2018 Workshop on the Dissemination and Communication of Statistics: Conclusions and outcome

Key items identified for future work included:

- Brand explained – what is it, how do you build and maintain it?
- Cases studies on issue management (crises, misuse of data, etc.)
- Internal communication, examples of good practice
- Building the communications function (skills, training, structure, etc.)
- Actively engaging and partnering with different audiences
- Understanding your audiences and how to evolve your products for them
- Making communications a strategy priority in your organization
- Showcasing failures
- Case studies on complex communication challenges
- Measuring success and impact
- Personas

Session 1: Communications Environment

The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- Good data is no longer enough; we are moving to sound bite statistics, where simple messages are important.
- Finding ways to increase trust in statistics is necessary.
- Many people think that the enemy is fake news, but what if people don’t want the truth? How does this affect statistical organisations?
- In addressing data misinterpretation, it is interesting to share experiences from other countries, including reliance on partners to counter incorrect information and mitigation plans.
- Share tips on how to encourage statisticians to become better communicators.
- How to measure our success and impact in times of changing communications and make sure people understand and remember our data? It is interesting to think about what success looks like.
- How to measure policymakers’ use of statistics?

Session 2: Strategic Communications

The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- Share strategies, guidelines, and concrete examples on communications, more specifically about social media and the responsible use of social media.
- Explore partnerships with the media: experiences, pitfalls, contingencies.
- Good communication requires two-way engagement with external people, more listening to external conversations/events.
- NSOs could report back on the successes and lessons learnt from their campaigns/strategies.
- How to use and recruit statistics ambassadors? How to choose and train specialists?
- Training session on visualizations by an expert.
- How to manage crisis situations beyond just planning? In future, have exercises on crisis communication and share crisis plans.
- Translating strategy into culture change – how to change internal culture, share ways staff can reinforce the communication message.
- Importance of internal communication for buy-in: statisticians seeing their role as communicators, consistent messaging, image/branding.
- How communication sits in the organization chart and how to design optimal communication teams?

Session 3: Broadening the Target Audience

The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- Learning about personas and usability tests through case studies. This could include their development and use, selling them internally, practical examples of how they can be used.
- Strategies and techniques to identify and segment audiences.
- How to evolve products to suit new audiences? It is important to match product to audience for maximum impact and effective use of resources.
- Creating specific messages to targeted channels.
- Adopt a proactive approach, communication starts where dissemination ends.