GLOBAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STATISTICAL TRAINING (GIST)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division

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Photo by IISD-ENB, Diego Noguera

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

by Elena Proden, GIST Chair

Welcome to this new edition of GIST Newsletter where we're sharing a number of exciting developments prompted by the work of the network and its members.

As the roll-out of the Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool (STAT) by countries has been gaining momentum, with four new countries in 2024-2025, there is a growing realization of the need to go beyond traditional training planning approaches to develop broader competency development strategies and to leverage all types of learning from formal to informal.

A sub-group on learning culture created under GIST's task team 1 on NSOs and sustainable training has the potential to help address this need. It has created a unique space for knowledge-sharing among countries on how they are experimenting with informal learning and mixed modes. It has also uncovered other important considerations related to individuals' and managerial mindsets, organizational frameworks, and institutional environment. The meeting of the GIST Stakeholder Advisory Group in January 2025 has confirmed a growing interest in learning culture and informal learning while showing that some organizations have been doing progress in these areas.

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...MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Another important piece of work that the task team on addressing NSO needs has been working on recently is the mapping and comparison of priority learning needs from the first STAT pilot countries and the learning offerings on UNSDG:Learn. While this is an ongoing exercise, the aim is to identify gaps in courses available at UNSDG:Learn, either not yet added or yet to be developed, so as to bring them on the gateway. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the gateway is a useful tool for NSOs to direct their learners to the most relevant learnings. While self-paced learning alone may not suffice, experiences from countries show that they can be very impactful when combined with other learning modes.

Another important piece of work is related to growing engagement with broader communities on statistical literacy through a series of GROW webinars. A dedicated task team has been working to invite experts from different world regions and diverse backgrounds – academia, official statistics, civil society – to address topics such as data visualization and citizen data.

Harnessing the collective power for more impacts across various countries has continued being the red thread of all GIST activities, including the work on translation. The STAT tool is currently being translated into French, Spanish and Arabic besides being available in English.

As we finish this cycle and prepare for the annual GIST meeting in February 2025, we are witnessing some exciting developments on collaborations and learning culture, spurring a growing enthusiasm among NSOs. We hope this will further increase the relevance of the work of GIST!

A NEW E-LEARNING COURSE ON THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FOR STATISTICS PRODUCTION
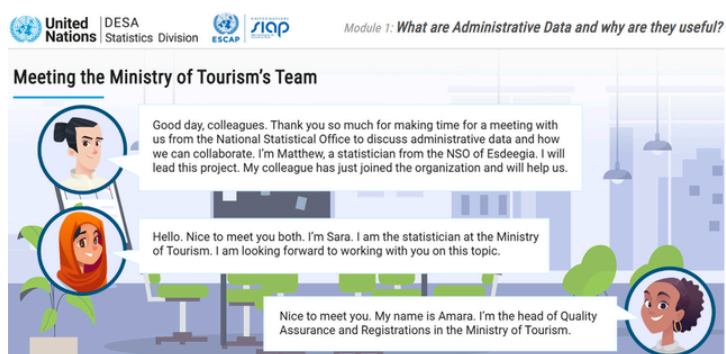
UN Statistics Division and the UN Statisticial Institure for Asia and the Pacific (UN SIAP) have jointly developed an e-learning course on *Using Administrative Data for Statistics Production*. It is meant for staff both at NSOs and for those working in agencies that hold administrative data.

The course consists of 6 modules:
- What are administrative data and why are they useful
- How can we map data sources?
- Quality of statistics and quality management
- Metadata and the feedback loop
- Data sharing arrangements and formalities
- Data sharing – Privacy and Interoperability

The course is currently offered in a facilitated version to around 2000 registered participants. It will be made openly available for self-paced learning on the UN SIAP training platform (and also on UN SDG:Learn) end of February 2025.

INTERVIEW WITH THE COORDINATOR OF THE GIST SUB-GROUP ON LEARNING CULTURE, DAG ROLL-HANSEN

- What is a culture for learning?

Dag Roll-Hansen: Culture can mean many different things. It is often defined as ideas, customs, and social behavior. It can be everything we do, as well as social and organizational structures that lead to a certain behavior. Like making learning a normal thing to do. The tricky part is how we internalize this, make the ideas our own. How we motivate colleagues to learn, give them intrinsic motivation, make them want to learn.

- What is most important in strengthening a culture for learning?

Dag Roll-Hansen: The most important is that people need to be motivated to learn. You can tell people to change their norms and behaviors, but you are not likely to succeed if it does not resonate within themselves.

