

ANNEX 4: Improving statistics on gender Issues: The Philippine experience¹

1. Background

In 1993, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) embarked in the project, “Improving Statistics on Gender Issues” funded by the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in response to the offer of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP). The Project aimed to promote and develop more and better statistics on gender issues by working closely with national statistics in the following countries: India, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The project was organized to improve the availability of statistics on and sensitivity to gender issues in national statistical systems of these countries.

In the Philippines, the Project specifically focused on identifying the statistics and indicators needed to measure the achievement of national goals relating to gender issues: assessment of existing statistics; publication of a statistical handbook on women and men; and formulation of a national plan of action to address deficiencies and further improve the production of gender statistics in the country.

2. Implementation of the Project

2.1 Implementing Mechanisms

The NSCB implemented the Project with guidance from a National Steering Committee (NSC), chaired by the head of the NSCB, the Secretary General and Vice-Chaired by the Deputy Administrator of the National Statistics Office (NSO). The Project was given high-level support and cooperation by all concerned, made possible by involving the executive heads of major agencies as members of the NSC: (1) National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, the country’s national machinery for women; (2) National Economic and Development Authority, the country’s planning agency; (3) Development Concepts, Inc., a women non-government organization (NGO); (4) Women’s Action Network for Development, another NGO; and (5) PILIPINA, another women NGO.

The NSC provided direction, advice and guidance to the National Working Group (NWG) in the planning, coordination, and implementation of the project. The NWG tasked with the implementation of the project, was likewise headed by the NSCB through the undersigned and composed of representatives from the above- cited agencies. The NWG was backstopped by a project staff, composed of NSCB sector specialists and secretariat.

2.2 Activities and Scope

The scope of work and activities of the project included the following:

- (a) Identification of the most urgent concerns regarding the situation of women relative to that of men based on official documents on national goals on gender issues;
- (b) Identification of statistics and indicators needed on these concerns and determination of the priority data set, with the aim of presenting them to a wider audience;
- (c) Participation of core members of the NWG in regional workshops organized by UN ESCAP;

¹ A brief paper prepared by Lina V. Castro, Director, Social Statistics Office, National Statistical Coordination Board for the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Gender Statistics, UN New York, December 12-14, 2006

- (d) Organization of a series of workshops to solicit ideas on priority gender concerns from a wide audience and to promote interaction and awareness among users and producers of data on gender issues;
- (e) Production of a popular statistical booklet which provides an overview of the status of women relative to men in the country;
- (f) Preparation of a report on the weaknesses and deficiencies of existing data systems on gender issues and recommendations on how to address these data gaps; and
- (g) Formulation of a national plan of action to improve statistics on gender issues.

3. Project Outputs

The Project accomplished and produced the following:

- (a) Conduct of First User-Producer Workshop obtaining broad consensus on priority gender concerns and indicators;
- (b) National report on Priority Gender Concerns including list of required statistics and indicators;
- (c) Conduct of second round of user-producer workshop obtaining comments on the draft Statistical Booklet on Women and Men in the Philippines;
- (d) Production of the **Statistical Handbook on Women and Men in the Philippines** (final version);
- (e) Launching and dissemination seminar of the Statistical Handbook (English version);
- (f) Printing and dissemination of the national language version of the Statistical Handbook: **Kababaihan at Kalalakihan sa Pilipinas: Isang Estatistikal Hanbuk;**
- (g) Participation in the Regional Workshops for Core Members of the NWG at the UN ESCAP;
- (h) National report on the assessment of official statistics and indicators on priority gender concerns;
- (i) A Report on the national plan of action to improve statistics on gender concerns

4. Lessons Learned, Other Prospects

4.1 Importance of User-Producer Workshops and Dialogues

The need to provide orientation on basic statistical concepts and indicators: e.g. unemployment, labor force participation rate, etc., was deemed important by users coming from NGOs who had little or low appreciation of statistics during the first round of workshops/dialogues. The tendency of users to add on to the list of indicators was a reflection on the inadequate knowledge on how the statistics are derived by the statistical system and the intricacies involved in generating such indicators. The potential users, on the other hand, were sometimes unaware of the amount of other statistical information that are regularly produced by the statistical system, and at the time, remain underutilized. The NSCB saw the need for providing a forum or avenue to have continuing interaction between the users and producers of data to assure that the producers generate statistics, which are useful and relevant to the users.

