GLOBAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STATISTICAL TRAINING (GIST)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division

IN THIS ISSUE:

Photo by IISD-ENB, Diego Noguera

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

by Elena Proden, GIST Chair

This Newsletter is a great opportunity for the GIST community to celebrate a very vibrant period. The impact of the Network's activities has rapidly expanded to more countries. Many GIST members have been taking the lead on different initiatives. As the Chair, I find that outreach and partner engagement are the most important indicators of the Network's success.

The work on helping National Statistical Offices assess their training needs has attracted a lot of interest. On the way to the 2024 World Data Forum, GIST has committed to supporting 10 countries with STAT, including at least 5 with national institutional training plans by mid-2026.

In my message, I wish to highlight a new emerging area of focus for GIST. Pilots have shown that the implementation of national training plans requires a shift in how training and learning are perceived and delivered. The challenge in many countries is to move away from primarily externally driven, fragmented supply to meet capacity needs in the context of financial constraints, staff turnover and fast-paced technological innovation. Nimbler, country-driven approaches to the development of staff capacities are needed. Placing an **emphasis on learning rather than training and promoting an enabling organizational culture within NSOs** is what a new sub-group within GIST has set out to address (read more on page 4). The sub-group met for the first time in July 2024 to discuss the needs of NSOs in creating a learning culture. A key message for all NSOs is that they should encourage continuous learning, innovation, and improvement among their staff, show they value their knowledge and skills, and provide staff with

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...MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

opportunities to grow and develop. **Moving forward, the sub-group is expected** to provide space for NSOs to exchange on how to promote a learning culture, including specific tools such as individual development plans as part of performance management, career incentives, different types of recognition, allocation of time and/or resources, incorporation of informal learning methods and changes in mindsets towards self-learning and peer-learning. The sub-group would also discuss how to best harness **various learning opportunities** available online or within offices and strengthen NSOs' capacities to develop and run their own training programs. While **a culture shift** may involve initial time and financial resource investments, there is a rapid pay-off as a result of improved efficiency and effectiveness and internal training and learning capacity.

Other important work streams where GIST has continued making progress are addressing statistical literacy and populating UNSDG:Learn gateway with more resources. Following the

successful editions of **the GROW webinar series**, including the **joint event during the 55th session of the UN Statistical Commission** with the International Statistical Literacy Project, **a new thrilling programme has been developed for fall 2024** addressing data journalism, data visualization as well as the synergies between statistical literacy and citizen data initiatives. We look forward to seeing you at the GROW webinars this fall.

I would also like to invite you to reach out to the GIST Secretariat if you wish to use the STAT tool, contribute to the work of the sub-group on Learning Culture in NSOs or add your course or a good practice case to statistics.unsdglearn.org or the GIST statistical literacy inventory. The work of GIST is about making the network more than the sum of its parts. **By joining forces, our ambition is to benefit more countries and stakeholders than any one of us can alone**.

I wish you an enjoyable reading!

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF STATISTICAL LITERACY: INTERVIEW WITH THE ORGANIZER

The first International Day of Statistical Literacy (IDSL), organized by the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP), took place on May 21, 2024. The event, with the slogan "Because data literacy is for everyone", was a free 8-hour online conference consisting of keynote addresses, invited and contributed presentations and an invited panel discussion. It also included a two-hour pre-conference on statistical literacy for researchers and data scientists with topics including big data, remote sensing, crowdsourcing and AIS (automatic identification system). Check the full programme here. **GIST has interviewed the chair of the IDSL Organizing Committee, Dr. Saleha Naghmi Habibullah,** a professor of Statistics at Kinnaird College for Women (Lahore, Pakistan) and a deputy director of ISLP.

ISLP
INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL LITERACY PROJECT (ISLP) PRESENTS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF STATISTICAL LITERACY:
BECAUSE DATA LITERACY IS FOR EVERYONE

MAY 21, 2024
8-HOUR CONFERENCE
FREE ONLINE EVENT
10 AM - 6 PM UTC

CONFERENCE EVENTS:
PRESENTATIONS - WORKSHOP - PANEL DISCUSSION - NETWORKING

IDSL2024

TO REGISTER: CLICK, SCAN OR GO TO:
https://forms.gle/5HwT9ANAZeq3CE4z7

Queries:
islp.coordination@gmail.com
https://iase-web.org/islp

- How did the idea of the International Day of Statistical Literacy evolve?

