

DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 1

GLOBAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STATISTICAL TRAINING (GIST)



This Issue

Message from the GIST Chair

Find out more about the diverse
and rich courses provided by
GIST members

Sustainable statistical training

Learn about the online hub for
statistical training courses,
[UN SDG:Learn](#) statistics



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST), I am honored to welcome you to the first issue of the GIST newsletter. Data and official statistics have always been essential for planning, decision making, and development, but the increased complexity of the data eco-system and the need for delivering an expansive range of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators has cast a spotlight on statistical capacity. While many partners have been building the capacity of institutions through training for producing and disseminating high quality official statistics, there are challenges related to lack of resources, uneven training quality, capacity gaps in various statistical sectors, coordination and duplication of effort, lack of systematic needs assessment, uneven participation, to name just a few. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has added yet another level of complication to training.



Dr. Mitali Sen - Chief, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Branch, International Programs, U.S. Census Bureau

The GIST was established in September 2017 to address some of these challenges, when the UN DESA Statistics Division (UNSD) brought together a host of international, regional, and national partners engaged in statistical training. The overall objective of the GIST is to facilitate collaboration among members of the network in the delivery of trainings on statistics in a more harmonized and standardized manner as well as to improve effectiveness of these trainings through maximizing their outreach.

The GIST includes members from international organizations that set standards and deliver training like UNSD, UNITAR, FAO, The World Bank, some regional training institutes like UNSIAP, IDEP, AITRS, EASTC and a few national statistics offices that build statistical capacity internationally like Brazil's IBGE, Statistics Norway, and U.S. Census Bureau. A Stakeholder Advisory Group consisting of a periodically rotating panel of representatives from various national statistical offices (NSOs) and other data stakeholders provide guidance and direction to the work of GIST. Based on the priorities identified, three task teams were established – (1) developing an online gateway and an e-learning community of practice; (2) addressing the specific training needs of NSOs; and (3) statistical literacy in the context of the 2030 agenda. Details on their work and accomplishments is discussed in later sections of this newsletter. The current leaders of the task team, along with the rotating Chair form the Board of GIST, with UNSD as the permanent secretariat.

Through this quarterly newsletter, GIST hopes to foster and build an engaged statistical community that can contribute, as well as learn from various initiatives and opportunities for training in official statistics. The work of GIST is only meaningful if it translates to building sustainable capacity and helps countries deliver the SDG indicators. We thank all the members who have contributed generously of their time and ideas to the work of the task teams. We hope to showcase the work of GIST and its members and partners through this newsletter for the benefit of all countries.

BRIEFLY ABOUT GIST

GIST's work focuses on various aspects of statistical training—from need assessment, to sharing courses, to harmonization of curricula—leveraging the unique strengths of its members.

GIST's membership currently spans 25 members from international agencies, regional training institutes and national statistical offices who engage in providing statistical training internationally.

Based on the priorities identified by the members of GIST, the work is currently organized in three task teams.

- **Task team 1:** Online gateway and e-learning community of practice. The task team has collaborated on setting up an online hub for learning materials: UN SDG: Learn/statistics. Users can access e-learning courses and micro-learning resources developed by partners on various statistical topics. See more on pages 4-6.
- **Task team 2:** Addressing the specific training needs of national statistical offices (NSOs). This task team has been mostly focused on low- and middle-income countries to examine the various types of sustainable statistical training practices, developing recommendations for establishing such training, the use of e-learning, a minimal course curriculum for an NSO, and how international partners can best help. See more on page 7.
- **Task team 3:** Statistical literacy in the context of the 2030 agenda. This group has worked on creating an e-learning course on statistical literacy and an inventory of resources available to promote such literacy (still in pilot format). The task team also organized a session on statistical literacy at the UN World Data Forum. See page 8.



UN SDG:Learn Statistics Landing page and other initiatives of GIST Task team on Statistical Literacy



In 2020, during the 51st UN Statistical Commission, the GIST launched the [UN SDG:Learn Statistics](#) landing page. This page serves as a gateway for statistical learning made available by international agencies, regional training institutes, national statistical offices and partners active in the global statistical community. The content of the learning materials is developed by the agencies that produce and share them. Users can easily find the learning offered by navigating through the following categories:

- Statistical classification: demographic and social statistics, economic statistics, environment and multi-domain statistics, methodology of statistical processes or strategic and managerial issues.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- E-learning, face-to-face or microlearning materials.
- Language.
- Region.

