



Northern Ireland
**Statistics &
Research**
Agency

2001 Census Review and Evaluation

Evaluation of The Northern Ireland Census Publicity Campaign

A detailed Review and Evaluation of the 2001 Census is underway, and information on projects within the 2001 Census is gradually being released.

This report provides a high level overview of the Northern Ireland Census Publicity Campaign.

Each report is written in isolation and is subject to amendments as processing progresses and further information comes to light.

Reports will be released on the NISRA website in the form of a high level Executive Summary and a more detailed Evaluation Report.

Census Customer Services
NISRA
McAuley House
2-14 Castle Street
Belfast
N.I.
BT1 1SA

Telephone: 02890348180
Fax: 02890348161
E-mail: census.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk

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2001 Census Review and Evaluation

Evaluation of The Northern Ireland Census Publicity Campaign

Introduction

The Census White Paper (1999) recognised that the Census would rely heavily on public co-operation and a publicity campaign was required to convey to the public the importance of the Census. Preliminary research carried out by the Census Offices indicated that there was limited awareness among some members of the public about the nature and purpose of the Census and a clear need to educate and promote the importance of participation. While coverage was estimated to have been high in the 1991 Census in Northern Ireland, lifestyle changes such as variable working hours, the growth in single households and difficulties in gaining access to properties had made some groups potentially more difficult to contact. A number of other factors including the growth in advertising and mail shots, increased exposure to marketing surveys and concerns regarding data protection needed to be overcome to achieve high levels of participation.

It was also important in Northern Ireland to achieve the support of the whole community and to ensure no disproportionate under representation of any population groups. While the publicity project needed to convey specific information about the Census it was one of a number of projects linked to the achievement of the overall objective of maximising coverage of all sections of the population. The main aims of the campaign were:-

- to ensure there was a critical level of awareness of the Census throughout the population and;
- to influence positively any potentially difficult to enumerate

groups.

A Census Publicity Board was set up at the UK level to coordinate the activities of the three Census Offices. The contract for the development of the publicity campaign for England & Wales was awarded to M&C Saatchi and it was agreed by the Census Publicity Board that the core concepts of the Saatchi campaign would apply throughout the UK with Census Offices developing and implementing their own regional campaigns. NISRA thereby hoped to benefit from the economies of scale that this approach allowed while retaining the flexibility to tailor an effective regional campaign. The strategy required adhering to the discipline of a common campaign while incorporating those key ingredients that would make it successful in the Northern Ireland context. To this end, it was decided that NISRA would employ a local advertising agency to develop the regional aspects of the campaign.

Objectives

In addition to the overall aims of the campaign to maximise coverage and reduce any potential differential underenumeration two further specific objectives were included in the Northern Ireland publicity campaign:

- To influence public response by ensuring advance awareness and shaping public attitudes to ensure post back of Census forms (as soon as possible after Census Day).
- To increase organisational effectiveness. It was intended that through its creative input the campaign would enhance and extend field operations for

example via the use of ‘through the door’ materials.

Development

Experience from the 1991 Census and the Census Rehearsal in 1999 had emphasised the importance of a core message and creative concept in raising awareness of the Census to influence participation. The need to introduce a local dimension to advertising and promotion was also identified and emphasised the need to take into account Northern Ireland specific characteristics. The main creative idea developed by M&C Saatchi was ‘Count me In’. This campaign slogan and the associated branding were felt to capture the inclusivity of the Census. However, prior to actually appointing the local agency to develop the campaign, it was decided to check out the potential effectiveness and the appropriateness of the core concept, message and logo within the Northern Ireland context.

(i) Concept and Logo Research

The main objectives of the qualitative research commissioned in Northern Ireland via the Central Office of Information (Col) were:

- to provide a check on the potential effectiveness of the proposed creative route; in terms of its potential impact, communication, comprehension, empathy, power to educate and potential to motivate.
- to assess responses to the “Count me In” branding and logo.

32 in depth interviews took place (16 in Belfast and 16 in Omagh) with respondents recruited in the street by a local recruiter to a specified sample and by means of an agreed recruitment questionnaire. The specified sample took account of gender, age, religion, social class and included potentially difficult to enumerate groups (18-33 yr. old males, C2DE socio-economic

group). The interview followed a semi structured questionnaire format based around the display of standardised creative material.