Having a culture for learning makes it easier for our organisations to adapt to a changing world. Increased interaction, and exchange of ideas and experiences among colleagues makes it easier to develop. It makes people feel they are trusted, have autonomy, and a corporate identity, and they are less likely to quit.
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- Is staff motivation to learn important to build a learning culture?

Dag Roll-Hansen: Yes it is, Sometimes management thinks staff are lazy and incompetent, while staff feel they have little to do, want to work and fear the management.

Both may be a valid description of the situation, seen from two different perspectives, but the question is how we can overcome this gap

- How can we know what skills are needed?

Dag Roll-Hansen: The Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool (STAT) can help us. It can give us information on what colleagues on the ground need, what is needed from the management perspective, and also in other parts of the National Statistical System. It also has some questions on learning culture, which are formulated as statements describing various topics that are associated with having a culture for learning, that can help us improve it.

Further, it is key to involve people doing the work in discussions on what skills are needed. They generally know best what the main challenges are. It is also important to keep in mind that most learning happens while doing the job, and finding good ways of development in this context can make a difference.

THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT PEOPLE ARE MOTIVATED TO LEARN

- DAG ROLL-HANSEN
STATISTICS NORWAY

- Why does Statistics Norway engage?
Dag Roll-Hansen: Statistics Norway has been working with sister organisations in the Global South for four decades now, mostly with financial support from the Norwegian directorate for development cooperation (Norad), and we've also been active in the work the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on statistical training and capacity building. We got involved in GIST after making an e-learning course in Questionnaire development and testing, still available on the UN SDG Learn-portal, developed by GIST.

- You have been a member of GIST for more than five years. What keeps you motivated?
Dag Roll-Hansen: Working with colleagues in NSOs in different parts of the world, I see that we are facing many of the same challenges. The technology we use is changing, the new generation of colleagues learn and are motivated in other ways than before. Also, budget cuts seem to happen more or less everywhere. When NSOs face similar challenges, organisations providing training can gain from exploring solutions together. I also like that I get to meet many interesting people, with ideas that challenge my perspectives. That makes it fun.

STRENGTHENING A CULTURE FOR LEARNING IN NSOs

The learning culture group within GIST is celebrating its first half year of existence. The group was created as members saw how cultures for learning differ among NSOs, reluctance to share knowledge exited and working together could be a challenge.

After the first constituting meeting, the group has met four times, focusing on examples of how to enhance learning culture. We have e.g. discussed:

- Innovative approaches on R-training in the NSOs in Ghana and Ireland,
- Promotion of a learning culture at the National Statistical System Training Academy in India.
- How the Brazilian National School of Statistical Sciences works to establish Communities of Practice (CoP).

There has also been discussions on the use of carrots and sticks as motivation for training and learning and the role of leadership in fostering a learning culture. There was also recently a workshop held which discussed ways to strengthen a culture for learning.

STAT includes questions on learning culture. These have the potential for assessing the current situation and monitoring the development over time.

Moving forward, the group will identify ways to work to strengthen a culture for learning including;

- The social environment: the interaction among us and what drives our intrinsic motivation.
- The physical environment; that training is actually available and that it is possible for staff to engage in it.
- Support from managers matters - both in terms of allowing enough time to learn and in helping identify needed skills.

Finally, motivating and making staff responsible for their own development will make them want to learn, develop and motivated to contribute. We think this will strengthen a culture for learning.

Reach out if you want to take part in this journey.

MORE COUNTRIES ARE IMPLEMENTING STAT

Since its launch at the UN Statistical Commission in February 2024 and several awareness raising activities in Africa and the Asian & Pacific region, STAT has received a lot of interest from countries.

GIST has been active in supporting countries in implementing STAT. In 2024, Kenya, Morocco and Seychelles started the implementation with first assessing skill levels and gaps of staff at the NSO followed by analysis of the data leading to the development of an institutional learning plan. The countries were also interested in developing a more strategic approach to learning why the first steps were taken to draft a Strategy for Competency Development. Each country had great discussions on the learning culture, diverse methods of learning and expanding the use of e-learning and in-house expertise to train themselves. The countries are currently working on finalizing their three-year institutional learning plan and developing the organizational strategy for competency development.

India kick-started 2025 with a workshop to train the state-level statistical offices in STAT with the aim to implement STAT at the sub-national level.

GIST plans to support additional countries in 2025.

The translation of STAT into Spanish, French and Arabic is still ongoing but is expected to be finalized later this year.