Prof. Habibullah: The post-pandemic era gave us the idea of organizing events online on a different scale. My work with the Pak Institute of Statistical Training and Research (PISTAR) and my online teaching experience at Kinnaird College gave me a solid background in organizing events online. The pivotal moment was my involvement with the Caucus for Women in Statistics. In 2022, they organized the International Day of Women in Statistics and Data Science for the first time, a 24-hour online conference. ISLP obtained stimulus from this and decided to organize something similar with a duration of 8 hours. We also decided to include a pre-conference workshop which was then organized by the Indonesian ISLP country coordinator. The duration of the event thus extended to 10 hours.

- How many participants did you have?

Prof. Habibullah: As many as 751 persons registered for the event, including teachers, lecturers, professors, researchers, statisticians and NSO staff. It is a mix of people from all over the world: Australia, United Kingdom, Iran, Portugal, Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, India, Mauritius, Canada, Egypt, Ghana, Colombia, Peru, Russian Federation, Mexico, Argentina, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Venezuela, Libya, etc. I am sure the ISLP country coordinators also played an important role in spreading the word.

- Why do you think promoting statistical literacy and organizing such events is important?

Prof. Habibullah: Well, I think it goes without saying. Because now, especially with tons of data everywhere, it is important that correct

decisions are taken based on data that acts as evidence. Obviously, without being statistically literate, people cannot make data-based decisions in the best possible way. That is exactly why we need to promote statistical literacy. Besides, in developing countries, the basic literacy level is low, and many people cannot read and write. It is important that once people acquire basic literacy, they are able to interpret a pie chart or a graph, which might appear even in the newspaper. It is not only those who are non-statisticians who need to be given this awareness or literacy. Even for people in the field, sometimes, not all concepts are clear. Unfortunately, even today, in some countries, there is a lot of rote memorization instead of a proper understanding of concepts.

- Do you plan any particular focus for the next IDSL in 2025?

Prof. Habibullah: We plan to follow the latest trends in the field; at the same time, ISLP welcomes suggestions for the next IDSL, which will be held in 2025.

Readers are welcome to contact Prof. Habibullah to share ideas and suggestions regarding the event.

> ❝
> **IT'S IMPORTANT THAT ONCE PEOPLE ACQUIRE BASIC LITERACY, THEY ARE ABLE TO INTERPRET A PIE CHART OR A GRAPH**
>
> **- SALEHA HABIBULLAH**

9TH ANNUAL MEETING OF GIST

The 9th Annual Meeting of the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST) was held on 12 February 2024 as a closed online side event of the 55th United Nations Statistical Commission which took place in New York from 27 February - 1 March 2024.

GIST Members discussed the key achievements in 2023, among others the expansion and testing of the Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool (STAT); the establishment of the new Translation Group; e-learning courses and blogs on the unsdglearn.org statistics hub; the mission of raising awareness around effective e-learning and certification of courses and guidance on statistical literacy initiatives.

To bring in more voices and contributions, GIST continuously engages with the community and ensures partners remain enthusiastic and actively contribute with input. Many members have brought in new colleagues and experts and it is a pleasure to also have Open Data Watch (ODW) onboard.

Members were also informed about the GIST Stakeholder Advisory Group, which met in January 2024 and provided input on the priorities for the year, particularly related to the work on STAT, where additional SAG members expressed interest in using the tool and on the future direction and priorities for Task Team 2 who has accomplished its mandate.

LEARNING CULTURE WITHIN NSOs

GIST members initiated the **first meeting of the sub-group on learning culture** on July 11, 2024. The meeting emphasized the critical need to transform organizational culture to facilitate continuous learning in different ways including informal learning, knowledge sharing and the use of in-house expertise.

