

Capacity building in Central Asia and Eastern Europe

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1. Introduction

There is a need for building the capacity of national statistical systems to produce and disseminate gender statistics. In many regions, data for analyzing differences in the role men and women play in society remains limited, incomparable or undervalued. The establishment of definitions continues to be a concern and there are methodological issues still to be addressed.

In recent years, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has had a focus on building the capacity of member countries to produce and use high-quality gender statistics. This approach has involved a range of initiatives, including establishing networks, developing tools and resources and training producers and users of statistics.

Although many goals have been achieved and progress has been made in the successful measurement of gender differences in the UNECE region, there is still more work to do. Operating in a rapidly changing environment means we must review our approach and be willing to adapt. Fora, such as this Global Forum on Gender Statistics, provide an opportunity to take stock, to learn from others and identify ways to work together.

This paper aims to share some of what has been learned in the UNECE region from our experience with capacity building. It provides an overview of the tools we have developed and our perspective on the important ingredients for successful capacity building for gender statistics.

2. Methods and tools for capacity building

The UNECE has taken a broad approach to capacity building by establishing a network of national statistical offices, international organizations and independent experts, and conducting activities to address specific needs. Our experience has relied upon working closely with key partners, such as the World Bank Institute (WBI) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In 2003, we embarked on a process that has culminated in a major joint project with WBI to engender national statistical systems for knowledge-based policy formulation in target countries of the UNECE region¹. The funding provided by the WBI has allowed the development of tools and resources and to make progress in building the capacity of these countries. A brief description of recent capacity building activities follows.

A network of focal points

A network of Gender Focal Points has been established in the statistical agencies of each of the 56 UNECE member countries. This network provides an infrastructure which creates momentum in work on gender statistics. The focal point contacts are used to understand the needs for developing gender statistics in the region and their expertise assists us with capacity building activities. They attend regular UNECE meetings on gender statistics thus enabling working relationships to develop within the group and the creation of bi-lateral networks.

Task Force (TF) on Gender Sensitization

The TF acts as a steering group for UNECE work on gender and members are drawn from the Gender Focal Point network and other experts. This group plays a key role in advising the UNECE on developments in gender statistics at the country level. They also provide a pool of experts to assist with the development of training tools and resources.

Country work plans

Target countries are asked about their gender statistics capacity building needs each year. This information serves as a basis for development of the UNECE annual work programme and informs the UNECE of individual countries current and future priorities in gender statistics.

Training workshops

Workshops are an important aspect of the UNECE's capacity building strategy. They have several goals: (a) to increase awareness of gender statistics and educate participants in issues of data collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and potential impacts on policy; (b) examine issues in the country or sub-region, such as analyzing data availability and development of survey modules; and (c) providing training skills to local trainers who can then repeat the capacity building exercises within their own offices.

These workshops are developed to meet the needs of the participants. Topics covered have included: measuring informal employment; violence against women, gender pay gap; reconciliation of family and work; analysis and presentation of gender statistics; time use surveys; advocacy and development of action plans.

¹ Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Expert visits and study tour grants

Development of capacity does not only happen in the classroom. The UNECE also organizes for national or international experts to visit countries and train small groups in particular aspects of gender statistics methodology. The UNECE has funded study tours, allowing statisticians who are building their expertise in a particular area to visit another national statistical office and learn how they have approached the collection and development of gender statistics.

Reusable tools and resources

A key component of the UNECE capacity building strategy has been the development of tools and resources that are used in training workshops and shared with others through the UNECE website.

Manual on Gender Statistics

This manual, which is component of a project with the World Bank Institute, is in the final stages of development. It is a comprehensive guide to gender statistics, describing the need for information, data sources, advocacy, dissemination and communication and exploring a wide range of gender relevant topics, explaining how statistics add value. The manual will be published in book form in 2009 and widely disseminated. The content will be used to update the gender statistics website described below.

Training videos

Funding and expertise from WBI enabled the development of short training videos on gender statistics. These videos, currently covering the topics listed below, are available online in both English and Russian. They can be downloaded for use by anyone with access to the UNECE website (www.unece.org/stats/video).

