

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL
HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE CARIBBEAN

Statistical literacy

An enabler of statistical
capacity development
in the Caribbean

Shirelle Floyd
Iskuhi Mkrtchyan
Abdullahi Abdulkadri



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Shirelle Floyd
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Abstract

This study reviews the level of statistical skills and competencies of staff of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the Caribbean as a critical step in enhancing the statistical capacity of National Statistical Systems (NSSs) of the subregion. It is important to take stock of the skills gaps that exist at the NSOs and the level of statistical literacy of NSO stakeholders in ministries, departments, and agencies of government. As producers and users of official statistics, NSO stakeholders' understanding of data and statistics is key to evidence-based decision making. In general, improving statistical literacy among the Caribbean population will contribute to a better understanding and use of statistical data by all users, including businesses, mass media, civil society, academia, and the ordinary citizen. Building on discussions of statistical literacy in national policies and regional frameworks such as CARICOM's Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS), this study explores statistical literacy and competencies at the NSOs using self-reported responses of NSO staff to a structured questionnaire that focused on technical expertise of staff and their perception of the statistical skills of their colleagues at the NSO and within the NSS. Results of the survey provide an encouraging indication that NSOs facilitate continuous education for staff to enhance their skills and are actively engaged in promoting statistical literacy among the general population. NSO staff perceive the staff of other government ministries, departments, and agencies with whom they interact on data needs and requests to have good statistical literacy. However, the study results are also indicative of the need to improve the statistical literacy of staff who do non-statistical work at the NSOs and suggest the prevalence of misuse and misinterpretation of data and statistics by journalists and the ordinary citizens.

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