Organizational learning theory was first developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön in the 1970s and has further been developed,

A learning organization improves itself over time through gaining experience and using that experience to create knowledge, When an organisation has a culture of learning it encourages and supports continuous learning, innovation, and improvement among individual staff and teams. Being able to experiment, test, risk, and fail in a working process is a part of developing an organization's creative and problem-solving workforce.

The concept of the "learning organisation" has been implemented in the STAT tool. The questionnaires for staff and managers ask about their positions to different statements related to learning culture such as "I openly discuss challenges with colleagues to learn from them" and "I help other people to learn (e.g. giving open and honest feedback, presenting my work)". The aim of these statements is to create awareness around learning culture among staff and managers and to allow the NSO to better understand to what extent their organization is a learning organization and thus support conversations around what it takes to move towards one.

The first meeting of the new sub-group was of a more technical character with members also expressing their initial ideas on learning culture. As the meeting concluded, it was decided that the next meeting would have a more practical focus to further advance the initiative.

EXCITING UPDATES ON THE GIST WEBSITE

GIST has recently updated its website, enhancing user experience and resource accessibility. The updated site features a modernized design and straightforward navigation through various sections. The main menu includes the following sections:

- **Membership:** Details about current member institutions and the Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- **Meetings & Webinars:** Information on events where users can find notes, materials, recordings, and presentations from various webinars and meetings, fostering knowledge exchange.
- **Resources:** Access to tools like the Statistical Training Needs Assessment Tool (STAT), the Statistical Literacy Initiative Inventory, and UN SDG:Learn. Further, this section features a comprehensive resource library, where users can find essential documents, training materials, and reports. Additionally, there is a dedicated newsletter section for the latest updates and insights.

GIST's commitment to improving statistical capacity and literacy is now supported by a more user-friendly redesign of its website. This ensures that members and stakeholders can easily access valuable resources and stay informed about ongoing and future initiatives.
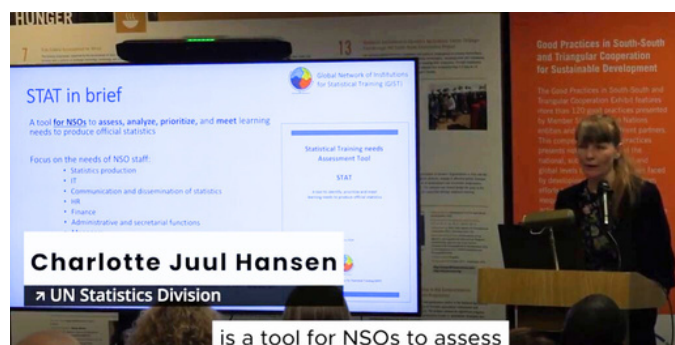
For more details, visit GIST's official website.

LAUNCHING STAT AT THE 2024 UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

The Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool (STAT) was officially launched at the 2024 UN Statistical Commission on 27 February during a side event held at UNDP. The venue was full, and participants were introduced to STAT and learned how it has contributed to the efforts of the National Administrative Department of Statistics in Colombia (DANE) and the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) to put learning at the center of organizational development. UN Statistics Division Director, Stefan Schweinfest, provided strong support to STAT and congratulated GIST for developing a tool that can support both the NSO and the NSS in building the needed competencies to produce official statistics. If you missed the event, you can watch it here. A short video on the main messages is available here.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF STAT

STAT has been updated to reflect the lessons learned from both pilot testing the three questionnaires in six countries and the more extensive pilot in Ghana and Colombia (check more details in the previous issue of our newsletter). The final version of STAT was launched at the UN Statistical Commission in February 2024. Besides a Quick Guide, the following documents are key to implementing STAT:

- The guidance document "Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool" describes the details of STAT incl. how to prepare the questionnaires, prepare and analyze data, prioritize training needs, and develop an Institutional Training Plan.
- Three questionnaires in Google Forms for collecting data from staff, managers, and the NSS.

- An Analysis Package where a final skills list.csv-file and R.files are used to extract the data from Google Forms to Power BI which has been prepared with ready-made visualizations.