The aim of the gateway is to allow users, be it the statistical community itself, policymakers, or the general public, to get an overview of the statistical learning available at a glance and in a one-stop-shop. Over 90 different learning materials are already available and more are expected to be added moving forward. Since the launch of the [UN SDG:Learn Statistics](#) gateway, over 4000 people have visited the page.

COURSES PROVIDED BY GIST MEMBERS

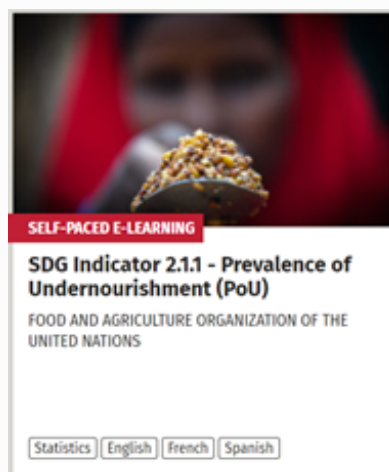
A few e-learning courses highlighted

E-learning on Statistical Literacy

The GIST Task Team on Statistical Literacy identified early on that there was a need for training materials for policymakers to improve their core competencies related to understanding and mobilizing data as well as conveying information. Based on a thorough assessment, an e-learning course was created to strengthen policymakers' statistical literacy. The work was led by United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), with input from UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) with funding support for the Swiss Development Cooperation.



FAO e-learning course on Prevalence of Undernourishment (SDG 2.1.1) Now available in multiple languages



How we measure food insecurity is the focus of an FAO e-learning course that aims to help countries track progress towards SDG Indicator 2.1.1 "Prevalence of Undernourishment". Primarily intended for those who play a role in the collection, analysis and reporting on the indicator, the self-paced course will allow participants to delve deeper into the fundamental concepts of the methodology to estimate the indicator. Enroll now in English, French and Spanish, with free digital badge certification!

Find out more [here](#).

Disaster related statistics framework - E-learning course

The collection, compilation and utilization of disaster related statistics are a priority for many countries due to the significant impact of disasters on life, well-being and sustainable development. At the national and sub-national levels timely and accurate disaster related statistics are needed to support countries in all phase of the disaster risk management cycle from risk assessment to recovery. At the international level, the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development have also led to increased demands for monitoring disasters. Responding to the increased needs for integrated statistics about disasters, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) developed the "Disaster-related Statistics Framework" (DRSF).



Microlearning

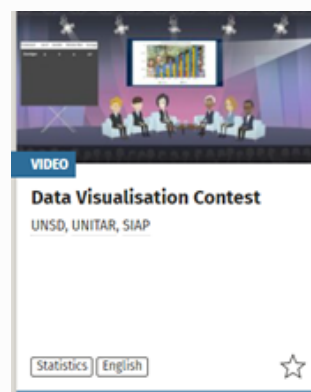
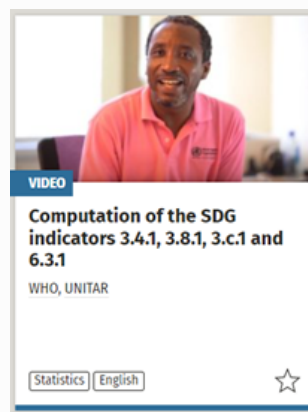
Microlearning are different short learning materials that give an introduction to a topic, explains core elements or details out a concrete, limited topic in a relatively short period of time. Microlearning materials at [UN SDG:Learn](#) are divided into several categories, including learning videos, quizzes, tools, platforms, webinars and documents. This feature was added to the UN SDG:Learn statistics pages at a later stage and content is therefore still more limited, but more and more is being added.



UNITAR and UNSD have developed four microlearning videos on trust in statistics and the role of the National Statistical Office in ensuring that data provided is of good quality, reliable and timely, as well as handled confidentially, and responding to needs for informed decision making.

The first episode of the National Superheroes office is available [here](#).

A glance on other microlearning materials



SUSTAINABLE STATISTICAL TRAINING



How to organize statistical training programs at national level?

There is much variation in how statistical training is organized across countries. While some countries have well-structured training programs with sufficient staff, there are many that have challenges either with organization, staffing or both. There is also large variation in who is responsible for the training programs, what is offered and to whom. Also, there is a need for more guidance and tools for countries to further develop their systems. The members of the GIST task team on 'Addressing NSO demands' have worked on this in 2021.

