

Joint UNECE/WBI Workshop
National Gender Statistics Training Programmes
Geneva, 9-10 October 2008

Summary of discussions and lessons learnt

1. Background

1. The Workshop on National Gender Statistics Training Programmes was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 9-10 October 2008. The workshop was jointly organized by UNECE and the World Bank Institute within the framework of the World Bank-funded Programme to Improve Gender Statistics in National Statistical Offices in countries of Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.
2. The key objectives of the workshop were to present and discuss the newest training materials developed as part of the UNECE-WBI Programme, as well as to plan future activities of the Programme at the national and regional levels. The workshop also served as a venue to take stock of national gender statistics training activities, with a particular focus in countries of Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, and to promote the sharing of experiences and good practices among participating countries.
3. The work programme of the workshop consisted of the following topics:
 - a) Advocating for gender statistics
 - b) Planning for a national survey on violence against women
 - c) Measuring the gender pay gap
 - d) Presenting and communicating gender statistics
 - e) Planning for national events on gender statistics
4. Participants included staff from National Statistical Offices (NSO), relevant Ministries and research institutions from the following countries: Algeria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tunisia, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Representatives of CISSTAT, UNESCO, and UNFPA also participated in the workshop. A total of 40 participants attended the workshop.
5. The workshop was organized around a series of multimedia presentations and discussions with experts aimed at introducing key concepts and at reviewing key organizational and/or methodological issues relevant to the topics under consideration. Participants also worked in teams to review and discuss a variety of materials including common arguments undermining the relevance of gender statistics, pre-tabulated earnings data, and statistical press releases.

6. The sessions and activities enabled participants to gain practical skills with the issues being reviewed as well as to share their national experiences and to learn from each other. Outputs of these activities included arguments to advocate for gender statistics, national assessments of data needs, stakeholder analyses of planned national gender statistics activities, and strategies to improve the communication of gender statistics to the media. In addition, the representatives from countries participating in the UNECE-WBI Programme produced a more detailed plan of gender statistics activities to be implemented at the national level in 2009 (see appendix I).
7. Staff from UNECE and the World Bank Institute led the sessions and facilitated the implementation of the activities during the workshop. Dr. Henrietta Jansen, Team Leader, National Research on Domestic Violence against women in Turkey, and Mr. Mervyn Fletcher, Communication Officer, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS, participated as expert resource persons for the sessions *Planning for a National Survey on Violence against Women* and *Presenting and Communicating Gender Statistics*, respectively.

2. Summary of discussion

2.1 Advocating for Gender Statistics

8. Participants discussed different arguments commonly used to undermine the relevance of gender statistics, including:
 - a) Gender Statistics is not a statistical field. What is special about it?
 - b) Nowadays women have more opportunities as men. So, where is the problem?
 - c) Adding Gender will cost too much
 - d) All data is already disaggregated by sex
 - e) We do not want to overburden the respondents
 - f) The role of women is not an issue in our country. We have resource constraints and we need to concentrate on other areas
 - g) Business Statistics does not relate to Gender
9. Participants noted having heard several of these arguments in the past, particularly arguments a, b, and d. Among the strategies found to be effective by participants in promoting gender statistics vis-à-vis the above arguments were:
 - a) Secure top management support by bringing the discussion at the Director's level in the NSO
 - b) Make visible the gender differences with the available data
 - c) Improve understanding of data among users including media, policymakers, ministries, NGOs
 - d) Secure support from stakeholders outside of NSO, such as NGOs, ministries, the media
 - e) Increase gender awareness of NSO staff through training