STAT is available in English on GIST's website. Translation into Spanish, French, and Arabic is currently undergoing with the great support of respectively DANE, HCP, and AIRTS.

STAT has received a lot of positive attention since its launch, and countries are asking GIST for both access and support to implement it. UNSD has ensured funding to support a few countries in 2024. Once translation to Spanish, French, and Arabic is complete, STAT can reach even more countries. If your NSO is interested in testing the STAT tool, please contact the GIST Secretariat (UNSD).

GIST TRANSLATION GROUP: INTERVIEW WITH THE LEAD

The GIST Translation Group was established in 2023 to address the need for more training materials in different languages (read more on this in our previous issue). GIST talked about the group's current work with its lead, Dr. Hédi Saidi, the Director General of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistic (AITRS) (Jordan, Amman).

-What is the purpose of the GIST Translation Group?

Dr. Saidi: The Group started to work on the ongoing challenge identified by various GIST members, specifically that most training materials are currently accessible in English only, which limits opportunities for regional organizations. Several GIST members were eager to contribute to the informal translation of materials.

-What is the group currently working on?

Dr. Saidi: The Group is actively working on translating the Statistical Training needs Assessment Tool (STAT) into Spanish, Arabic and French. Additionally, Russian and Portuguese translations are considered for the following year. The following group members perform the effort: Colombia's National Department of Statistics (DANE), the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), and the U.S. Census Bureau (USA). The translation of STAT would be a great achievement for the group as it includes the questionnaires, guidance documents, R codes, and PowerBI dashboards. Therefore, the work until the next United Nations Statistical Commission is focused on translating STAT as a primary output. The Group is also working on getting more organizations to commit to translating.

-How can other organizations contribute to the work with translation?

Dr. Saidi: It is very important to translate STAT to derive full benefits from it. Regional or international organizations who want to contribute to the translation of STAT are welcome to **contact me via email**. The Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics works with 22 Arab States, and we have a demand from our communities for Arabic translation. But besides Arabic, we also need translations to other languages. To engage other organizations to help us translate training materials, we should first inform better about STAT itself. There are many regional statistical organizations that have no idea about what STAT is. Once other organizations learn about STAT and realize its capabilities, they will feel the need to use it and, therefore, get engaged in translating it. We must encourage all the regional institutes to organize some workshops to inform them about STAT and encourage them to use this tool. The more organizations know about STAT, the more demand it creates, and the more users can help translate it into other languages. Therefore, we need to increase communication about the STAT.

> ## IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO TRANSLATE STAT TO DERIVE FULL BENEFITS FROM IT
>
> **- HÉDI SAIDI**

GROW: GIST STATISTICAL LITERACY SERIES OF WEBINARS

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

The first webinar, dedicated to the Statistical Literacy Inventory, took place in December 2023.