Sustainable statistical training programs at National Statistical Offices

Dag Røll-Hansen and Elisa Rustenbach



Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)



To understand the situation better, fourteen countries were interviewed. The systems and approaches were different in all of them. Based on the conversations with these countries and further exchange with GIST members, four areas of follow up were proposed:

- A repository of training material and tools that can be used as a global common good.
- An overview of a standard set of training courses to potentially cover in a training programme.
- Development of a set of recommendations for training.
- Strengthening and clarifying the role of regional and international organizations in building training programs at the country level.

The first point is already set up with the [UN SDG:Learn](#) statistics platform. An initial guidance for training programs has also been developed, including a separate report on how countries can make better use of e-learning materials.

GIST is also supporting Ethiopia and Ghana, two of the stakeholder advisory group members, in setting up and improving their statistical training programs. The statistics office in Ethiopia has already started the work to set up a statistical training school for the entire statistical system and is currently working with partners to assess training needs, while at the same time piloting a few core trainings. The goal is to run core trainings independently of international support. Ghana has also identified that they want to provide more systematic trainings themselves, but are currently in a process of further specifying the plans.

For more info please click [here](#).



Photo: Electronically supported learning, Dag Røll-Hansen

Introducing e-learning in National Statistical Offices

Dag Røll-Hansen

for the



Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST)



STATISTICAL LITERACY

"Statistics and Data Smart: Innovative solutions for increasing statistical literacy of the general public" session during the 2021 World Data Forum - Bern, Switzerland - October 6th 2021

Strategies and initiatives promoting the effective use of data and improving the statistical literacy of different stakeholders were the focus of this hybrid session. Organized by UNITAR, UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and in collaboration with the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST), the session was moderated by Ms. Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen, Inter-Regional Advisor at the UN Statistics Division.

Although the GIST has long been working on the topic of statistical literacy, the COVID-19 Pandemic which saw an increase in the use and misuse of statistics by different stakeholders, made this topic more relevant than ever.

Several initiatives targeting younger generations and students were presented. Mr. Husam Khalifa, Director of the External Trade Statistics Department at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) highlighted the Bureau's efforts to nurture students' interest in statistics with school competitions and office visits. Similarly, director of Methodology at Statistics Portugal and Deputy Director of the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP) Mr. Pedro Campos presented the ISLP's wish to make statistics more exciting for younger generations. Its online biannual school competition allows children and teenagers from remote regions of the world to participate and become familiar with statistical knowledge and practice. Mr. Léandre Foster Ngogang, Statistician at the African Centre for Statistics presented initiatives targeting students of all ages such as the "Reading Data with Children" event organized by the National Institutes of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and UNICEF or the creation of a data center by the national statistics office of Senegal at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

To achieve statistical literacy, a key strategy is supporting and encouraging journalists. Mr. Ngogang and Husam Khalifa presented training initiatives to help journalists understand and use data in their works. In Rwanda, to further encourage this practice, the Rwanda Data Journalism Award (RDJA) was also created.

Other initiatives included the flagship joint project of the PCBS and the Arab American University of Palestine (AAUP) to promote data in Palestine, the "Data Matters Festival" and large-scale campaigns targeting government and international workers, students or the private sector as presented by Chairman of the National Statistics Office of Mongolia Mr. Batdavaa Batmunkh. The session was closed by Ms. Elena Proden, Senior Specialist for the Strategic Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Unit at UNITAR, who presented the work of the GIST task team on statistical literacy.



Watch the recording of the session [here](#).

ABOUT THE GIST SECRETARIAT



Ms. Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen - Inter-regional adviser on Statistical Training and Capacity Building



Ms. Francesca Perucci - Assistant Director, UN DESA Statistics Division

The UN Statistics Division ([UNSD](https://unstats.un.org/)) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the secretariat of [GIST](https://unstats.un.org/gist/). The responsibility sits with the Development Data and Outreach Branch under Ms. Francesca Perucci and the secretariat work is mainly implemented by Ms. Vibeke Oestreich Nielsen, an Inter-regional adviser in the branch. She oversees the work, organizes all meetings of GISTs, follows up on the website, [UN SDG:Learn](https://unstats.un.org/gist/SDGLearn/) and other tools and communication updates and carries out other tasks as agreed with members of GIST. In the last year, three interns have been involved in the work, UNSD has also involved a communications consultant in the work, along with three statistical training related consultancies.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

GIST WEBPAGE: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/>

UN SDG LEARN STATISTICS: <https://www.unsdglearn.org/statistics/>

UNSD WEBPAGE: <https://unstats.un.org/home/>

LIST OF MEMBERS: <https://unstats.un.org/gist/Membership/List-of-members/>

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