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Implementation of other elements of work programme: Generations and Gender Programme

Report on the Generations and Gender Programme

This document summarizes the current status and developments during the course of 2011 of the Generations and Gender Programme, in which UNECE is a partner. It outlines the status of programme implementation, recent activities, and plans for future work.



GGP Progress Update

Summary report for the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing

The secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for administration of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), which is emerging as one of the leading data sources for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the UNECE region. For those countries which participate in the GGP, the survey and contextual data constitute a rich source of evidence for the evaluation of implementation of RIS/MIPAA, both in terms of impact on the lives of older persons and with respect to instrumental change (i.e. the existence of relevant policies). The data also provide empirical evidence for use in the Working Group's other outputs such as the policy briefs on ageing.

I. Survey implementation

A. First wave

First wave survey data from three additional countries (Estonia, Norway and Belgium) were made available online for download by researchers (www.ggp-i.org), bringing the total number of countries with accessible first wave data to 12 (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation). During 2011 the secretariat has successfully obtained signed contracts for data transfer from a further three countries (Lithuania, Australia, Japan) and transfer of another (Poland) is foreseen in the near future as soon as contract formalities are completed. Finally, two more countries have already collected first wave data: harmonization of Italy's data is in progress, while efforts to negotiate with the Czech Republic for transfer of their data to UNECE are ongoing.

B. Second wave

Nine countries have already collected second wave survey data. The UNECE secretariat's co-ordinating partners at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) are responsible for developing a harmonization protocol to ensure accuracy and comparability of survey data. This has been developed for the second wave and is now being applied to the available second wave data sets, with completion for Bulgaria, as the first country to be harmonized, expected in late 2011. Harmonization for other countries, including Germany, France and the Netherlands, is expected to be complete shortly thereafter.

C. Third wave

The UNECE secretariat continues to work with countries to ensure timely transfer of second wave and subsequent data sets to the harmonizing team. Wave 3 data collection



has taken place already in the Netherlands and Hungary, and is scheduled for 2011-2012 in Russia, Georgia and France. Japan is actively seeking funding for wave 3 and hopes also to conduct the survey in 2012 or 2013.

D. New and continuing participants

Two additional countries made concrete steps towards becoming GGP participants in 2011. Sweden obtained funding, conducted a pilot and plans to conduct the first wave of the survey during December 2011 or early 2012. Denmark has been actively seeking funding, has translated the survey instruments and has planned a pilot survey. The secretariat has continued liaising with other interested countries to promote their inclusion in the programme, providing support and communicating with potential funders as requested. The same is true for efforts to secure funding for further waves in already-participating countries. For example, political support from the UNECE Statistics division successfully helped the Austrian GGP team to secure funding for the second survey wave, and similar written support was recently provided to assist NIDI in an application for continued funding of their coordinating role.

II. Programme developments

A. Questionnaire redesign

As a partner on the GGP Consortium, the UNECE secretariat has been in a position to view and comment upon proposals for improvements to the survey questionnaire and its accompanying guidelines such as suggested survey modes, intervals between waves etc. The secretariat has also taken part in discussions regarding the future development, directions and funding of the programme, and has advocated for continuation of the region-wide focus rather than a process of narrowing towards a European Union-only perspective.

B. Contextual database

The contextual database is the second pillar of the GGP, complementing the survey micro data with national and regional data on health, pensions, education tax systems, unemployment, parental leave and benefits, demographic indicators, and other areas which determine the context in which demographic behaviour takes place. The contextual database is managed by colleagues at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, a member of the GGP Consortium. The UNECE secretariat has played a supporting role by liaising with the contextual database team and GGP country teams to identify responsible parties and expedite provision of data by the countries. There are currently ten countries with full data in the contextual database; two further countries have collected data which is currently being prepared for the online environment; and a further two are in the process of collecting the data.



