

Data limitations and implications for the future

One of the most pressing limitations in the studies carried out for the GIS program was the lack of current income data in sufficient detail to estimate costs of this program. DBS conducts a biennial income survey every two years, but the sample size is small, and it is not always possible to generate the data required for detailed cost estimates. The 1961 survey was a 20 per cent sample of non-farm individuals and families conducted during the Census and was very good for our purposes. However, it did not cover the farm population and the time period between 1961 and 1967 was sufficiently long to limit the applicability of some of the assumptions made.

Very little was known about the behaviour patterns of the aged population - i.e. whether they would understand the program which was more complex than the OAS pension program, whether they would respond and apply for the benefits, and whether they would apply for a benefit if it was very small. Experience has shown that they understood the program and responded well, but statistical data on payments under the GIS program show a skewness towards the higher monthly benefits and not an even distribution throughout including the lower benefit amounts. This is an area which requires further study to ascertain whether or not there is a reluctance to apply when the benefit payment is small.

The studies and conceptual development conducted during the GIS program has strengthened solidarity of the research team in the Research Directorate, and will pay considerable benefits in studies on more comprehensive forms of guaranteed income.