

DECEMBER 2022 | ISSUE 2

GLOBAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS FOR STATISTICAL TRAINING (GIST)



This Issue

Message from the chair

Welcome new members & new
co-leads of the task teams

Interviews with GIST members

UN SDG:Learn spotlight
courses

New partnerships and
products

Upcoming events



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training (GIST), I am honored to welcome you to the second issue of the GIST newsletter. This issue highlights some exciting new developments, tools, and products that we have been collaborating on for the increased benefit of the global statistical community. As you know, 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. In this issue, we would like to share with you some of our successes since December 2021.



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

During the 2022 U.N. Statistical Commission meetings, we had a well-attended, productive, and engaging side event on What Makes National Statistical Training Programs Sustainable? In addition, GIST shared some of the major accomplishments, including a growing range of courses available on the UN SDG:Learn platform, new micro-learning videos and other listings, guidance on setting up sustainable training centers in countries like Ethiopia and Ghana and building a statistical literacy inventory. Discussions at this side event formed the basis of deliberations and outcomes at the Annual Meeting of GIST. Upon the advice of GIST members, the GIST Board put in motion several new initiatives that will lead to a more effective network.

First, to expand our global reach, statistical contributions, and the transformational power of GIST, we are excited to welcome several new members into the network. You can read more about them on the next page of this newsletter. Each institution brings a wealth of experience, tools, products, and regional knowledge that will enhance the work of GIST.

Second, we have made changes in our workflow to increase participation and input from the members and reduce the burden on the U.N. GIST secretariat. From this year, each task team will not only have a Lead, but also a Co-Lead assisting with running the task team. Together, they will be responsible for calling the meetings, setting the agenda, and accomplishing the work. Learn more about our Leads and Co-leads in this issue.

Third, at the beginning of each calendar year, the GIST Board, in consultation with all GIST members, drafts a work plan to address needs. This year's work plan included development of a framework for assessing the needs of national statistical systems, drafting a paper on best practices in remote learning, exploring certification systems for training, and developing an inventory on statistical literacy. The three task teams have made good progress on all these fronts, and we look forward to sharing the work with you during the 2023 UN Statistical Commission meetings.

Fourth, most of GIST materials are accessible only in English. We would like to change this going forward and hope our GIST members bring some resources to bear on providing translations in other common languages like, Arabic, French, and Spanish.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and can use the information here to strengthen your institution's capacity to produce, disseminate, and use the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators for the development of your country.



Welcome new GIST members and new co-leads of the task teams

New GIST members

In the course of 2022, GIST has expanded to include more members. There are many and various reasons for this expansion. One is as a response from the UN Statistical Commission to ensure that regional training institutes are involved, another to have closer ties and connections to initiatives that work on related matters and a third to benefit from the knowledge and work that new partners are doing in global provision of official statistical training

New members include:

- Regional training bodies: AFRISTAT and Pacific Community's Statistics for Development,
- International and organizations: UN Population Fund, UN Women, Inter-American Development Bank and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
- Country statistical offices that build capacity beyond their own border: U.K.'s Office for National Statistics, Central Statistics Office of Ireland and the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (DANE)
- The International Statistical Literacy Project, a sub-entity of the ISI which already is a member



New task team co-leads

In efforts to expand responsibilities to more GIST members, GIST has now co-leads who work actively with the task team leads in progressing the work. Leads and co-leads for each task team are as follows:

- Task team 1: Addressing NSO demands:
 - Lead: Mamadou Cisse, IDEP
 - Co-lead: Dag Roll-Hansen, Statistics Norway
- Task team 2: Online gateway and e-learning community of practice
 - Lead: Shailja Sharma, UN SIAP
 - Co-lead: Cristina Petracchi, FAO
- Task team 3: Statistical literacy
 - Lead: Elena Proden, UNITAR
 - Co-lead, Bianca Walsh, IBGE

The new co-leads are also joining the meetings of the GIST board.