The English version of the Guidance document has been updated as the instructions to STAT's analysis package needed some changes to guide users. The new version is available on the website of GIST.

STAT workshop with the National Bureau of Statistics Seychelles, November 2024

STAT workshop with the High Commission for Planning, Morocco, November 20024

STAT workshop with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, December 20024

# MAPPING UNSDG:LEARN TRAINING COURSES TO DATA AND SKILL GAPS

Is your statistics office struggling to meet the demands of producing the SDG indicators? Are you searching for materials to train yourself or others to address these gaps? If so, we have some great news for you!

GIST has been working on mapping the needs for training as revealed by STAT to the training resources available on UNSDG:learn. STAT helps NSOs diagnose needs and priorities for learning not only on statistical production processes, but also across a range of statistical domains. UNSDG:learn, also developed in collaboration with GIST, provides information on online courses, micro-learning materials and other resources that NSOs can use to strengthen statistical capacity. These resources can be incorporated into any formal training curriculum or even accessed by staff that have a need to learn a particular skill.

With the generous collaboration of Open Data Watch, a GIST member, we mapped which of the materials on UNSDG:learn can address the needs revealed by STAT results. We analyzed the STAT results from Ghana, Colombia and Seychelles and searching for courses and resources that would address their needs. Many resources map well to country gaps and needs.

For instance, if your NSO has a need to strengthen skills in data analysis and disaggregation, UNSDG:learn has over 40 courses and resources such as U*sing small area estimation for data disaggregation of SDG indicators Case study based on SDG Indicator 5.a.1* or *E-Learning tool for SDG indicator 3.7.2*. Similarly, if there is a need for training on demography, there are over 50 resources available like, *SDG Indicator 2.1.2 - Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)* or *Measuring Disability in a Census*. There are, however, fewer resources addressing newer areas like using statistical registers or data disclosure avoidance. While not all training can be delivered through a learning platform, this mapping exercise also enables GIST to identify topics that need more resources and materials.

The GIST mapping matrix should help NSOs plan their training curriculum, or their staff skill development programs based on the results of STAT. Online and self-paced learning in combination with informal learning, mentoring, community of practice etc. should be part of any NSO capacity strengthening program.
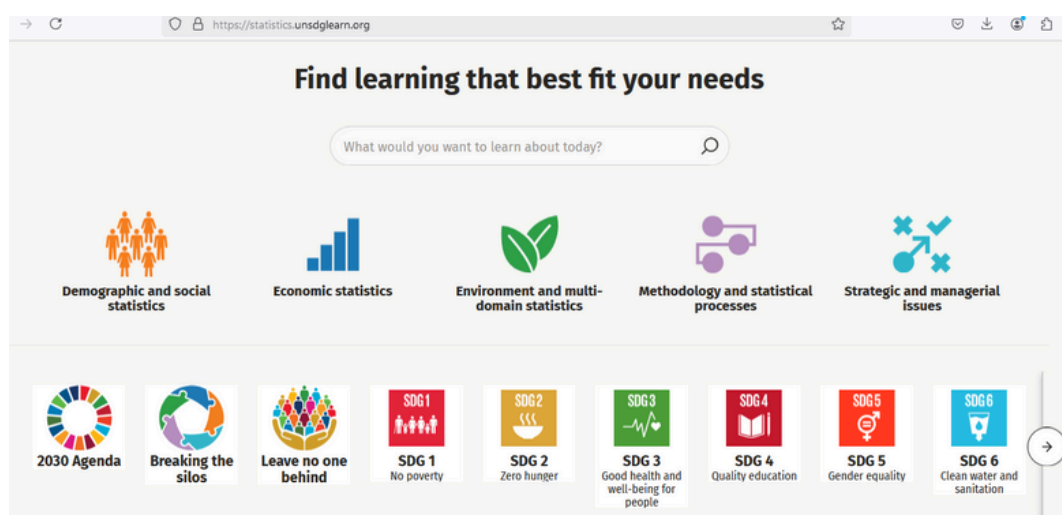
GROW: GIST STATISTICAL LITERACY SERIES OF WEBINARS

GIST Task Team 3 has initiated the GROW Series of webinars on statistical literacy.