2.2 Planning for a National Survey on Violence against Women

10. The participants from the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan shared their experiences and activities in preparation for the conduct of a national survey on violence against women (VAW). Both countries conducted, in 2007, national seminars on gender-based violence to review key concepts, discuss the experiences and approaches used by other countries, and, based on the review, to plan the work to be conducted in the country.
11. In the case of the Kyrgyz Republic, as one of the countries participating in the United Nations pilot project on Violence against Women, it has also initiated consultations with the UN country offices in order to conduct a national assessment of needs and to coordinate the work. The Kyrgyz Statistical Committee is currently developing a work plan, identifying the needs of the organization. In the case of Kazakhstan, a network of experts and users including NGOs, sociologists, psychologists, doctors, and lawyers has been set up to review a draft questionnaire and to plan the interviewers' training. It is expected that a pilot study will be conducted by the end of 2008.
12. In the ensuing discussion participants and presenters highlighted the importance of the following activities in the planning of a national VAW survey:
 - a) Secure high-level political support from the start by engaging policy-makers and other key stakeholders from the beginning
 - b) Set-up multidisciplinary teams that should include statisticians, sociologist, psychologists, doctors, lawyers, and other experts, to advice on survey design and interviewer training
 - c) Review other countries' experiences and technical materials
 - d) Review national and international laws and codes related to violence against women
 - e) Consider safety and ethical issues from the start and make sure they are an integral part of the methodology
13. Among the questions raised by participants were: whether the conduct of a national VAW survey falls under the mandate of the National Statistical Office; whether interviewers should also be expected to provide counseling, give advice, or report incidents of violence; whether it is possible to also capture violence in childhood; and how to secure support for stand-alone VAW surveys from the government.
14. It was noted that the role of the NSO in the conduct of a national VAW survey depends on national circumstances. In most countries, the NSO has a broad mandate to provide relevant statistics on social issues to inform policy. The NSO also follows strict methodological, ethical and confidentiality standards which are crucial in the conduct of VAW surveys. However, because of the sensitivity and complexity of measuring VAW it is important that other specialists be involved in the development of VAW surveys. Thus, in planning a national VAW survey, the NSO should put in place multidisciplinary teams involving various institutions including ministries of

Women's or Family affairs, Academic or Research Institutions, and professionals such as sociologist, psychologists, doctors, lawyers, and other experts, to advice on survey design and interviewer training.

15. Interviewer training is crucial to the ethical and safe conduct of a VAW survey. Training should be specialized and should cover counseling skills. However, interviewers should not give advice, counsel women, nor report incidents of violence. Rather, they should establish a safe interview environment conducive to disclosure of violence experienced by the respondent (good listener, non-judgmental, supportive) and know how to recognize and handle difficult and/or sensitive situations. An independent network of counseling services should be in place for interviewers to refer women should they wish to receive assistance.
16. It is very important that ethical and safety standards be maintained at all times during the conduct of a VAW survey. This often includes changing the name of the survey during the implementation. Questions should not be asked to children. Not only is this methodologically very difficult, but also carries important legal consequences. Rather, experiences of violence during childhood can be explored through the use of retrospective questions. Likewise, questions on violence should never be direct (ie. *have you experienced violence in the past year?*), but rather focus on specific behaviors (ie. hit, slapped, choked, etcetera).
17. Political will to conduct a stand-alone survey may take time, but it is important to recognize that planning for a national VAW survey is a step-by-step process.

2.3 Measuring the Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

18. Participants explored various methodological issues related to the calculation of the GPG. Through the exercise, participants noted the effects that different worker coverage (all employees, full-time employees, part-time employees) and income measures (hourly, monthly, annual) have on the estimates of the GPG.
19. Participants recognized that the GPG based on different income measures (hourly, monthly and annual) capture different aspects of the pay gap, and therefore, should be interpreted differently. The GPG based on average hourly earnings captures differences in pay due to the different jobs that women and men perform. By contrast, the GPG based on average monthly or annual earnings captures differences in pay due to differences in jobs as well as in working time.
20. Some participants expressed concern over the misinterpretation of the GPG among the general public. It was stressed that the GPG is not a measure of gender discrimination in pay. Rather it reflects the combined effects of job segregation, discrimination and various structural factors. Participant agreed that to improve understanding of this indicator it is important to present it in conjunction with other relevant indicators of participation in the labour market. In addition, there is a need to produce various estimates of the GPG for relevant sub-groups for example: by

occupation, sector, industry, status in employment, educational attainment, years in employment, etcetera.