Meet the lead from task team 1

Mamadou Cisse holds a PhD since 2008 and is a training officer of the African Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), which engages in capacity building for African countries and is the training arm of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). He is also the lead of GIST Task Team 1, which focuses on better response to needs and requests from the NSOs.

Please describe your expertise and experience related to the mission of GIST and the task team.

One of our main training areas at IDEP is statistical data analysis, which is very relevant for good planning, including for sustainable development. Our participants are from National Statistical Offices (NSOs). We are divided into two areas; technical and leadership trainings. To ensure we understand the request of the National Statistical System (NSS) we first organized meetings. We then propose a curriculum and develop it to answer the request. We are happy to share the experience we gain from working with countries to enhance their capacities.

How can we better assist the data community and identify their needs for statistical training?

The most relevant need is related to SDG indicator measurement in Africa. The first step is to collect the relevant data, but it is very urgent for African countries to diversify the ways of obtaining them. We can't analyze data, if we don't have it, and we don't have enough. We need to use every data source we have and manage them effectively. We have administrative data, big data, and data collected from surveys. We always try to use the data collected from surveys, but I think our methods are not good enough to ensure that we organize every survey to collect sufficient data. We need to reduce informality and collect administrative data automatically. We might also use big data sources to complete some types of data collection. I think it is a huge issue and challenge for Africa to have up-to-date, relevant data for meaningful analysis.

On the other hand, we need not only technical assistance, such as organizing training activities, but a more urgent matter is leadership. We need leadership to raise awareness that NSOs need improved opportunities to collect important data. That being said, we also need fundraising activities to do that. Without enough funding, nothing will work. We need to lobby at the policy level, and more support from the UN to developing countries is needed to help them better organize the collection .

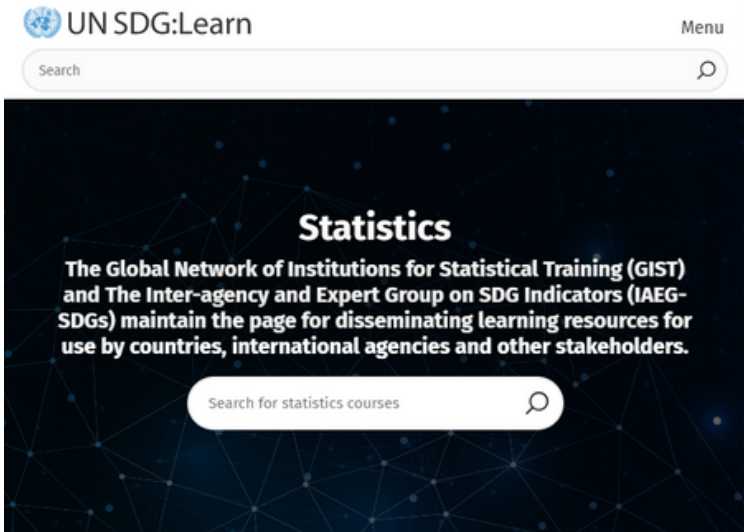
What motivates you in your role as a GIST member?

Before I joined IDEP, I worked at ENSAE de Dakar, a national training school and a sub-regional training institute for statistics and economic analysis. We usually received over 1000 applications and recruited around 30 students from 10-12 French speaking African countries for the training department I lead. As I was the head of the training for Ingenieurs in this school for ten years, I got to know the curricula of the statistical training schools which were linked to the Senegalese NSS and helped me understand their needs. When I joined IDEP, we provided continuous training in data analysis because I had learned it was a real need for the NSS. IDEP was my contact point with GIST. IDEP has been involved in capacity building since 1963 and has trained many African officials. Today enhanced statistical capacity is one of the key areas of IDEP training activities.

What hopes do you have for task team 1 of GIST?

The first thing we need to do is to provide languages other than English. There are for instance many French speaking countries who also need training. Secondly, we need to organize surveys related to training needs more regularly to collect data from the NSS because their needs vary. For example, African countries, particularly French speaking countries, are impacted deeply by the Ukraine crisis. They need to have relevant data to know the impact of this crisis, which are instantaneous requests. We are elaborating our curriculum to be more proactive and agile and that should lead us to be recognized as an institute that can help the NSS. We need to work closely with these NSSs by organizing regular surveys to ensure that what we are doing is continually relevant to them. The work we are doing in task team 1 of GIST on development of standardized training needs assessments and sustainable training programs at national level are relevant in this context.