The research findings can be summarised as follows:

- the logo and ‘count me in’ concepts were considered to be positive, involving, straightforward and likely to be impactful across all groups;
- the main source of motivation to complete the form is the perception that Census will play a significant role in improving present services;
- more information could be given on explaining what the Census involves;
- the emphasis on ‘everyone’ provides a motivating reason for participation;
- the ‘Count me in’ slogan was thought to be memorable and relevant;
- the logo itself required further enhancement.

On the basis of these research findings it was felt that some degree of adaptation of the logo proposed for Great Britain was necessary and a competition (separate to the main publicity campaign) was held to devise a suitable NI logo.

(ii) Appointment of Consultants

In April 2000 a letter was issued to all advertising agencies on the Government Purchasing Agency’s list inviting them to submit proposals for the delivery of the Northern Ireland publicity campaign along with options for an associated Public Relations campaign. The contract was

awarded to Navigator Blue Ltd.

(iii) Campaign Strategy

The 'Count me In' slogan developed by M&C Saatchi was felt to be effective in that it presented the Census in terms of an event that everyone would want to take part in. While Northern Ireland would benefit from general UK coverage of the Census the specifics of the Northern Ireland market led to the production of local advertisements and materials. The new NI logo incorporating a raised arm in "Count me in" integrated well with the slogan and campaign message.

The campaign elected to deliver this message across a wide range of outlets including television, radio, print, posters and the "through the door" materials delivered by Enumerators. This allowed the core ideas to be communicated in a variety of ways in a mutually reinforcing manner, linked by a common brand. Various creative options were developed to examine how the core concept, logo and message could be communicated in an effective and integrated fashion on information leaflets, TV and billboard posters. A further research exercise investigated different options across four focus groups selected on the basis of age (18-32 / 33 or over), sex, and socio-economic group (ABC1/C2DE). The focus groups also provided another opportunity to examine public perception of the Census and the factors influencing participation. The research indicated that there was a lack of clarity about the purpose of the Census with some linking it to the electoral register and many had little understanding of the content and format of the form or the length of time required to complete it. Most respondents nevertheless indicated they were willing to fill in a form, though the main obstacle to completion was deemed to be a lack of confidence regarding the use to which the information was put. Other factors mentioned included a dislike of form filling in general and the potential complexity of the exercise. There was considerable endorsement of one of the TV advertisements

which emphasised "people" against an alternative which focused on "places and services" with a voice over. While recognising the importance of the Census for service planning the "places and services" approach was regarded as too governmental.

"It's what the Census is supposed to be about – people" (Male, 33+, Belfast)

The research emphasised the general information communication requirement for the publicity campaign, the need to reassure the public about the treatment of Census information and specifics which enabled further refinement of the posters, through the door materials and the development of the "people" TV advertisement. The lack of awareness of the purpose of the Census also influenced Census Office's decision to introduce an "Advance Round" leaflet, which (uniquely in the UK) was posted to every household in just before (April 2-7th) the Enumerator deliveries of Census forms commenced (April 9th – 27th). It was also evident that there was a real need for people to connect with the Census operation in a meaningful way if it was not to be perceived as just another "government" exercise and this encouraged the use of PR initiatives as an integral part of the campaign. Similarly, it was recognised that appropriate media should be used in order to target students and the 18-34 age groups. Implicit reference to the value of the Census for planning and providing services for the future such as housing, education, health and employment was positively received in the research. The advertising was therefore designed to raise awareness and underline the social benefits without being seen as too worthy or governmental.

(iv) Media Plan

The media plan was developed to reflect the different stages of the fieldwork and the public's involvement with the Census to ensure the correct messages were received at the appropriate time and encourage compliance throughout. This involved an

“Advance” phase (April 2-7th), a Delivery phase (April 9th- 27th) a “Blitz” during Census weekend, a “postback” stage (April 30th – May 18th) and a final “Thank you” stage (billboards) after May 18th including a final postback reminder. A detailed Publicity and Public Relations calendar, incorporating both paid and free media activity ensured that a mix of media with television at the core would achieve maximum impact. The following is a summary of how each medium was used.

