

**Individual asset ownership as measured in the General Household Survey**

**Presenter:** Isabella Schmidt – Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)

In most countries, the measurement of individual asset ownership in household surveys and censuses is done at household level. There is a large body of evidence that suggests that the distribution of asset ownership within households varies significantly, and that asset ownership by women can be a powerful economic empowerment tool. This therefore makes it imperative to focus on individual asset ownership rather than that of the household. The UN EDGE project found that the measurement of individual asset ownership is best done by interviewing each individual directly in a survey specially designed for that purpose. However, most national statistical offices do not have the resources to execute such surveys, and in practice, the measurement of individual asset ownership will take place within the confines of existing survey designs and question sets.

Given the current resource constraints, Stats SA has decided to improve on current household-based measures of asset ownership by including questions about individual ownership in existing surveys. This paper explores the findings of the measurement of individual asset ownership using proxy respondents in the General Household Survey 2017. Individual asset ownership patterns of the primary dwelling are compared with previously used reporting mechanisms, such as the sex of the household head and the household in general. Ownership parity ratios for other property and financial assets are presented within the context of policy mechanisms aimed at gender equity. Factor and principal component analysis further explores the underlying socioeconomic characteristics that may explain individual asset ownership patterns.