

Radical Statistics Conference – Good Data, Good Policy?

7th March 2015

Background Notes for Session on User Engagement

Statistics User Forum (SUF)

The Statistics User Forum is the successor to the long-established Statistics User Council and was set up to make sure that the needs and views of the statistical user community are properly taken into account.

The Statistics User Forum is administered by the Royal Statistical Society, but the User Groups that make up the Forum are independent, not part of the RSS. They will have been set up by different statistics user communities to share their experiences, learn about recent developments, discuss issues of concern and to engage with producers.

The Statistics User Forum brings representatives of user groups together to share their experiences, identify issues of common concern, and coordinate and represent the views of users on these issues. The activities of SUF are prompted by, and designed to respond to, the issues raised by the user groups.

Many of these user groups were set up prior to the establishment of SUF, and then affiliated to the Forum, in order to participate in these shared activities, in addition to their own activities within their specific areas of interest.

SUF aims to represent the statistical user community as whole and so, where there was no pre-existing user group representing a significant user community, SUF liaises with community to determine whether they are interested in setting up a user group, and to assist them in doing this.

For further information go to the 'Get Involved' tab on the RSS web page www.rss.org.uk and click on Statistics Users (SUF / SUN) on the drop down menu.

StatsUserNet (SUN)

The online work of SUF, and of many of the User Groups, is now carried out via the web site StatsUserNet (SUN) – <http://www.statsusernet.org.uk/> - This web site was set up to stimulate and facilitate engagement between groups of users, and also between users and producers of official statistics. The site carries news of interest to users, materials relating to relevant events, discussion forums and other facilities

For further information on the User Groups that participate in SUF, go to the Communities tab and then click on Browse All Communities in the drop down menu. For further information about SUF go to Statistics User Forum in this list of User Communities.

The SUF library within StatsUserNet holds SUF minutes and also some reports that have been submitted to StatSUG (Statistics Suppliers and Users Group). These include, for example, a paper highlighting concerns regarding Data Access Issues that was prepared by the Health Statistics User Group but raises issues that are relevant to the statistics user community as a whole.

Statistics User Executive (SUE)

The SUE is responsible to the RSS Council and includes both representatives of the Statistics User Forum and members appointed by the RSS Council for their knowledge of, or experience, within the statistics user community.

It presents the views of the statistics user community at meetings of StatSUG.

Statistics Suppliers and Users Group (StatSUG)

StatSUG meetings provide an opportunity for the National Statistician, and members of his senior team, to meet with the Statistics User Executive, and discuss current issues of concern. The meetings are chaired alternately by the National Statistician and the Chair of the Statistics User Forum

Other References

Royal Statistical Society: Stats Life - www.statslife.org.uk

UK Statistics Authority report on “Strengthening User Engagement”, published in June 2010.
https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/images_strengthening-user-engagement-final-report_tcm97-327951.pdf (or google search on title and UK Statistics Authority)

Blog from Nick Woodhill (Good Practice Team) following the SUF Conference on Poverty includes some thoughts on user engagement and the way forward

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/blog/2015/02/user-engagement/>

This blog relates to the ‘Poverty and deprivation: Statistics for Action’ conference, organised by the Statistics User Forum (SUF) with Royal Statistical Society, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Resolution Foundation as partners, which took place on Tuesday 10 February at the RSS in London. For more details see: <http://www.statslife.org.uk/events/eventdetail/349/15/>

See also press release following the conference raising concerns about proposed EU legislation
<http://www.rss.org.uk/Images/PDF/about/press-releases/2015-02-10-eu-proposals-threaten-uk-poverty-research.pdf>