- **TV**

TV production included two 30 second advertisements each with a different set of actors to be played in the run up to Census day with a variation for Census day itself to increase the effect. These emphasised the link between the Census and the provision of services using local actors in different service related occupations and used a range of regional Northern Ireland accents. After Census day two sets of six 10 second television ads were played with the emphasis on posting back the form. Advertisements were placed with UTV and Channel 4 and scheduling paid close attention in terms of targeting key groups such as young males. In addition, the Northern Ireland audience would have had seen the England and Wales Census advertising campaign when it occurred on Channel 5 or Sky. Northern Ireland would also have benefited from the Census related storylines which occurred in a number of the main soap operas such as Coronation Street (13 minutes air time) and in Brookside, Eastenders, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks and which were organised by the Office for National Statistics Media Unit.

- **48 Sheet Posters**

A series of 8 posters to be displayed at different stages of the Census campaign were developed and tested using focus groups. These included an initial poster (45 locations) timed to coincide with the Advance Round leaflet indicating that the Census was coming, a further 3 variants

designed to run in parallel from April 9th for 2 weeks (45 locations) with another version displayed in the week prior to Census day (75 locations) indicating that the following Sunday was Census day. The remainder of the posters (3 versions) after Census day emphasised the importance of post back and concluded with a Thank you poster.

- **Radio**

It was planned that there would be a six week presence on Downtown Radio/Cool FM with a listener promotion in the final week and additional support on Census weekend from Citybeat and Q102FM. This was targeted at a younger audience likely to have had little previous exposure to the Census.

- **Press**

Press was planned as part of the final weekend ‘blitz’ with advertisements due to run in the main Northern Ireland dailies and tabloids. These advertisements were full page colour and conformed to the Census branding. Additional coverage was introduced in the weeks commencing 30th April and 7th May (dailies and regional Northern Ireland press) and on the 14th and 21st May (regional Northern Ireland press) to provide additional coverage for Foot and Mouth issues inter alia.

- **Media Briefing**

Media briefings were held in Belfast and at regional locations during February and March 2001. The purpose of these meetings was to brief representatives of local newspapers, TV & radio channels on the background to the Census and the fieldwork calendar. They also provided an opportunity to introduce the regional Census Area Managers to regional media personnel to ensure appropriate recognition was given to the local dimension of the campaign. Media briefing packs were also developed to provide contact numbers, details of the

media plan with information on PR events, the printed 'through the door' materials, Census fact sheets. and CD ROMs with photographs of Census Enumerators engaged in fieldwork and publicity shots of Census Area Managers to accompany articles.

- **PR**

Public Relations was included as an option in the Publicity tender and was designed to support and develop the key messages in the core advertising campaign via editorial and other coverage on TV, radio and print. It was seen as another less formal means of engaging the attention of the public and a way of focusing on specific aspects of the enumeration less suited to traditional advertising. In addition, it sought to identify and manage issues to achieve a situation where positive messages outweigh any negative coverage.

The Census briefings undertaken at a number of venues throughout Northern Ireland by Census Office also provided the opportunity to inform the press of the pre arranged PR events occurring over the course of the Census.

(a) Press media

The strategy invoked was designed to supplement advertising with a range of written material designed to gradually raise awareness of the Census and culminating in a series of articles in Census week itself. Press releases were also distributed as required through the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) to answer queries and provide information on key events such as the Census launch. A number of academics were contacted and asked to submit articles on different aspects of the Census to the Northern Ireland dailies. It was also decided to prepare articles for submission to appropriate magazines relating to special enumeration groups such as the homeless to increase awareness of the

Census.

(b) Census Launch

The Census Launch was held on 6 April 2001 in W5 at the Odyssey in Belfast - a newly opened venue with a popular science and education theme. School children were brought to the venue and provided with Census t-shirts and caps for the unveiling of the Census posters and a number of photo opportunities. Invited media witnessed a preview of the Census TV ad and the Minister for Finance and Personnel formally launched the Census.

(c) Photocalls

A number of different photocalls were arranged during the Census period – the training of Census District Managers, the Minister with an oversized envelope posting back his Census form etc – and issued to regional media through the DFP Press Office to obtain wider coverage.

(d) Baby Promotion

An initiative designed to focus attention on the need to record children born on or before midnight on Census day was identified early in the preparations. Various options were explored and it was decided that the most cost effective was to include Babygros in the 'Bounty' packs issued to all new babies born during Census week.

(e) TV & Radio Interviews

These were developed on a rolling basis as opportunities arose and preparation involved media training for senior Census Office staff and the Census Area Managers.