4.2 Appreciation of the Statistical Handbook

The publication produced was the first of its kind, in a format that was user-friendly and handy, thus gaining wide appreciation and popularity, not only from the executive policy-makers, NGOs, the academics and the public, but the legislators as well. The NSCB had to re-order reprints of the publication

to meet the demand. The statistical handbook was used as reference material in various training programs/seminars.

4.3 Assessment and Data Gaps

As exemplified in the report on weaknesses and deficiencies, one of the major limitations identified in the assessment was the failure to collect gender-specific information for certain sectors, e.g. environment, women in the media, etc. Though improvements were being made for certain sectors, there are problems related to measurement and comparability. The most problematic statistics fall under special concerns such as, violence against women and children (VAWC), sex trafficking and prostitution, peace and human rights, etc. The evaluation provided a good basis for identifying the problem in data generation, which led to formulating solutions/proposed recommendations in a more organized manner. The national plan of action was formulated along this line.

4.4 National Plan of Action

In view of the country's limited resources, considerable emphasis was put upon the better utilization of existing data generation systems in the PSS. The program of action developed by the Project outlined major activities in terms of the following:

- 1) Improving the use of existing statistics (e.g. further processing of sex disaggregated data, improvement of survey or administrative-based forms, etc.)
- 2) Improving the concepts, methods and classifications (e.g. defining domestic violence, etc.)

The NSCB for its part, committed to serve as the over-all coordinator in terms of policy- setting, in the improvement of the data generation systems on gender statistics.

5. Gains, Challenges and Further Opportunities

Implementing the Project was a major breakthrough in the PSS in improving the availability of statistics on and sensitivity of these statistics to gender issues. The production of the popular statistical handbook on women and men in English and the national language were major achievements.

5.1 Institutionalization of the Production of the Statistical Handbook on Women and Men

As part of its commitment to provide relevant, timely, and user-friendly information on gender issues which are deemed important to planners, researchers and other users in gender and development advocacy, plans, programs and policies, the NSCB institutionalized the preparation, publication and dissemination of the Statistical Handbook on Women and Men in the country (even after the Project was completed). In 1999, the second edition was released featuring new and additional tables, made possible through the data support of agencies in the PSS. At the national level, the Handbook is being produced every three years.

Demands for gender statistics at the sub-national level, also emerged, with some NGOs and other organizations committing to provide financial and technical assistance to the NSCB Regional Divisions (RDs) for the production of the Handbook to contain data at the sub-national level. The national-level publication became the model. As a result, the Handbook was prepared, launched and printed in different periods at the various NSCB RDs.

5.2 Setting Statistical Policies thru NSCB Resolutions

In order to make available a comprehensive set of information which is gender sensitive and will serve as sound basis for formulating plans aimed at improving the status of women, as well as for monitoring the impact of such plans and programs, the NSCB issued NSCB Resolution No. 8, directing all government agencies to promote gender concerns in the production and dissemination of statistics for planning and policy-decision making purposes.

5.3 Gender database

The database on gender statistics has also been made available in the NSCB website accessible to various on-line users to reach a much wider set of clients and other users of these datasets. This is also in keeping with NSCB's commitment to implement the "Government Statistics Accessibility program", a framework and mechanism for the PSS to respond effectively to demands for statistics on a sustained basis and make statistics and services accessible to various users and in various modes of data dissemination. Although this activity was initially done at the NSCB Central Office, to date, the gender databases have also been developed at the various RDs as discussed in section 4 of the Questionnaire.

5.4 Inter-Agency Committee on Gender Statistics

As the highest policy and coordinating body on statistical matters in the country, the NSCB is mandated to create inter-agency committees on statistics, to resolve statistical issues and to address emerging concerns to be able to provide relevant, reliable, and timely data for planning and programming purposes. In 2002, the NSCB Executive Board approved the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Gender Statistics through NSCB Memorandum Order 3, series of 2002, tasked among others, to formulate measures that will improve the system of collection and dissemination of sex disaggregated data at the national and local levels; formulate measures to ensure that the data requirements of the Statistical framework on GAD indicator system and the Statistical Framework related to the protection of women and children are being compiled by all concerned agencies; and monitor the over-all development of gender statistics in the country.

At present, the inter agency committee serves as a regular venue and mechanism to discuss problems and come up with recommendations on the improvement of gender statistics. It is a collaborative effort of both users and producers of gender statistics in the country under the leadership of the NSCB.

6. Final Note

As a final note, much remains to be done, and on this, the NSCB believes that the production of gender statistics in the country remains the responsibility of the national statistical system. This will continue to be a collaborative process between the statisticians as producers, and the users as the policy-makers and program implementers and the NSCB will be on the lead to foster efforts among all concerned.