EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON QUALITY IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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Do policymakers get training in statistics? A cross-country study

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Intro & Motivation

- Statistical literacy is important for evidence informed decision-making
(Anderson et al., 2014; Berndt et al., 2021 Gigerenzer et al., 2007; Jenny et al., 2018; Jindal et al., 2021; Monahan, 2007; Wegwarth, 2015; Windishet al., 2007)

- Policymakers often make decisions impacting a wide array of domains, including resource allocation and redistribution and are directly accountable for the outcomes
(Reeves and Chiang, 2018; Umbach, 2022; UNECE, 2014)

- No evidence of what gets covered in policymaker training programes'

- Leverage centralised policymaker training

Literature

(UNECE, 2014; Proden 2021; Umbach 2022; 2023)

Core competencies of policymaking (statistical literacy, data literacy)

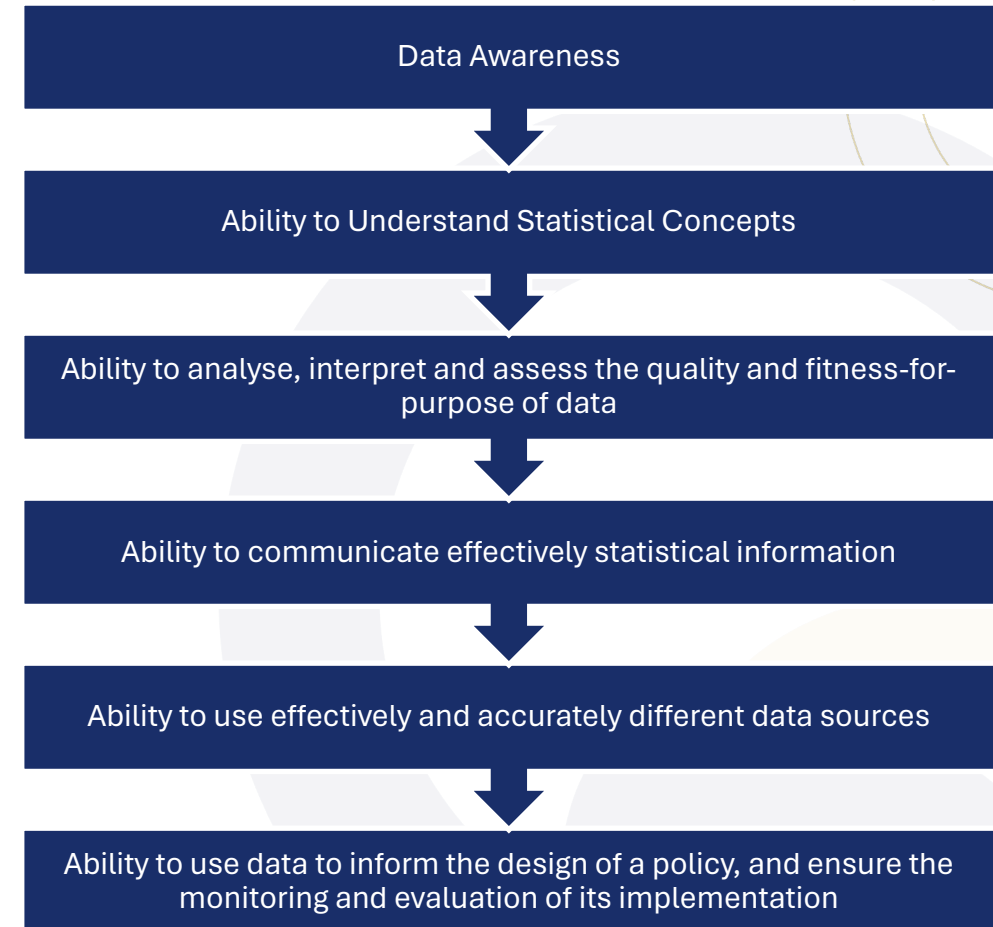Political nature of statistical literacy in policymaking

Behavioural aspects on statistical literacy (e.g. statistical anxiety)

Core Data Competencies

(UNECE,2014; Proden, 2021)

Data Awareness

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Ability to Understand Statistical Concepts

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Ability to analyse, interpret and assess the quality and fitness-for-purpose of data

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Ability to communicate effectively statistical information

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Ability to use effectively and accurately different data sources

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Ability to use data to inform the design of a policy, and ensure the monitoring and evaluation of its implementation

Research Questions

1. Is statistics included in the core training curricula of policymakers?
   - What specifically is covered and for which tracks?

2. To what extent is this aligned to the UNECE Framework?

3. How relevant is statistical literacy for policymakers?

Methodology

- Content analysis of training curricula of policymakers (public admin officials)

- Qualitative interviews with Key informants

Overview of training institutions

Attribute	Cameroon	DRC	CAR
Institution	Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature	Ecole Nationale d'Administration	Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature
Years of operation	1959	2014	1962
Duration of Training	24 months	12 months	6 months
Prerequisites	Masters Degree	Masters Degree	NA
Training Methodology	In-person	In-person	In-person
No of Trainings	7	1	1

Results

- Reviewed 181 subjects, with 130 from Cameroon, indicating a specialized training approach compared to DRC and CAR.

- No foundational statistics courses included in the curricula of the three countries, highlighting a systemic educational gap.

- **Curricula in Cameroon**
  - Despite the lack of introductory courses, curricula in fields like economics and finance incorporate applied statistical methods.
  - Features diverse training tracks but lacks broad-based foundational statistics.

Results

- High level of data awareness

- Discrepancy is statistical literacy among policymakers

- Varying relevance of statistics for professional roles

- Consultants are hired for statistical work

- *Students entering programs are expected to have pre-existing foundational statistical skills.*

Conclusion

- Without robust statistical training, policymakers are potentially less equipped to interpret and utilize data effectively, undermining their ability to make informed decisions.

- The reliance on external expertise for tasks involving complex statistical analysis and economic modeling indicates a lack of internal capacity, which could impede sustainable development and transfer of skills.

- The diversity in educational backgrounds, with a substantial proportion of administrators having non-quantitative training (notably in law), further complicates the uniform application of data-driven decision-making principles across various governmental departments

Next steps

- Develop survey

- Roll out to training institutions in Europe and Asia (Switzerland, Singapore, Pakistan, South Africa)

Questions & Feedback

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