New partnership with IAEG-SDGs



At the 53rd session of the UN Statistical Commission, [the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators \(IAEG-SDGs\)](#) was requested to make guidance and learning materials for the different SDG indicators easier to find for the member countries.

Following this, the IAEG-SDGs agreed to use [UN SDG:Learn](#) as a common platform for agencies to share learning and capacity building resources on SDG indicators and monitoring. The work to add more learning resources was started in late 2022 and will continue in 2023.

Some agencies are both custodian and GIST members and have therefore already added resources. FAO for example has already added over [20 courses](#) and [9 microlearning materials](#) to the UN SDG:learn statistics pages, many of them available in several languages.

In focus: Statistical literacy


The task team on statistical literacy (task team 3) agreed in 2021 to develop an [inventory of statistical literacy initiatives](#). As of December 2022 it had 21 initiatives listed targeting various audiences and providing different product types in a variety of languages.

The work is greatly benefiting from a partnership with the [International Statistical Literacy Project](#). It is a project initiated by the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE), which is the education section of the International Statistical Institute (ISI)

More materials are expected to be added in the course of 2023.

If your organization has examples you would like to add, please don't hesitate in reaching out to the GIST secretariat.

Education corner



Title of Initiative: Education corner
Organization: European Commission, Directorate-General Eurostat (Eurostat)
Contact: Romina Brondino romina.brondino@ec.europa.eu
Website: [Click here](#)

Purpose: The Education corner is a section on Eurostat website. It provides a wide range of tools and resources to explain statistics in a simple way.

Getting to know GIST members: Brazilian Institute for geography and statistics



Bianca Walsh is a technical assistant to the Director of the National School of Statistical Sciences (ENCE) of IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). She represents IBGE in the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST) in two working teams: statistical literacy and e-learning. For the first one, she is a co-lead. She is also a member of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, particularly working with the Task Team on Training, Competencies and Capacity Development.

Please describe your involvement in GIST and why GIST links to the work of your institution.

I have worked as a member of two task teams since 2019—statistical literacy and e-learning. When I first joined GIST, I was the coordinator of the Training and Development Department within the National School of Statistical Sciences (NSSS) at IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística). We developed a lot of e-learning products and were also focused on statistical literacy projects, so there was a strong link to GIST. I have since changed positions, working as technical assistant to the director of NSSS, representing the school in the projects of the UN Big Data, also connecting to the academic community and our formal education offers.

How would you position your institution in terms of statistical training providers in the nation?

We envision becoming the reference for the national statistical system and we are increasingly occupying that position. Institutes from other municipalities and countries have come to learn from our courses. For example, we have a survey skill development course. At the end of the course, students go to the field and develop household surveys. The course came from Canada in 1997, and we adapted it for Brazil. Hearing of our success, other countries have come to us in order to develop something similar, so we are also a reference in statistical training, especially for Portuguese-speaking African countries.

How would you address training needs for your own staff?

We have revolutionized capacity-building needs assessment in the past years. Before 2016 we sent a form and the departments returned with their needs. No questions were asked, it was not really a needs assessment. They thought of the solution before thinking of the problem really. From 2016 up to last year we worked on improving the approach. We started talking to the managers, then to staff members, asking them, trying to learn more about the real gaps in terms of performance, thinking of what we want to achieve and what we had, also linking it to the strategic objectives of IBGE. We simplified the questionnaire and took a more qualitative approach. Then on the subject matter, we asked detailed follow up questions to understand the exact needs rather than a general topic.

We received around 800 responses, and through further assessment reduced it to a list of 200 needs. The list changed people's mindset as it indicated that capacity-building is not always necessary. Sometimes the problem is in the way work processes are organized, so the solution requires changes in the management of the processes. Other times it's a matter of knowledge management; the transmission of information may be disrupted because someone retires and knowledge is lost.

