

Role of universities in statistical capacity building: the case of the department of applied statistics at national university of Rwanda

Abstract submitted to the Fifth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics – ICAS-V,
13-15 October 2010

By
Dr. JOSE A. Mathai¹

Abstract: In October 2004, the Department of Applied Statistics (DAS) was established at National University of Rwanda (NUR) to build the capacity for research and training in Applied Statistics. The National Statistical Institute Rwanda (NISIR) is instrumental in building statistical capacity in Rwanda and has been collaborating with DAS-NUR in all these years. The ultimate performance indicator of the overall objective of the establishment of the DAS is the national and international acceptance of national Rwandan statistics for policy making, monitoring, and evaluation of development, and the analysis of socio-economic situation.

As NSDS (National Strategy for the Development of Statistics) visualises the synergy between data producers and data users, it is important that statistical capacity building in a country dependent upon an effective system that trains the required manpower to handle the entire gamut of statistics in the way it is to be produced and used. There arises the role of University as training and research institution in producing the required manpower. The University has to attain the said objective for which it requires appropriate curricula, it has to train staff (of both national statistical agencies as well public and private sector organisations) and oversee that better data is produced and made use of for effective policy making. This paper intends to draw on the experience of DAS-NUR in this front in strengthening statistical capacity in Rwanda.

The paper also will elicit the new emphasis on quality of statistics in policy making and the need to improve the capacity of national statistical systems by way of: (i) highlighting the national statistical capacity building in Rwanda; (ii) assessment of various weaknesses and challenges facing national statistical system in Rwanda (iii) strengthening collaboration between different stakeholders in the national statistical system so as to have synergy in their operations.

The paper, therefore, is expected to contribute to the better understanding of the challenges facing national statistical system (statistical education, use of statistics in policy-making) in Rwanda and will seek to have an idea of how international statistics organizations and institutions can build capacities for statistics education which will pay way for better NSDS.

¹ Professor and Head, Department of Applied Statistics
National University of Rwanda
BP 117, BUTARE, Rwanda
Email (official): dasfem@nur.ac.rw
Email (personal): amjose13@nur.ac.rw
Phone: +25 0788539398
Fax: +25 0252 530121