



The Role of Statistics in Educating the Public

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Introduction

- Canada compared to the East Caribbean area
- Plan for this presentation:
 - Values of a national statistical office
 - What do we mean by ‘educating the public’?
 - What types of information are needed?
 - How should the public be informed?
 - Why not leave this role to others?



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Values of a national statistical office

- Impartiality and objectivity
- Professionalism
- Statistical quality: Relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence
- Resolute protection of confidentiality of individual respondent information
- Sensitivity to and minimization of burden on survey respondents





Educating the public

- Serve all citizens equally, fairly and impartially
- No exclusivity
- Serve the general public first and foremost
- Then focus on sub-groups such as:
 - Students
 - Businesses and non-profits
 - Foreign investors
 - Governments



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What information is needed?

- General economic and social ‘report cards’
- Responding to particular needs
 - Example of ‘hospital wait times’ in Canada
- Information for local communities
- Myth busting
 - Example of underground economy in Canada



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How should the public be informed?

- Working with the news media
- Daily statistical releases
 - All users should get any new information simultaneously
- Using the Internet to distribute information freely and fairly
- Conferences and workshops



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Why not leave this role to others?

- Statistical offices must help to analyze and interpret the information they produce because:
 - They have comparative advantage
 - This is a means to demonstrate impartiality
 - Statistical analysis within statistical agencies leads to better data relevance and quality



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Concluding remarks

- Statisticians intermediate information:
 - They collect detailed information from the public and convert it into aggregate information for the public.
 - They hold a mirror before society.
- Thanks for inviting me to this interesting conference in this beautiful land.



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