We needed to make our list more effective and concise, however, so we invited representatives from different directories to discuss how to address everybody's needs in a unified way. People from various departments often discussed the same topics in Big Data, for example, and, in a magic moment, we arrived at one solution from working together on ten different needs. It was a significant achievement, and it worked well. For me, it was like a goodbye because I was one of the leaders, and I was leaving the department.

Do you have trainings that focus on engagement with users?

We actively engage with users, for example with decision makers, people from government looking for information or partnerships. We also interact with media all the time. We have therefore developed courses for our IBGE staff on how to engage with the users. Two focus on public policy, evaluation and planning respectively, for these, half of the participants are internal and the other half from other institutions who interact with us. A third course is on engagement with the media.

For users, we have a course on how to handle the databases of IBGE, and our system to create tables out of these. This is targeted towards researchers, journalists and the general public that deal with data and want to understand how our databases work and how they can extract relevant data. The dissemination department of IBGE also leads a project to help increase statistical literacy among school children and teachers, called IBGE Educa. We are also promoting this through GIST



What kind of collaboration would you see that can develop together with other members?

There are many areas that interest me. As we talked about, an area that really interests me are needs assessments. For me, it's always something we need to keep studying and are struggling to achieve, so I would like to share our experience and listen to how others approach the matter. There are also many new developments in how trainings are provided, I'd like to continue sharing experiences on e-learning formats and training of trainers, for instance, in the context of training large groups of people, including enumerators. Statistical literacy is also an interesting topic, we really consider this as part of our mandate to help people consume our data, and generally understanding what data means and how to be critical to numbers presented to them.

We value statistical literacy in the Brazilian NSO and consider it a part of our obligation to society, including those that aren't usually involved in statistical literacy. We are not only data producers, we have a responsibility to prepare people to use and benefit from our data. I am pleased with the task teams of which I am a part and, if I have time, I would like to join other task teams, like the needs assessment team, which would be profitable for exchanging ideas.

This participation in GIST is a pleasure for me and it's important for NSSS as it's a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and do some benchmarking.

Some of the courses that IBGE offer can also be found on UN SDG:Learn (all in Portuguese)

 <p>FACE-TO-FACE</p> <p>Survey Skills Development Course Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics</p> <p>SDG17 SDG17: Systemic Issues Statistics Latin America and the Caribbean Portuguese</p>	 <p>SELF-PACED E-LEARNING</p> <p>Fundamental Principles of the Official Statistics Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics</p> <p>SDG17 SDG17: Systemic Issues Statistics Latin America and the Caribbean Portuguese</p>	 <p>FACE-TO-FACE</p> <p>Social indicators for public policies and programmes Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics</p> <p>SDG16 SDG17 SDG17: Systemic Issues Statistics Latin America and the Caribbean Portuguese</p>	 <p>FACE-TO-FACE</p> <p>Evaluation of public policies and programmes Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics</p> <p>2030 Agenda SDG16 SDG17 SDG17: Systemic Issues Statistics Latin America and the Caribbean Portuguese</p>
---	---	--	---

UN SDG:Learn spotlight e-learning course



A platform with learning materials from SESRIC

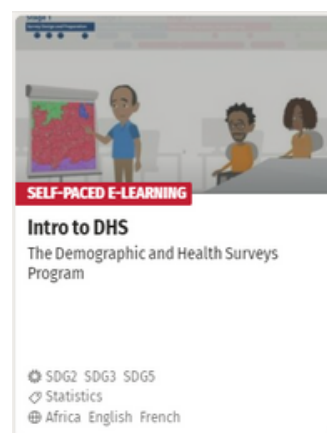
A recent addition to the [UN SDG:Learn](#) platform is information about and a link to SESRIC’s flagship statistical skills development program. The “SESRIC Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme” aims to identify statistical needs and capacities of NSOs and enable exchange of experts among OIC countries by implementing different types of activities (i.e., training courses, technical missions, webinars, workshops, etc) in order to strengthen their NSSs. Many of the exchanges and learning materials are afterwards posted on the platform with open access for everyone who wants to explore.