21. Some participants noted the need to also consider the issue of gender inequality in the receipt of pensions due to the differences in the work trajectories of women and men (with women being more likely to have breaks in their work careers for family reasons) and in the legal ages at retirement.
22. A few questions were also raised regarding the accuracy of income reports in household surveys. It was noted that various methodologies have been developed to improve the reporting of income through the use of multiple income brackets. Similarly, it was noted that because the GPG is a relative measure, so long as women and men report their income similarly, this should not affect the estimates of the GPG.

2.4 Presenting and Communicating Gender Statistics

23. Participants discussed the challenges of communicating official statistics. At the outset, participants explored the differences between dissemination and communication of statistical data. It was noted that dissemination implies spreading statistical information by making it available on the Internet or in print. Communication, by contrast, implies imparting knowledge; that is, making statistics meaningful and ensuring it reaches the broadest audience possible.
24. Participants agreed that NSOs tend to focus more on dissemination and there is a need to better communicate the statistics being disseminated. This can help reduce misuse and misinterpretation of official statistics and improve the public perception of official statistics as accurate, independent and unbiased, leading to better respondent relations.
25. Strategies to improve the communication of statistical data were explored. Among these were:
 - a) Build relationships with the media to reach a mutual understanding and encourage the correct use of official statistics to inform the public.
 - b) Try to understand the journalists' perspective – “news” is something new, significant and that affects lives. Journalists receive hundreds of press releases so it is necessary to catch their attention with a good headline and lead paragraph.
 - c) Write press-releases that send a clear and simple message. Statistics alone are just numbers, communicating involves telling the story behind the numbers
 - d) Follow the writing style used by journalists: “inverted pyramid style” with the main findings first and details later in the text.
 - e) Conduct training for journalists to build their understanding of statistical concepts
 - f) Tailor dissemination products to audiences with different information needs
26. The discussion made it clear that communicating official statistics to the public should become a core activity of the NSO. When producing statistical outputs such as

publications, reports, fact sheets and press releases, attention should be given to highlighting the points that are relevant to the audience. The UNECE publications *Making Data Meaningful: a guide to writing stories about numbers* (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/>) and *Communicating with the Media* (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/media/guide/Contents.htm>) provide more information and guidance for NSOs.

2.5 Planning for national activities on gender statistics

27. Participants reviewed a few management tools to improve the planning of national activities on gender statistics. It was emphasized that in the conceptual phase of a project it is crucial to give appropriate consideration to: (a) scope of the project: what it will include and what it will not include; (b) stakeholder identification and analysis; (c) identification of milestones.
28. With regard to stakeholder identification, it was pointed out that these include all those institutions and individuals that may have an interest or link to the project, including potential project partners, the targeted participants, those who could benefit directly or indirectly from the project, as well as those who may challenge or disapprove of the project. A stakeholder analysis is useful because it can help:
 - a) Identify potential partners, supporters or spoke-persons for the project
 - b) Reduce duplication of activities (in cases where other individuals or institutions are planning or intend to plan a similar activities)
 - c) Manage expectations
 - d) Mitigate barriers
29. Some participants noted that in identifying key stakeholders it is important to think not only who can bring resources to the project but also what the project can offer to stakeholders. Likewise, it was noted that stakeholder analysis should aim at identifying specific individuals to contact early on in the planning of an activity.
30. Participants also reviewed a few key issues to consider in organizing and delivering a national training on gender statistics including: the need for the training, targeted audience, timing of the event, selection of the trainer or facilitator, gender balance in the selection of trainers, facilitators and participants, and the mode of facilitation.
31. It was noted that training for statisticians should be dynamic and should be aimed at facilitating the sharing of knowledge among participants. As experts, statisticians already bring a wealth of knowledge. The sessions and dynamics planned, thus, should be designed to enhance the skills of the participants and to learn from each other. In this regard, the choice of facilitator is very important. It should be a person regarded as neutral and independent by the participants. Activities should vary in format, including a mixture of exercises, lectures, brainstorming activities, sharing of experience, etcetera.

