Seminar at Statistics SA on 27 Jan 2023
Measuring Rural Household Electricity Access

8 March 2023

Achieving progress in the Sustainable Development Goals requires high quality measurement. Too few attempts are made to assess the accuracy of existing measurements and how they change over time.

At this seminar called 'Measuring rural households and electricity access: A comparison of national census data and small-area health and demographic surveillance system (HDSS) data', the collaborative team, from UCT/DataFirst, SAPRIN/MRC/Wits and Statistics SA, fed back results of the research, which used national

census data in the enumerator areas that covered the Agincourt Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) area and compared them with the findings from the HDSS.

The variables used included whether or not a household cooked using electricity, and whether or not they used electric lights. We compared household counts and electrification rates for the Agincourt Health and Demographic Surveillance Site (HDSS), as measured in the 1996, 2001 and 2011 national censuses and in the database of the HDSS. The household measurements in the two systems agree within a few percentage points in 2001 and 2011 but show much bigger divergences in 1996. The population counts also show impressive agreement, with perhaps some over-enumeration of older males in the national census. Overall, survey and census information seem to provide accurate measures of population access to electricity.

SAPRIN's data on households' and individuals' state of wellbeing can be

compared to national census data and national household survey data in future work.

Working paper:

Machemedze, T., Shoko, M., Collinson, M.A., Wittenberg, M. (2022). Measuring rural households and electricity access: A comparison of national census data and small-area health and demographic surveillance system (HDSS) data. Cape Town: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town. (DataFirst Working Paper Number 290)"

Available on the DataFirst website: <https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/images/docs/DataFirst-TP22_42.pdf>