C. Survey meta-data

Updates on country progress and programme implementation collected by the UNECE secretariat have been used by the GGP technical coordinators at NIDI in their development of an online environment for the provision of comprehensive survey meta data. Information such as sampling procedures, survey dates, panel attrition rates, data collection modes, interview length, etc., has been organized and added to the existing online analysis interface. This is intended to better equip users to make their own assessments of data quality, apply weights in their analyses, and provide information often required by peer-reviewed journals prior to publication. Hence the publication of research based on GGP data should now be easier.

III. UNECE role in the GGP

The secretariat's involvement in the coordination of the GGP has continued through representation (including delivering several presentations and reports) at meetings of the GGP Consortium Board and Advisory Board in Paris, February 2011. The secretariat provides the inter-governmental platform to discuss research in its relevance for policy-making in the UNECE region. In accordance with the strategies developed by the GGP Consortium Board, the secretariat has contributed to efforts to foster broader dissemination and discussion of its content and findings and to raise the profile of the GGP. This has included press releases and articles in the UNECE Weekly newsletter, and a written interview in the newsletter of France's Institut National D'Études Démographiques (INED). In addition, the secretariat staff attended and presented a paper on preliminary research findings on the topic of 'familism and fertility in Europe' at the first GGP users' conference held in Budapest in May 2011. In an expert working group regarding the MIPAA indicators, organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the UNECE Secretariat and INED were represented to discuss practicalities of using the GGP data as an important data source.

A. International Working Group

The secretariat has continued the management of the GGP International Working Group, which comprises national focal points from governmental institutions, national statistical offices, and population research institutes from countries participating in the Programme. The meetings of this working group are an important bridge between the Programme's coordinating bodies, on the one hand, and the implementing teams in participating countries, on the other hand. Activities during 2011 have included renewing the database of country contacts; obtaining and collating reports on country progress, and presenting this information to the GGP Consortium Board; and organization, joint chairing, and reporting to the 8th meeting of the GGP International Working Group in Budapest in May 2011¹. Representatives of 18 countries attended this meeting.

¹ Documents from this meeting can be found at <http://live.unece.org/index.php?id=18420>



B. Micro data access

UNECE is responsible for reviewing and processing applications to use the survey micro data. During 2011 (as of mid-November), data access has been granted for 96 new applications. This compares with 143 for the full year 2010. Applications continue to come primarily from researchers affiliated with western European institutions, although a smaller number from eastern parts of the ECE region, North America and other areas are also registered users.

C. GGP bibliographic database

A bibliographic database of published research articles, conference papers and academic dissertations which make use of GGP survey or contextual data continues to be maintained by the secretariat. Comprehensive searching of journals and conference programmes has brought the number of entries on this database to well over 500, of which more than 200 have been added during 2011. This database has now been transformed into a fully searchable web interface. The secretariat is now undertaking the task of adding keywords to the database to aid in the identification of relevant entries, as well as ongoing efforts to identify additional items for entry onto the database.

D. New data application procedure

In response to the feedback from users and the scientific community, and following requests of the GGP Consortium Board and the GGP International Working Group, the secretariat developed a new application form to facilitate a more streamlined procedure for researchers to apply for access to the survey micro data. Country teams were consulted in this process, and an amendment to existing data transfer cooperation agreements was prepared as well as a newly-drafted cooperation agreement for new and future signatory countries. The UNECE secretariat has coordinated the process of obtaining signed copies of these agreements from countries.

E. GGP pages on UNECE website

As part of the secretariat's efforts to redesign all the Population unit's website content, the GGP pages have been reorganized and new text has been prepared to better orient interested readers and potential data users. This also fulfils the request by the GGP Consortium to both UNECE and NIDI to update website content, clarify the distinct roles of the UNECE GGP webpages versus the ggp-i website, and ensure links between the two for users to easily find their way from the UNECE site to the site containing the data.



F. Use of GGP in policy discussion

Following the successful publication in 2010 of the report on ‘Intergenerational family relationships in ageing societies’ that arose from the Working Group’s 2009 in-depth discussion on the same topic, preparatory work has taken place in 2011 for a similar in-depth discussion and written report. The topic is ‘Quality of life and active ageing’. A consultant has been engaged to prepare a background paper on this topic, making use of the GGP data where relevant.