United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Workshop on Gender Statistics for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
Belgrade, Serbia
27-28 November 2017

Report

Note by the Secretariat

I. Organization and attendance

1.   This capacity-building workshop on gender statistics was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-Stat). The workshop was part of the United Nations Development Account project "Data and statistics" (10th tranche). Additional financial support was received from the UNECE Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation.

2.   The workshop was attended by participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan. UNFPA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CIS-Stat were also represented.

3.   The workshop took place immediately before the UNECE Work Session on Gender Statistics (29 November – 1 December).

4.   The agenda and the slides used in the presentations are available on the meeting page of the UNECE website[1].

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[1] unece.org/stats/documents/2017.11.gender.workshop

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II. Purpose

5.   The purpose of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia,

- to understand and explain the principles of measuring and valuing unpaid care work, including data and processing needs, methodological challenges and solutions, interpretation and policy relevance
- to produce gender-oriented indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Agenda, monitor the current status of indicator availability and identify areas for development
- to disseminate and communicate gender statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6.   The target audience was experts dealing with gender statistics in national statistical offices in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

III. Summary of proceedings

A. Valuing unpaid work

7.   Target 5.4 of the SDGs, 'Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work', was included as a component of the goal of gender equality due to the recognition that the majority of such work worldwide is performed by women, and that the contribution of such work to the well-being of individuals, families and societies is generally undervalued or taken for granted. Conventional statistics share some of the responsibility for this undervaluation, since the standard economic approaches of national accounts and employment statistics have been defined explicitly to exclude non-market production from their scope, thus grossly underestimating the economic contributions of women. This measurement gap can effectively be addressed by household satellite accounts that place a monetary value on unpaid work.

8.   This session began with an overview of the recently-published UNECE *Guide on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work*[2], which supports statistical offices in preparing household satellite accounts. The guide was presented by Dominic Webber of the United Kingdom's Office of National Statistics, who was the chair of the Task Force that developed it. Focusing on the main data collection and processing requirements, the presentation emphasized the interpretation of results, the importance and benefit of measuring and valuing unpaid work and its potential contribution to gender-responsive policymaking.

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[2] http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47511&L=0

9.   National experiences from the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan highlighted findings, challenges faced and lessons learned from efforts to measure time use and produce estimates of the value of unpaid work.

10.   A group discussion exercise aimed to identify the principal barriers that prevent the measurement and valuation of unpaid work being systematically included in the work programmes of national statistical offices, and potential means of overcoming them.

11.   Barriers identified were:

- limited financial resources
- limited human resources and capacities
- methodological or technical challenges
- low response rates in surveys
- low quality or infrequently collected data
- low demand from policymakers, and limited ability of stakeholders to interpret results, leading to a vicious circle of low demand

12.   Suggestions for overcoming these challenges included:

- identification of donors and partners
- increased regional and global cooperation
- harmonization of methods, not only in collection but also in analysis and communication
- use of new technologies and techniques to reduce data collection costs and respondent burden
- integration of time-use modules into labour force surveys
- more systematic analysis of user demand and enhanced dialogue with users and potential users
- improved communication of results, including analyses of data and explanations of their relevance, which should increase demand and strengthen the case for further collection

13.   Discussion of these many points revealed that user-producer dialogue and the ability to communicate with policymakers are among the greatest challenges as well as areas where future efforts could be most fruitful.

B.   Gender statistics in the Sustainable Development Agenda

14.   The aim of this session was to take stock of progress across the sub-region in translating into reality the gender-related aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and in particular, the production of adequate data to monitor the targets of SDG 5 through its 14 indicators.

15.   Countries were asked to provide information in advance of the workshop about their progress since the previous sub-regional workshop in May 2016, the challenges faced, and the particular data gaps identified. UNECE began the session with an overview of responses to these requests,

alongside self-assessments of 'readiness to report' conducted by several participating countries (see self-assessment template available on the UNECE wiki[3]), and an introduction to the *CES Roadmap on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals*[4]. Two presentations from CIS-Stat focused on specific aspects of the SDGs: discrimination against women, and the interaction of population ageing with gender issues.

16.   Presentations from Belarus and Tajikistan, and experiences shared by other participating countries, demonstrated that there has been very significant progress in the past year in statistical offices' involvement in the overall national SDG coordination processes and engagement with partners and stakeholders. The crucial role of statistics is becoming more widely recognized, which is raising the profile of statistics in general and sex-disaggregation of statistics in particular. Statistical offices are deeply involved in producing nationally-relevant indicators and plans. It was also evident from the discussions that gender focal points were well incorporated into these processes and well informed of their respective national situations and endeavours.

17.   Discussion among participants noted that there are persistent data gaps, especially for the measurement of time use and violence against women; that there remain significant challenges in terms of financial and human resources to undertake the necessary data collection and processing; and that multiple disaggregation, international comparability and application of standards continue to pose challenges. The session concluded by noting that SDG 5 is only one aspect of the broader arena of gender statistics. If managed well, the whole field of gender statistics should ultimately benefit from the attention and resources given to the SDGs.

C.   Dissemination and communication of gender statistics

18.   As with all statistics, gender statistics are only valuable to the extent that they are used, and this relies on effective dissemination and communication. This session showcased an example of best practice in communicating gender statistics with the general public through a 'Women and Men' publication, presented by Tina Žnidaršič of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, who described the processes of developing the publication, the rationale and communications principles behind it, and the dialogue and feedback used to ensure its effectiveness.

19.   National experiences in dissemination and communicating and interactive dialogue with users of gender statistics were shared by participants from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova. The importance of identifying stakeholders, and finding out and responding to their needs, was a recurring theme throughout the

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[3] https://statswiki.unece.org/x/AwKoBw

[4] http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47510&L=0

interventions. It is becoming increasingly clear that different users groups, with varying needs and levels of statistical literacy, cannot all be served by a single gender statistics product and that therefore publications, websites and databases must offer a multi-layered range of options suited to the different user groups.

20.   A practical exercise invited participants to identify key messages from data tables and suggest ways in which these messages could be communicated, debating the pros and cons of tabular, graphical and/or textual presentations.

21.   The session highlighted concerted efforts among participating countries to produce more user-friendly gender statistics publications and to engage users in dialogue. It was emphasized that the UNECE toolkit[5] is a valuable aid in such efforts. At the same time, discussions made clear that effective communication remains an important area for continued capacity development in gender statistics.

D.   Visit to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

22.   Workshop participants were invited to visit the premises of SORS, where the Mr Zoran Jancic, director of the sector for general affairs and data collection in the field, gave a welcome address. SORS representatives gave a presentation about the development of the latest 'Women and Men in Serbia' publication, explaining the user dialogue processes employed, and presented the DevInfo software and database used for disseminating socio-economic indicators.

IV.   Conclusions

23.   The workshop highlighted the important feedback loops between production, communication and use of gender statistics. These can be harnessed into a positively-reinforcing cycle, in which users who can easily access and interpret statistics generate demand for more and better data, which can in turn lead to improvements in the statistics produced. At the heart of this is the recognition that communication is part of the core business of statistical offices, rather than a marginal additional activity.

24.   The workshop was considered by participants to be a valuable opportunity for learning and for sharing knowledge and experience. The combination of presentations from invited experts, sharing of national experiences in participants' countries, and small group discussions and activities was found useful and effective.

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[5] https://www.unece.org/stats/gender/toolkit.html