- Advocacy
- Gender and Population Sub Groups
- Gender Pay Gap
- Gender Based Violence
- Measuring Informal Employment
- Incorporating Gender into Labour Statistics
- Making it Happen

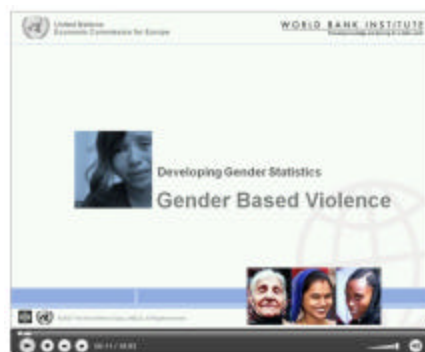


Figure 1 Screenshot of training video on gender based violence

3. Related ongoing activities on gender statistics

Annual meetings

The UNECE organizes a work session on gender statistics every 12-18 months. These three-day meetings attract up to eighty participants from national and international statistical offices. Discussion from the previous meeting, and guidance from the TF on gender sensitization, determines the selection of topics to be covered. The meetings enable progress in the region to be gauged, identification of methodological issues and the development of standards and definitions to address common problems.

Gender statistics website

(www.unece.org/stats/gender/)

This website is a product of a joint UNECE/UNDP project that began in 2000. It describes gender statistics, provides links to online resources, such as publications and databases, includes a glossary of related terms and examples of survey modules and other data collection methods.



Figure 2 Screenshot of the UNECE/UNDP Gender Statistics Website (www.unece.org/gender)

UNECE Gender Statistics Database

(www.unece.org/stats/data/)

The UNECE Statistics Database has a specific component on gender statistics. This collection of statistics is an important source of information on our region. Data is collected bi-annually through questionnaires to gender focal points, and updated regularly from the websites and publications of international and national statistical offices. Information is presented under the following domains:

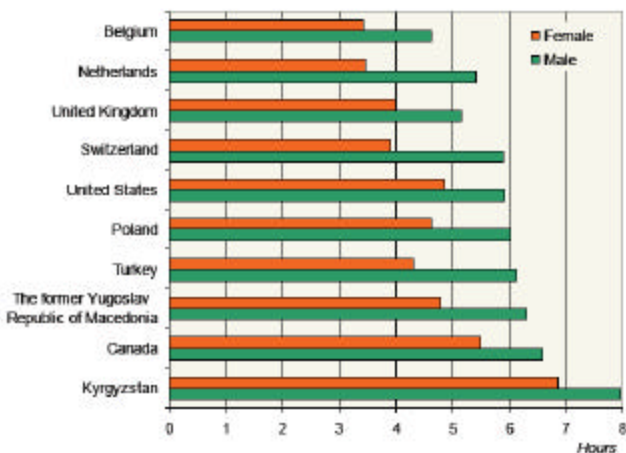
- Gender Country Profiles
- Population
- Fertility, Families and Households
- Work & the Economy
- Education
- Public Life & Decision Making
- Health and Mortality
- Crime & Violence
- Science & ICT
- Life Balance

Facts and figures articles

Using the Gender Statistics Database as a basis, short analytical articles are produced for the UNECE Weekly newsletter. These provide a topical look at gender in the UNECE region. The information is also republished on our database website.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Average daily time spent by men and women in gainful work, 2003-2006



Source: UNECE Gender statistics database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>).

Notes: (i) Gainful work: includes time spent on main and second jobs (including informal employment) and related activities, breaks and travel during working hours, and on job seeking; (ii) the sample refers to economically active persons only and does not include inactive persons.

Daily time spent in gainful work by women is notably shorter than by men

The average time people spend daily in gainful work varies noticeably among UNECE countries, but across the region there seems to be a common tendency for men to spend more time in gainful work than women do.

According to the findings, based on a series of time-use surveys conducted between 2003 and 2006 in several UNECE countries, the median of gainfully worked time per economically active person in these countries is 5 hours 25 minutes in any day of the week, including holidays. The longest hours in gainful work (7 hours 25 minutes on average) are spent in Kyrgyzstan, while the shortest hours worked are reported in Belgium (4 hours 4 minutes) followed by the Netherlands (4 hours 33 minutes) and the United Kingdom (4 hours 38 minutes). Although women generally spend less time than men in gainful work, the gap in hours worked between the two sexes varies markedly as well: from 1 hour 5 minutes in the United States to 2 hours in Switzerland. These differences reflect among other factors the flexibility of labour markets and the incidence of part-time work. ■