(f) Education Initiatives

The Northern Ireland Census Office opted to take part in two separate educational initiatives - Census at School – a web based data collection exercise and a Schools Pack with material adapted for the Northern Ireland curriculum

developed as part of the overall Publicity campaign. The aim of these initiatives was to provide an educational resource while at the same time raising awareness among young people (and indirectly their parents) of the forthcoming Census.

(g) UK level Initiatives

Census Office in Northern Ireland was kept informed of England and Wales and Scotland initiatives and aimed to ensure that Northern Ireland would benefit at least indirectly from the coverage generated by such events as the “Census Cake” which related to the whole of the UK.

(h) Publicity Web Site

A Census publicity web site was created and operational for about 6 months during the Census. This was separate from the NISRA web site and presented a less formal and more user friendly focus on the Census. The objective was to encourage participation and make information more readily available particularly to younger age groups. The web address was publicised on the printed promotional materials and contained pdf versions of the factsheets, helpline information and contact points.

Printed Materials

The following print materials were developed to inform the public and a decision was taken to enhance the designs to ensure the materials were fully integrated with the main advertising campaign.

- **Fact sheets**

A series of 9 fact sheets were written covering all the major aspects of the Census such as the history, the uses made of the data, the fieldwork procedures, the census questions and the law. The fact sheets were made available to the media, community and voluntary groups and the general public and sought to raise awareness of the Census while addressing many of the frequently asked

questions. The full list of fact sheets is listed in Annex A

- **‘Through the Door’ materials**

These materials were designed to enhance the fieldwork operation and provide a visual link to the main advertising campaigns. An “Advance Round” leaflet was delivered to every household in Northern Ireland with information on the purpose and importance of the forthcoming Census, confidentiality statements, an example of the Census ID card, details of the Helpline numbers, support for special needs and the availability of translation leaflets in eight different languages. An “Information” leaflet was also delivered with every Census form, providing more detailed information on how Census results would be used to plan services, confidentiality statements and giving details of the Census Helpline.

The reminder leaflets were delivered to every household who had not returned their form in the period May 11-18th. Translation leaflets, Language Identification cards, Enumerator bags and Communal Establishment leaflets also adhered to the Census branding protocol.

- **Posters**

Two sets of posters consistent with the Census branding were developed for the purposes of assisting recruitment and promoting participation in the Census. These were displayed by regional field staff in appropriate venues including Health Centres, Libraries, Leisure Centres and in particular universities, third level colleges and student accommodation.

Implementation and Results

Publicity

The first ‘Foot and Mouth’ outbreak in Northern Ireland occurred on 18th February and revised procedures for the delivery and return of forms were introduced for the farming

Advance Round Leaflet Front)



Delivery 1 (Front)

Advance Round Leaflet (Front)



Delivery 1 (Back)



Delivery 2 (Front)



Information Leaflet (Outside)



Reminder 1 (Front)



Reminder 2 (Front)



community and those in affected areas. Additional press advertisements to this effect were carried in the Northern Ireland daily papers and the farming press in the weeks commencing 26th March and 2nd April. Further outbreaks occurred in mid April and additional advertisements were inserted in the Farming Press. The fieldwork arrangements, in respect of households in surveillance or exclusion zones and for farms in general had to be well publicised; this resulted in greater press activity than had originally been envisaged. Finally, there was an impact on the public relations aspect of the campaign with a high level of interest from journalists on the effect the outbreak might have on the conduct of the census. Within this context the publicity campaign proceeded largely as planned.

(a) TV advertising

The table below shows the media ratings achieved on Census day and in the pre and post Census periods.

April 6-8	April 9-28	April 29	April 30-May 18
Ratings			
200	940	211	1,755
Coverage			
70%	96%	70%	96%
Average OTS			
2.8	9.8	2.8	18
4+ OTS			
50%	85%	50%	90%
Spots			
33	246	42	428

*Note :-1 Rating equals 1 per cent of total possible given audience.

