



Statistical Capacity Needs in the Caribbean

Leveraging lessons learnt for statistical capacity development (SCD) for effective Environment Information Systems

Dr Gale Archibald
Head, Statistical Services
Unit OECS Commission

Reflections from the UN Data Forum 2021

Have we been going about
capacity development **the
wrong way?**

Where to start first? Identifying
the **leverage points** of **effective**
capacity development

SCD in the Caribbean: *the wrong way?*

- **Definition:** capacity was interpreted as training;
- **Target recipients:** always the NSO;
- **Approach:** transactional rather than strategic; not linked to multi-year plan or NSDS; or a capacity development plan;
- **Identifying needs:** requested during regional meetings; tied to a partner-initiated statistics project (*e.g UNICEF's MICS*); timed with a statistical undertaking (*e.g population census*);

SCD in the Caribbean: *the wrong way?* cont'd

- **Focus:** used to be narrowly focused on data collection and compilation for surveys and censuses (*economic and social dimensions*); and included supply of IT equipment and software;
- **Modality:** in-person regional events; one to three weeks duration; facilitated with consultancies and TA from IDPs; south-south sometimes used;
- **Effectiveness:** low ROI: trainees not appropriate; budget mostly travel costs; little or no application on the job; no assessments and peer reviews;

Rethinking SCD in the Caribbean: *leverage points*

- **SDGs**: the structure of the 2030 Agenda (*domains, tiers, partnerships*) and SAMOA Pathway espoused the imperative for **holistic approach** for data production and dissemination;
- **COVID 19**: the pandemic highlighted the weak elements in the NSS; and demonstrated the importance of **communication, advocacy, format and use of data**;

Rethinking SCD in the Caribbean: *leverage points cont'd*

- **Big Data:** the prominence of voluminous and high frequency, high velocity unstructured data in the ecosystem, portend for a threat to structured official data; but also offers **many opportunities**;
- **Rise of the “data scientist”:** posing as a threat to the official statistician and ushers the imperative to **rethink skills, knowledge, tools, techniques and partnerships**;

Rethinking SCD in the Caribbean: *leverage points cont'd*

- **SCD frameworks:** definition, performance measures (*e.g. WB SCB index*); assessment tools (*e.g. TASC; FDES:ESSAT*); guidelines (*e.g. PARIS21*), pointing to need for **coordination, consultation, compliance**;
- **National development plans:** now more than ever countries are responding to the imperative for **national development plan or strategy** (*esp. SDG mainstreamed*), a companion NSDS is necessary;

Summary of capacity needs

- **Institutionalise** foundational high-level elements – laws, policy; including for freedom of information;
- **Design** national development strategy (*SDG mainstreamed*), with a sub-strategy for environment sustainability;
- **Produce** an NSDS and companion capacity development programme (see *PARIS21 Capacity Development 4.0*);
- **Establish** a national arrangement for environment statistics (*public, private, NGOs, CSOs*);

Summary of capacity needs *cont'd*

- **Create** a professional development and training programme for environment statisticians and subject matter specialists;
- **Undertake** a programme of continuous capacity assessment of the NSS (ESSAT);
- **Publish** knowledge products that use environmental statistics and indicators;
- **Design** an advocacy and communication plan that promotes and educates the importance of measuring environment sustainability – children youth, women; businesses and so on;



SCD implications for a strong EIS

- **Data producers** (MDAs) should receive the support to improve the **quality and comparability of** their respective data and information (e.g *survey, census, administrative; spatial*);
- **Data providers** (e.g *individuals, households, NGOs, businesses*) should be provided the **purpose, assistance and means** to participate in the availability of environmental data and information;



SCD implications for a strong EIS *cont'd*

- **Capacity to produce disaggregated data** by **(vulnerable)** groups/cohorts and location (*geographical; rural/urban*) so that interventions give *voice to the voiceless, leaving no one behind*;
- **Capacity to disseminate data and information:** all relevant MDAs have an obligation to contribute to an EIS by allowing **equal access to information** in several formats (*written, visual, audio, electronic*);



Statistical Capacity Needs in the Caribbean

Leveraging lessons learnt for statistical capacity development (SCD) for effective Environment Information Systems

Dr Gale Archibald
Head, Statistical Services
Unit OECS Commission