32. Some issues related to the organization of gender statistics training include carrying out a needs assessment prior to the training event to ensure that the training addresses the key issues specific to the country's needs. At the beginning of the training, it is important to set up clear objectives and activities that support the overall training objectives.

2.6 Planning for national activities in UNECE/WBI project countries

33. At the end of the workshop, participants from the UNECE/WBI project countries outlined in more detail the key gender statistics activities to be conducted in their respective countries in 2009. Appendix I summarizes the activities proposed by each participating country as well as the next steps agreed by UNECE, WBI and the country representative.

Appendix I: Summary of national activities on gender statistics to be conducted by UNECE/WBI Programme countries

Country	Suggested Activities	Dates	Next steps by		Comments/Remarks
			Country	UNECE	
Bosnia	-Workshop on Migration with a focus on gender issues. Target audience: ministries/agencies involved in the collection of migration statistics.	2009	-To send country assessment to UNECE by November. -To send contact information for UN project on Young People to UNECE.	-To review country assessment in order to better plan the activity -To get in touch with UN country offices to explore possible linkages with YP project.	-Some information is already available. A national assessment has already been done. -Would like to identify other partners interested in the project. -Would like to link project to UN national project on young people.
Kazakhstan	-Continue the work on Informal employment (LFS). Improvement of survey on informal employment with use of international experience (US consultant). -Possible study tour to ISTAT to learn about practical fieldwork in VAW.	2008 2008-2010	-Ready to send additional LFS data to consultant. -To send VAW project documents to UNECE by end November.	-To check with consultant if more LFS data is needed. -To coordinate with UNICEF/MICS work on incorporation of a VAW module in 2010 survey. -To send VAW questionnaire and project documents to ISTAT for comments and to plan activities (study tour, etc).	-Informal employment questionnaire needs improvement based on LFS data analysis. -Would like to include VAW module in 2010 MICS. The module has already been budgeted and some discussions have already been held with UNICEF/MICS people. Needs assistance communicating with UNICEF to make this happen. -Needs technical assistance (possibly from ISTAT) including to view fieldwork activities and to receive comments on the module and survey plans.

Country	Suggested Activities	Dates	Next steps by		Comments/Remarks
			Country	UNECE	
Kyrgyzstan	-Gender analysis of census data. -Development of VAW survey. -Creation of website on Gender statistics with dissemination purposes.	2008-2009	-To submit to VAW project document to UNECE, identifying NSO needs by end November 2008. -To review NSO work plan for next in order to identify gender statistics needs and feasible activities for 2009.	-To coordinate with UNFPA country office to avoid duplication of efforts. To review project document and identify next steps. -To work with NSO to identify feasible activities on gender statistics for implementation in 2009	VAW survey project currently being defined with UNFPA and UNDP. NSO needs technical assistance at all stages of project.
Tajikistan	-Pilot survey on informal employment. -Workshop/consultation with ministries and policymakers to present results of pilot survey on informal employment. -Training on VAW.	2009	-To write official document supporting work for informal employment pilot survey. To send document to UNECE by November.	-To review document on informal employment pilot survey and identify activities to implement. -To contact UNIFEM country office to discuss possible future activities on VAW.	Roundtable held with UNIFEM to define data needs on violence against women.
Uzbekistan	-General training on gender statistics. Possible audiences: interviewers working on multipurpose household survey; middle-level statisticians; or key users from ministries, media, policymakers. -Further work on VAW module.	May 2009	-To pick up 1 or 2 precise topics. To narrow the scope of training. -To send project document on VAW to UNECE by November.	-To review project document and identify possible activities to conduct in 2009. -To contact UNDP country office to discuss possible future activities on gender statistics.	Would like to review other country experiences with VAW surveys, particularly questionnaires and survey designs.