Scheduling ensured that the ads appeared during popular programmes with the choice of programmes aimed at specific audiences e.g. ‘Who wants to be a millionaire’, ‘Coronation Street’, FA Cup final, ‘The Bill’ and ‘Countdown’. In the post Census period, where the emphasis was on post back it is estimated that the advertisements could be seen up to 428 times and that a total rating of 1755 was achieved. This means that 96% of the target audience saw the adverts at least once with 90% seeing them at least 4 times. Overall a peak-time share of 61% was delivered with an average opportunity to see (OTS) of 18. The campaign was judged to have met the TV targets, which were set at the outset and achieved significant penetration.

(b) Outdoor Poster Campaign

The UMS Omnibus (500) in May 2001 asked respondents whether they were aware of the poster campaign. Overall 82% of respondents were aware/recognised the poster campaign. The breakdown by social class and age was as follows: -

All	82%	16-24	78%
		25-34	87%
ABC1	85%	35-49	92%
C2DE	81%	50-64	80%
		65+	71%
Working	86%		
Not Working	80%		

The frequent variations of the posters also helped maintain the freshness of the message and it was regarded as being of benefit that the design of the outdoor posters retained a strong link with the through the door materials.

(c) Radio

A key group to reach were young persons and one of the primary channels of communication utilised was radio. A number of initiatives in addition to radio advertisements were introduced to target this group. A breakfast promotion in the week prior to Census day

asked listeners to name No1's from previous census years was conducted on Downtown/Cool FM attracted over 2000 calls from listeners. A Census reference was also made at hourly clock updates. The Census Manager participated in two phone interviews.

Downtown/Cool	Citybeat	Q102/92.7
Spots		
281	80	60
Reach		
62%	18%	
OTS		
18.4	5.8	

Overall, the Downtown/Cool campaign matched the TV OTS of 18 across the six week period. During the 'blitz' period Citybeat and Q102 contributed effectively. The breakfast promotion achieved a higher than average response.

(d) Press

Additional press activity was employed in regional, local and agricultural print media to ensure the Census message was delivered effectively. This included the need to disseminate guidance regarding the Foot & Mouth crisis and represented a rapid response to events on the ground. It is estimated that the increased press activity delivered over 90% reach across Northern Ireland, boosting local and farming community coverage.

Public Relations

(a) Press media

The series of pre Census briefings provided throughout Northern Ireland by Census Office proved very useful in terms of providing an opportunity to convey the Census message directly to the press and make the media pack reference material available. It was also beneficial in that the briefings resulted in around a dozen articles appearing in the regional press in the following weeks.

During March and April press coverage was good with over 40 titles throughout NI

carrying census stories. The Belfast Telegraph carried upwards of 20 articles with several appearing in the week prior to Census Day. In addition, their 'Viewpoint' article on 29 April was on the Census. The vast majority of articles were positive about the reasons for the Census and encouraged participation and there was also some coverage concerning Irish and/or Ulster Scots issues, Foot and Mouth or reference to particular instances where a form had not been delivered. A number of contributors also submitted articles regarding the importance of the Census in areas such as Health, Housing, Education and the Economy to the Northern Ireland dailies and these were planned for publication in the week prior to the Census to contribute to the lead up to Census day itself. Articles by Census Office staff on the Census were also published in a magazine for the retired and for staff dealing with the homeless - two potentially difficult to enumerate groups.

Throughout the Census there was a dedicated line set up within the office to receive calls from the media. All such calls were dealt with promptly and referred to the Press Officer, the Census Manager or the Registrar General as appropriate. The majority of calls to this line were seeking background information or following up on calls that journalists had received from members of the public e.g. to enquire why certain areas had not received forms. Fast tracking these calls and liaison with fieldstaff enabled us to address such issues quickly and thereby minimise negative publicity.

(b) Census Launch

The Census Launch was held on 6 April 2001 in W5 at the Odyssey in Belfast. The Minister was present and schoolchildren from two local schools were invited to attend. The launch provided good photo opportunities and a means of showing the TV advertisement & poster campaign to representatives of the media. It was attended by both press and television and an interview with the Minister was shown on TV. Photo coverage was also

achieved in the Press.

(c) Photocalls

A number of different photocalls were arranged during the census period – fieldstaff, the Minister with Census form etc – and these were issued to regional media. Despite wide distribution not all of these photographs were published in the press. Photographs that did appear in newspapers were usually the result of making personal contact with a paper e.g. Census at School photos

(d) Baby Promotion

Babygros were included in the ‘Bounty’ packs issued to all new babies born during Census week. The take up of this story by the press tended to be more in the regional papers and provided a number of publications. Given the importance of recording this group, the initiative was deemed valuable and would merit repetition.

