3458e30030063>
- Horrobin, P., & Leavers, G. (1986). *Junior praise*. United Kingdom: Marshall Morgan and Scott.
- Mc Nally, T. (2002). *Service-Based Enumeration*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.census.gov/pred/www/rpts/E.6.pdf>
- Northwood, K. (1996). *1996 Homeless Enumeration Strategy*. Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Peressini, T., McDonald, L., & Hulchanski, D. (1995). *Estimating homelessness: Towards a methodology for counting the homeless in Canada*. Retrieved March 4, 2008, from http://action.web.ca/home/housing/resources.shtml?x=67172&AA_EX_Session=8ed95ebdcf9ef2245218bc258158e02f
- Roberts, E. (2008). *Up to 350 persons may be homeless*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d5cb923003006a>
- Salo, M. T. (1990). *1988-89 exploratory research on enumerating homeless individuals in Baltimore and Washington*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/rsm2007-29.pdf>



United Nations. (1982). *International year of shelter for the homeless*. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from [www.un.org /documents/ga/res/37/a37r221.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r221.htm)

Unknown. (2008). *Long-term plan need to tackle island's homeless problem, says Salvation Army*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=117&articleId=7d8209330030172>

Unknown. (2007). *Salvation Army scraps homeless database plans*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=117&articleId=7d73bbf3003000a>

Unknown. (2005). *Salvation Army hopes database will get homeless off streets*. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from <http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=49&articleId=7d5c81230030047>