Figure 3 Article featured in UNECE Weekly Issue No 301

4. Results achieved in capacity building

In the short-term, it is challenging to measure the impact of capacity building activities, such as building awareness in gender statistics and training in methodology. Planning the future statistical production of a country is often a lengthy process and changes take time. Measurement of results is an area the UNECE plans to focus on as part of the evaluation phase of the joint UNECE/WBI project. Selected tangible results from UNECE work in capacity building for gender statistics are:

- (a) Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kazakhstan have reviewed their labour force survey to better measure informal employment
- (b) Kazakhstan has reported that capacity building has resulted in the inclusion of gender statistics in the State statistical programmes and plans. A multiple indicator cluster survey, with an additional module on domestic violence against women, is incorporated in their 2009-2011 strategic plan for the development of the state statistical system.

“Efforts to build the capacity of the statistical services in Kazakhstan by organizing and conducting training workshops have thus been fairly substantial and have had a considerable impact on the outcome of the national statistical body’s activities.”

Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan²

5. Successful capacity building

The essential ingredients for successful capacity building are establishing partners and networks, being responsive to needs, focusing on concrete outcomes and combining practice with theory.

Good networks within national statistical systems and with international agencies

Funding for building capacity in gender statistics is a key contributor to the success of the work in the UNECE region. Partners such as the WBI and UNDP have helped provide the resources to develop tools used for training and advocacy. These tools can be reused by anyone working in gender statistics.

Strong networks enable the UNECE to keep across the issues facing member countries and make connections between the work programmes of international organizations in this field. As the topics relevant to gender statistics are broad, the expertise of Gender Focal Points and others in areas can be drawn upon in situations where the knowledge does not exist in the UNECE. Participants in workshops often represent both producers and users, encouraging an understanding of the different perspectives and establishment of networks within individual countries.

² *Gender Statistics Training for Statisticians: Introduction of gender statistics in the national statistics system of the Republic of Kazakhstan.* A paper by the Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan delivered at the UNECE Work Session on Gender Statistics, 6-8 October 2008. Available on-line at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.30/2008/5.e.pdf>.

Responsive to needs of countries

Advocating gender statistics is a challenge, given that national statistical systems have other priorities and limited resources. It is important to listen to country needs and identify how capacity in gender statistics can impact on policy change and link to other priorities within the national statistical system. Capacity in gender statistics can provide benefits to other subject-matter areas and statistical production processes.

For example, if a country has a goal of establishing an on-line data dissemination system, this can be linked to gender statistics capacity building by providing training in the creation and marketing a gender statistics database. The outcomes are increased awareness of gender statistics, understanding of data availability and gaps in collection, releasing data to inform policy makers, as well as addressing the need of the country by building expertise in development of an on-line data dissemination system.

Focus on concrete outcomes

A focus on specific issues, such as developing a small survey module, building relationships with users of gender statistics, creating a publication on women and men or increasing awareness of the need for gender statistics leads to concrete outcomes.

Combine practice with theory

The UNECE approach to training is to combine practical activities with the presentation of theory. This allows participants to apply what they are learning to real work situations. The structure of workshops is to present an overview of the topic, using our training videos and presentations, followed by small group activities where participants are asked to work through an issue and then discuss their findings. This increases participant understanding of the theory and allows trainers to identify gaps in learning or assistance that may be required following the workshop.

6. Future directions in capacity building

Many of the activities described above will continue through 2009 and 2010. In addition to improving evaluation and measurement of results, possible methods to develop capacity building include:

Reuse of the training tools developed and share these with others

The UNECE is developing an online training materials repository that includes an area on gender statistics. This site will help the better organization of existing training materials, while at the same time making them available to others.

Improve platforms for dialogue and sharing of experiences

Face-to-face meetings and workshops can be complemented by virtual meeting places that allow gender statisticians to continue the dialogue and sharing of experiences. Social networking platforms provide a means of sharing of experiences. Access to reliable Internet connections is an issue in some countries in our region, but resolution is likely in the near future. As technology becomes cheaper and easier to customize, online communities of practice can provide an effective support mechanism for self-guided learning and establishing contacts.

Develop international cooperation in gender statistics capacity building

Participating in global work in gender statistics is an area the UNECE would like to develop further. Thanks to the coordination of the United Nations Statistics Division, there is a strong network being established and potential for pooling resources to improve our approaches to capacity building.