Learning materials are available in Arabic, English and French

E-learning courses offered by Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)

The Demographic and Health Surveys program (DHS) offers a number of courses. Many of these have now also been added to [UN SDG:Learn](#) to reach additional audiences. As some of the visuals on this page show, there is a large variety of courses available. They include an Introduction to the DHS Program, DHS Dataset Users, Essential Reading and Understanding DHS Program Tables, Essential Statistical Concepts for Understanding DHS Program Data, Introduction to Nutrition Indicators in DHS Surveys.

The targeted audience is those interested in research and analysis related to demography, public health, economics, sociology, or other social sciences and those who are planning to use DHS data, such as academics or students, or staff conducting policy or program-oriented research.





Getting to know GIST members:

The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

Please describe your involvement in GIST and why GIST links to the work of your institution.

SESRIC is a founding member of GIST and has been a task team member in addressing NSOs' needs since its establishment. SESRIC plays an important role in strengthening and enhancing the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries for them to produce better national statistics and therefore assist policymakers in implementing better national policies and plans. In this connection, we provide a substantial contribution to strengthening the technical capacities of the NSOs of OIC member countries and also acts as a networking institution between the institutions providing assistance and the beneficiaries. Due to the pandemic outbreak, we have converted everything into virtual mode, and now reach a wider audience.

How would you position your institution in terms of statistical training providers in the region?

SESRIC, through its StatCaB programme, collects information from NSOs of OIC countries through a questionnaire available in three official languages of the OIC (i.e., English, Arabic, and French), assessing their needs and capacities and matching these. The programme is constructed on the south-south cooperation principles as we facilitate the transfer of statistical knowledge of our member countries to others by organising short-term statistical training courses, technical missions, workshops, and more recently, online activities. The training providers are from the NSOs of our member countries who indicate their readiness to provide the training(s). We act as a mediator and a facilitator. When matching, we consider their preferences, languages used, socio-economic development levels, geographical proximity, and equitable regional distribution of the OIC countries. We also cooperate frequently with fellow international organizations, including the UN.

How would you address training needs for data users to ensure people are being sufficiently trained to interact with policymakers and the general public?

We facilitate training for the benefit of NSOs, but some of our member countries are taking proactive steps to reach wider audiences and inviting other stakeholders. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have held trainings in a virtual format that broadens the scope of the audience.

What kind of collaboration would you see that can develop together with other members?

In the past, we have collaborated with other GIST members, such as UNSD, Paris21, FAO and UN regional commissions to develop training series. For example, we held workshops on statistical coordination within the NSSs and 2020 round of population and housing censuses with UNSD and we worked with FAO to examine food imbalances and food insecurity experiences.

One area we would like to explore further is how to better engage in the virtual format. It has brought more accessibility to more people, but the challenge is measuring knowledge acquisition and maintaining contact with our trainees. There are many strategies in the literature, but they require resources to support instructional designers for the time needed to develop things such as e-learning modules. We would also like to work with the task team on statistical literacy to tackle issues regarding regional audiences. While we have limitations as a regional institution, we are trying our best to engage more people and to fill as many statistical training gaps as we can. We hope to work with other members and are always willing to share our experiences with them.

What materials would you like to share with other GIST members?

We have uploaded our StatCaB Reference Materials Repository information to the UN SDG Learn system under "Microlearning" (also also referenced on the previous page).

Upcoming events

The GIST will as every year of the UN Statistical Commission hold its Annual meeting. A side-event promoting the work of GIST is also planned. Please stay tuned for more information on these events.

Members of the GIST have also submitted proposals and been accepted for sessions at the UN World Data Forum, the 64th ISI World Statistics Congress and the IAOS conference in Zambia in 2023.



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/>

FOLLOW US:

TWITTER: @UNDataForum or @UNStats

YOUTUBE: UNStats

HASHTAGS: #GIST #UNStatLearn

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

FILL OUT THE FORM, [HERE](#).



United Nations

**DESA
Statistics**