The third webinar, dedicated to the *Data visualization and its interfaces with statistical literacy*, took place in October 2024. It featured two main presentations;

- *Seeing is believing; Visualizing statistics using video* by Jo Røislien, University of Stavanger
- *Elements of data engagement: Facilitating understanding for young readers* by Guilherme da Costa Garcia, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

The webinar had good participation and engagement, clearly being a topic that interested many. If you were not able to attend, you can watch the recording <u>here</u>.
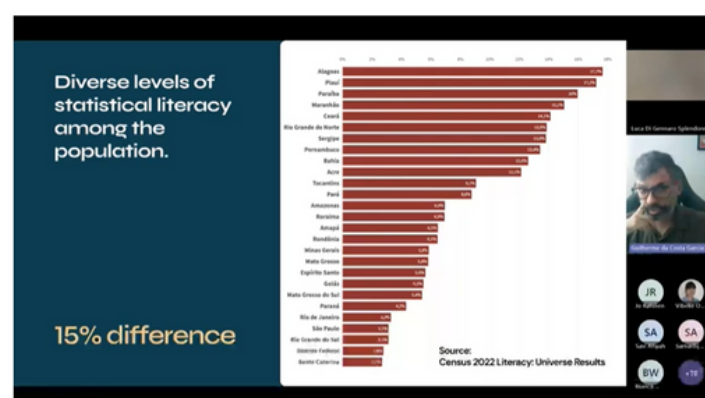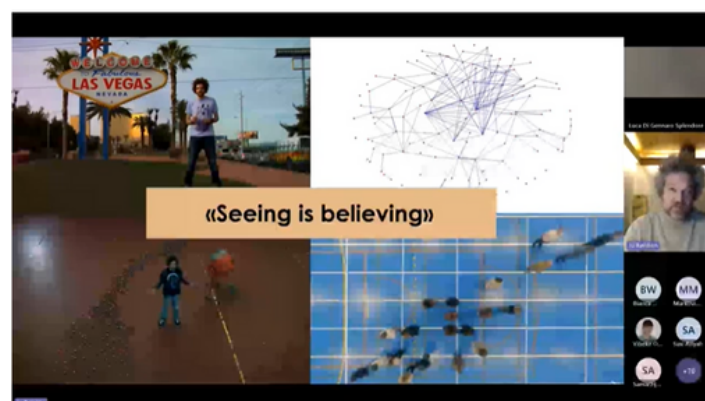
GROW: UPCOMING WEBINAR

The next GROW webinar will take place on the 6th February and focus on *Statistical literacy and citizen data*.

This webinar will explore the linkages between statistical literacy initiatives, with a primary educational goal, and citizen data initiatives that encompass a range of citizen contributions to the data value chain, from civic action to partnerships with and by NSOs.

The Copenhagen Conceptual Framework on Citizen Data developed by the Collaborative on Citizen Data sets a new milestone by increasingly recognizing citizen data "as critical to overcoming many of the data challenges we face today and encourages a more inclusive decision-making process".

Subscribe to our email list to receive further updates on upcoming webinars and the latest updates from GIST, including newsletters and other statistical training and statistical literacy events.

GIST COMMITS TO DATA

COMMIT TO DATA
A UN WORLD DATA FORUM CAMPAIGN
supported by Open Data Watch and PARIS21

GIST's commitment *Strengthing national statistical capacities by adopting a strategic approach to learning and training* is focused on supporting ten countries adopting STAT by mid-2026 of which at least 5 have set up an institutional training plan.
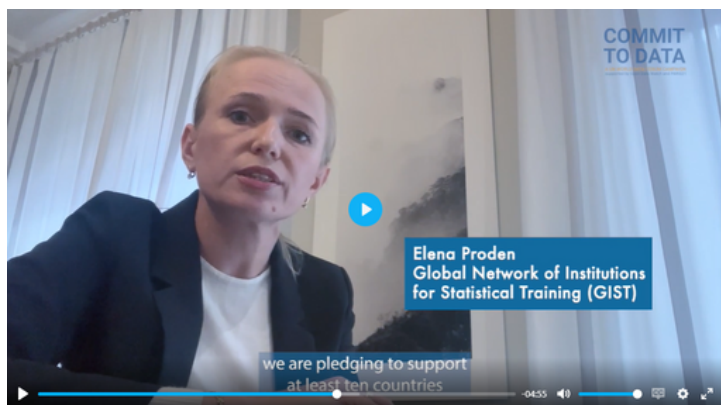
GIST was one of the first contributors to the Commit to Data campaign which was launched in connection with the UN World Data Forum in Medellin in November 2024. The campaign aims to contribute to increased accountability and showcasing progress in the area of data and statistics.

The goal is to support countries in applying a strategic approach to learning and training by adopting STAT and thus identifying and analyzing skills gaps of staff. Based on this, they discuss and decide on how to prioritize and meet their needs by using different types of informal and formal learning.

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