(e) TV & Radio Interviews

The Registrar General appeared on UTV Life and Channel 9 to promote the Census while the Census Manager was interviewed on a Radio Consumer Affairs programme, a “Talking Newspaper” for the Blind and conducted two live phone interviews. These opportunities illustrated the need to use both high profile opportunities and targeted initiatives to put forward the Census message.

(f) Education Initiatives

Assistance was received from the Department of Education and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in developing both initiatives. This nevertheless involved a considerable input from Census Office during a very busy period but resulted in two high quality products which received significant positive media coverage in UK papers.

CensusAtSchool

Census at School was a UK wide project conducted six months before the Census.

This initiative involved young people at school, between the ages of 8 and 16, in gathering some simple information about themselves. Data was collected using the Internet and the whole process was designed to improve participant’s data handling and ICT skills while demonstrating the purpose and processes involved in the Census. Flyers were sent to all schools during October 2000 encouraging them to participate. Approximately 1,000 pupils in Northern Ireland took part. The data were analysed and the results released in February 2001. This story was well covered at a national level and appeared in around six regional newspapers.

Schools Pack

In addition, schools packs were developed for use in both primary and post primary schools. The material in the packs sought to present both the mechanics of the census and the data collected from the Census in a manner relevant to various parts of the school curriculum. The packs were very attractively presented, were specifically developed by an educational company and adapted in co-operation with the Department of Education and representatives of the Curriculum Authorities for use in Northern Ireland. The material ranged from Mathematics to Civics to Geography and provided a valuable educational resource for both primary and post primary schools regarding the Census in particular and more generally in the collection and use of statistics. These packs, particularly the accompanying CDs were very well received by schools. The packs were distributed to all schools in Northern Ireland in the run up to the Census and an Irish language version of the primary pack was also made available. The Irish News and a couple of regional papers carried the story.

(g) UK level initiatives

As well as the variety of initiatives undertaken at the regional level, NI also benefited from the national PR activities organised by ONS. For example, the ‘Census in School’ story was carried by most daily national newspapers

and by the BBC children's programme Newsround while Coronation Street included a Census storyline and scripted references which featured in ten episodes.

(h) Census Publicity Web Site

The Census publicity web site has registered over 49,000 hits with nearly 16,000 hits - the highest monthly total - being registered in April 2001. The site was well designed and featured prominently in the advertising materials developed providing a valuable additional channel for disseminating Census information and news bulletins on the progress of the Census.

Lessons Learned

Essentially both the publicity and public relations campaigns went well but as with all projects there are lessons to be learned and recommendations to be considered in the planning and implementation of future Censuses.

From an NI perspective, there was a definite benefit in the decision to take the already well-developed ONS creative and adapt it. Retaining the main concepts meant that there was sufficient similarity between the two campaigns for NI to benefit from national coverage of ONS outputs (both on satellite TV channels and in the national press), while production of our own advertisements allowed us to make the material more attractive to the regional audience.

The 'Count me In' slogan developed by M&C Saatchi was felt to be effective in that it presented the Census in terms of an event that everyone would want to take part in. The new NI logo incorporating a raised arm in "Count me in" integrated well with the slogan and campaign message. The vivid colours of the logo and slogan were considered to create good visual impact and it was anticipated that this branding would provide an effective link between the mainstream advertising and the fieldwork operation. This helped the field staff with their distinctive census bags and materials

make contact with the public and improved recognition of the Census forms accompanied by the branded 'through the door' material. The common branding of TV advertisements, posters, newspaper advertisements, the Advance Round leaflet and Information leaflet delivered to every household in Northern Ireland facilitated the delivery of an integrated message and contributed to the overall aim of increasing awareness and participation.

As in the Census publicity campaign developed by the Office for National Statistics it was felt that there was limited time for the preparation and development of news materials and background information to fully exploit opportunities to promote the Census. Ensuring that Census Area Managers optimised publicity opportunities along with their other duties required close liaison with the Information Officer. Given the limited resources available, it was not always possible to develop partnership opportunities specific to Northern Ireland. However, where possible NISRA opted to participate in ONS initiatives. For the future, consideration should be given to maximising NI specific partnerships.