The second GROW webinar "The sum is greater than its parts - promoting statistical literacy worldwide" took place in February 2024. The director of the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP), Reija Helenius, presented ISLP and invited two of its country coordinators to talk about their national initiatives. Hugo Hernández Trevethan from the National Autonomous University of Mexico talked about the ISLP Poster Competition, highlighting Latin American participation and achievements and sharing experiences and challenges in integrating statistical literacy into educational programs in Mexico. Daniel Frischemeier from the University of Münster, Germany, shared his experience on promoting statistical literacy among elementary and primary school students aged 4-11. Further. the GIST chair, Elena Proden from UNITAR, presented the Statistical Literacy Inventory and Alexandre da Silva from the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro presented statistical literacy projects involving Civil Society Organizations and undergraduate students.
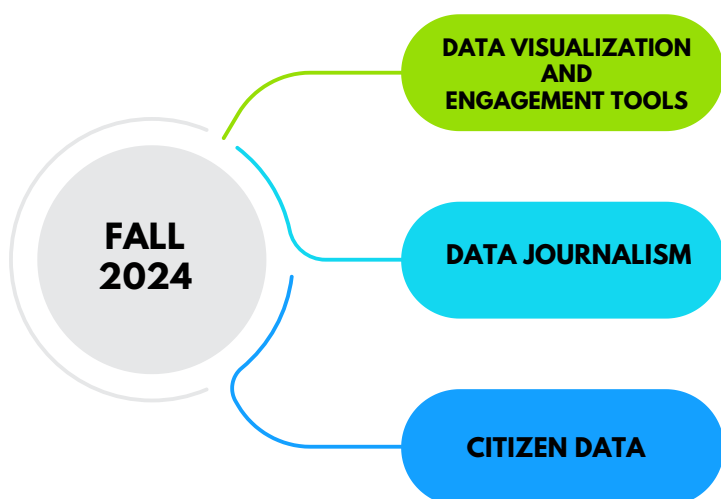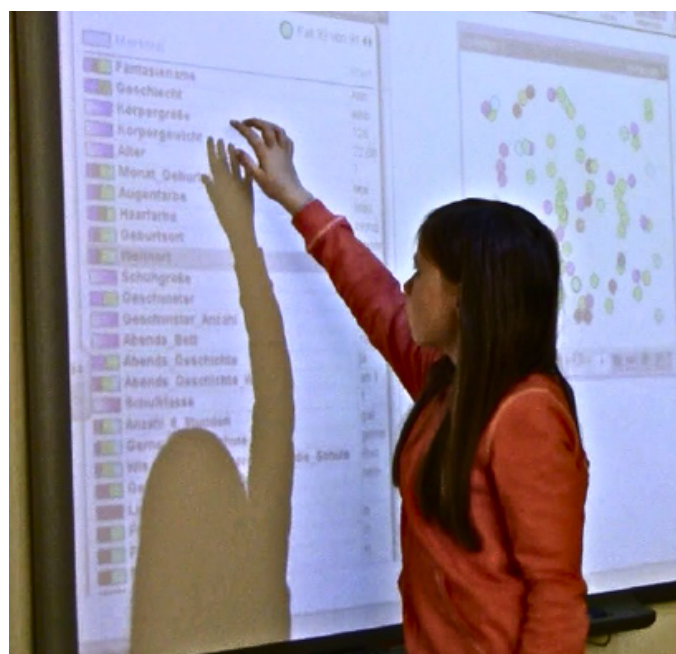

First categorization activities

Pictogram-Datacards for first classification activities

Sort the cards according to the favourite food (here Pizza)

see Guimaraes (2018); Estrella (2018); Zapata-Cardona (2023)

FALL 2024
- DATA VISUALIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLS
- DATA JOURNALISM
- CITIZEN DATA

THREE MORE GROW-WEBINARS ARE PLANNED FOR THE FALL/WINTER OF 2024

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.

UN SDG:LEARN BLOG SERIES ON DATA & STATISTICS

More blogs have been added to the UN SDG:Learn portal in the last 6 months which all have interesting messages related to data and statistics. One blog highlights the role of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and the Global Indicator Framework in tracking progress. Another blog showcases the Kyrgyz Republic's efforts in SDG monitoring. The importance of international competitions like the ISLP in promoting statistical literacy is discussed in a third blog. Finally, the necessity of developing data skills among non-specialists to foster a data-informed culture for sustainable development is emphasized. For more details, click on the specific author or title to read the full blog.

YONGYI MIN

NAVIGATING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF THE IAEG-SDGS AND THE GLOBAL INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

PEDRO CAMPOS

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE STATISTICAL LITERACY ON A GLOBAL SCALE - THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ISLP