The decision to postpone the Census in the Republic of Ireland until 2002 because of the impact of the Foot and Mouth campaign illustrated how serious a threat the disease was to the Census process and could ultimately have rendered the publicity planning redundant. Other issues that had to be taken into account were the potential for local elections to be held close to Census day and for the need to distinguish Census publicity from electioneering material.

The interface between the publicity project and the data collection project operated well. The 'Through the door' materials were specifically designed to assist in the fieldwork and were generally well received. However, the Foot and Mouth crisis resulted in the fieldwork procedures being changed and necessitated the use of mail shots to those living in affected

areas or in farms across Northern Ireland. A number of advertisements were also rapidly introduced in the Farming Press. Having planned recourse to such facilities in similar situations merits further consideration for any future Census. It may also have been advantageous for the advertising campaign to have given additional emphasis to the fact that the form should have been sent back on, or as soon as possible after April 29th 2001. The pre Census day post back indicated some members of the public may have thought forms needed to be back by 29th April. Similarly there may have been benefit in advising householders that planned deliveries of Census forms continued up to Friday 27th April. This no doubt contributed to the number of callers contacting the Public Enquiry Unit, where calls about when Census forms would be delivered peaked on April 23rd. It could be argued that while the publicity materials succeeded very well in encouraging public participation they may not have provided a clear enough message regarding the period during which forms were to be delivered and could have acted to reduce public concerns. However it is important to note that both these messages were included in the Advance Round leaflet which were distributed to every household in Northern Ireland.

It is also worth noting that as the creative work (carried out as part of the publicity) is needed for a range of printed materials early planning is essential.

From a publicity perspective some good use was made of the regional fieldforce and a range of local PR opportunities were achieved. Some of the variation in coverage could be explained by the varying emphases which different Census Area Managers (CAMs) gave to the task. However, not every newspaper or broadcast media necessarily views every Census promotion as newsworthy and there will always be variation in the level of coverage available for this reason. Ways in which further local media opportunities could be systematically developed by the CAMs and monitored by

Census Office should be considered.

Having a representative of the DFP Press Office on site was beneficial in dealing with press and media contacts. This Information Officer had essential knowledge and experience which could not have been easily acquired by others. However, there is a need to have such a person in post from an early stage (e.g. at least 6 months in advance). We did not get as much coverage out of the PR events as we might have e.g. the Census Launch and where we did get good coverage it was usually as a result of making direct approaches to individual journalists. Recourse to the DFP Press Office to release statements also worked very well. In general the Census received balanced coverage from the Northern Ireland press and apart from 1 or 2 instances where Enumerators were reported as having trespassed on farm property no major media issues emerged during the conduct of the Census.

Media training was an essential item in the publicity preparations. It is important that the Census Area Managers and any Census Office staff are able to communicate the Census message effectively. The UTV Life appearance enabled the Registrar General to reach a large audience and was likely to have been impactful. Further opportunities of the nature would have been valuable.

Conclusions

The publicity campaign was one of a number of projects that sought to encourage participation to maximise coverage of the population and in this respect it appears to have been successful. The programme was well integrated across the different communication channels and no major negative campaigns emerged to challenge the Census message. The campaign was also intended to promote post-back of the forms and this was also achieved with around 92% of forms received having been

posted back.

The final aim of the campaign was to increase organisational effectiveness with regard to the fieldwork. The branding of the fieldwork materials and 'Through the Door' materials undoubtedly assisted fieldstaff and made them instantly identifiable. The advertising message clearly linked the Census with the provision of services and the branding was successful in enabling a high level of integration to be achieved across all media. Further consideration of the best way to further emphasise some of the details of the delivery and return date should be considered in any future Census. Overall, the scale and promptness of the post back response suggested that the weight of advertising and the level of awareness created were high. The public did appear to respond positively to the 'Count me In' call and it is estimated that 98% of forms were received from households from which a Census form was expected. A final measure of the extent of coverage will not be available until late Summer 2002 when the results of the Census Coverage survey will be published.

Annex 1: Factsheets

1. The Census - A giant snapshot of Northern Ireland
2. Why we need a Census
3. Census 2001 – What's new?
4. Counting everyone in – the big challenge
5. The Census organisation
6. Census jobs
7. The Census and the law
8. Census taking through the ages
9. The Census questions

These factsheets are available at www.nisra.gov.uk.