NAZIRA KERIMALIEVA

EMPOWERING SDG PROGRESS: A GLIMPSE INTO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC'S VOYAGE TO SDG MONITORING

DR. RACHEL BENNETT

'OPENING THE APPETITE' FOR DATA & DATA SKILLS AMONGST NON-SPECIALISTS

EXPLORE THE UN SDG:LEARN BLOG SERIES HERE

UN SDG:Learn
Statistics

Demographic and social statistics   Economic statistics   Environment and multi-domain statistics   Methodology and statistical processes   Strategic and managerial issues
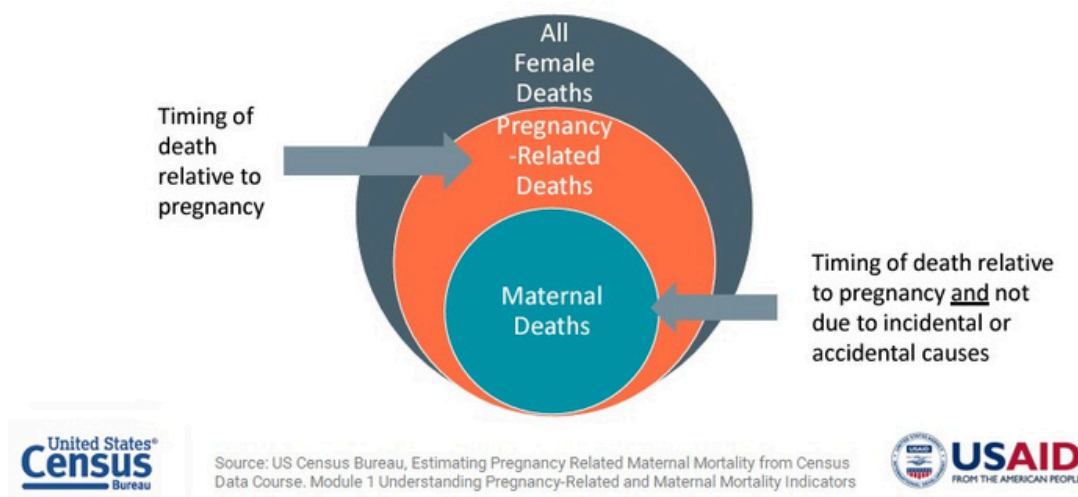
FOR STATISTICS LEARNING MATERIALS, GO HERE

NEW COURSE ON MATERNAL MORTALITY IS AVAILABLE ON UN SDG:LEARN

Difference Between Maternal and Pregnancy-Related Death

Source: US Census Bureau, Estimating Pregnancy Related Maternal Mortality from Census Data Course. Module 1 Understanding Pregnancy-Related and Maternal Mortality Indicators

The vision of a world where no woman dies from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth motivated the International Programs Center (IPC) of the U.S. Census Bureau to develop the free self-paced e-learning: Estimating Pregnancy-Related and Maternal Mortality from Census Data.

This e-learning course sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), empowers statisticians and public health professionals to skilfully use census data to estimate maternal and pregnancy-related deaths to track progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, even in regions lacking robust vital registration systems.

In this e-learning course taught by demographic experts, participants learn core concepts and measures of pregnancy-related and maternal mortality, the sources of data, ways to evaluate and adjust fertility and mortality data, and estimate pregnancy-related and maternal mortality indicators. Finally, the course walks you through the Census PRM workbook, a tool to estimate census-based pregnancy-related and maternal mortality measures.

The course plays a key role in saving lives of mothers by teaching participants to produce statistics that track progress towards reducing global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) to below 70 per 100 000 live births by 2030. These indicators help identify high-risk areas with elevated maternal mortality rates and provide essential data to make informed decisions that shape policies, programs, and interventions aimed at advancing maternal health outcomes. By strengthening capacities and fostering international collaboration, IPC and USAID are forging a path toward sustainable improvements in maternal health worldwide.

COURSE Self-paced e-learning

Estimating Pregnancy-Related and Maternal Mortality from Census Data

USCB

❋ Leave no one behind, SDG 3, SDG 5

PROMOTING RESOURCES ON UN SDG:LEARN

UN SDG:Learn offers self-paced e-learning and microlearning on various topics related to producing statistics, which are offered in different languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Indonesian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Self-paced learning is online courses, while microlearning is a mix of shorter videos, podcasts and blogs. UN SDG:Learn also provides access to different resources such as documents, guidelines and training materials.

Do you want to see what UN SDG:Learn offers on its platform? Click on the green button below and learn something new!

WHAT COULD YOU LEARN TODAY?

START

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