Session 1 - Introduction to gender statistics

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What are gender statistics?

Gender statistics are statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life.

They respond to gender issues by capturing how socially constructed roles, responsibilities and power relations shape people's lives.

Gender statistics:

- Go **beyond sex-disaggregated data**
- Are based on **gender-sensitive concepts, definitions and methods**
- **Avoid biases** that lead to under-measurement or invisibility
- Make differences and inequalities **analytically meaningful**

What gender statistics are not:

- Not only "statistics about women"
- Not limited to disaggregation by sex
- Not a separate or marginal statistical field

Gender statistics are a **cross-cutting dimension of official statistics**, relevant to all domains.

Relevance of gender statistics

- **Support decision-making and accountability**
- **Make gender inequalities visible**
- **Understand differentiated impacts and underlying causes**
- **Estimate the contributions of women and men across different areas**
- **Monitor progress, setbacks or stagnation**

COVID-19 AFFECTED WOMEN AND MEN DIFFERENTLY

- Women with children spend 5 more hours per week on childcare than before the pandemic, on average.
- Women suffered steeper job losses than men during the pandemic. The number of employed women declined by 54 million and 45 million left the labour force altogether.

WOMEN WERE ON THE FRONT LINES OF FIGHTING THE CORONAVIRUS

Globally, women comprise over 75 per cent of the health workforce, making them indispensable to the COVID-19 response. Yet they make up only 28 per cent of health executives.

Source: SDG Gender Snapshot 2021

Users of gender statistics

Gender statistics serve multiple purposes and are used by many actors, including:

Policymakers and government institutions

for policy design, monitoring and evaluation

National women's machineries and equality bodies

to inform gender equality strategies

Researchers and analysts

for gender analysis and knowledge production

Civil society organizations and the media

to raise awareness and advocate for change

International and regional organizations

to monitor global and regional commitments

Global Frameworks for Gender Statistics

1979
CEDAW
Binding commitment to eliminate discrimination; strengthens demand for sex-disaggregated evidence

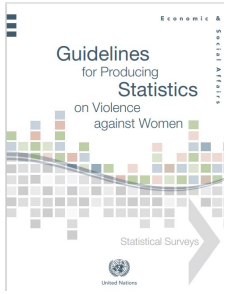
1995
Beijing Platform for Action
Calls for statistics on individuals to be collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age, reflecting issues relevant to women and men

2015
2030 Agenda
Gender equality is cross-cutting; monitoring requires sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicator

2020
UN Statistical Commission
Requested that a gender perspective be adopted and integrated into all agenda items—mainstreaming gender across all statistical domain

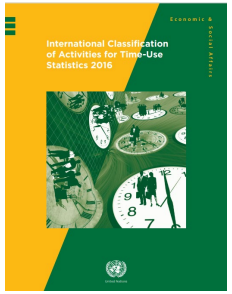
Global guidance in priority areas

Violence against women

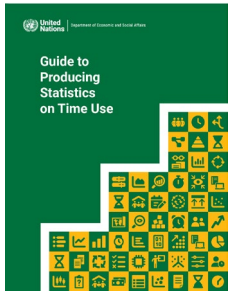


Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women— Statistical Surveys

Time-use

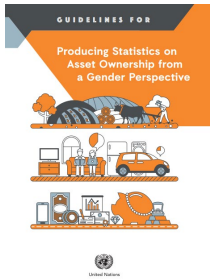


International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics 2016



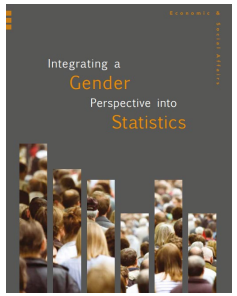
Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use

Asset ownership



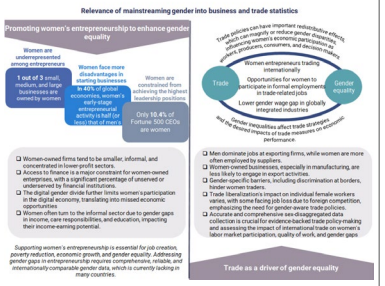
Producing Statistics on Asset Ownership from a Gender Perspective

Integrating a gender perspective



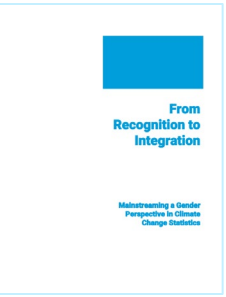
Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics

Business and trade



Guidance note on mainstreaming gender into business and trade statistics

Climate change



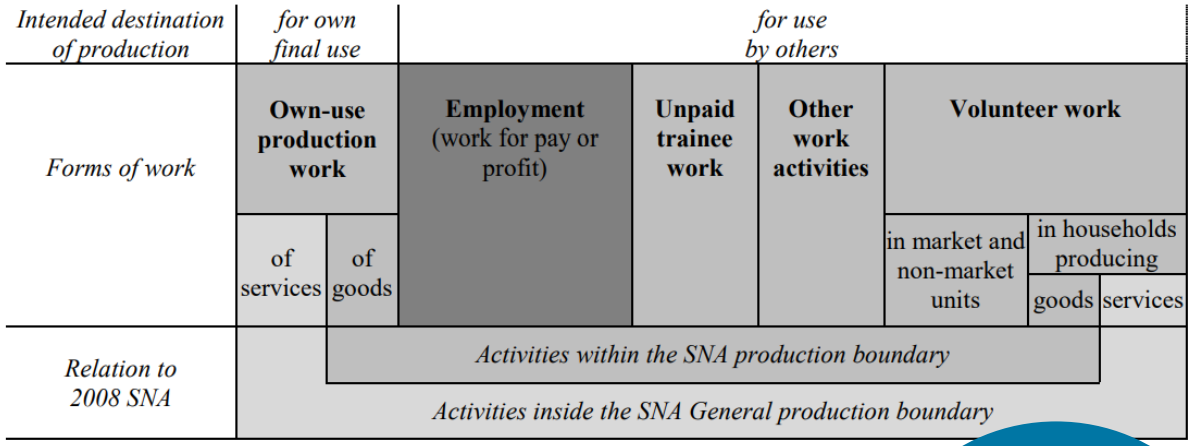
From Recognition to Integration – Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into Climate Change Statistics

What do we mean by *mainstreaming the gender perspective?*

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in statistics means to systematically integrate gender considerations into all official statistics and at all stages of the statistical process.

Gender mainstreaming involves:

- Taking gender issues and potential gender biases into account
- Ensuring that concepts, methods, analysis and dissemination reflect the realities of women and men
- Applying this approach across all statistical domains, not only in “gender-related” topics
- Mainstreaming gender ensures that official statistics accurately reflect social realities and are relevant for policies aimed at equality.



Work and employment are not synonyms

Challenges for mainstreaming the gender perspective in official statistics

01

Limited gender-sensitive concepts and methods in some domains (especially "gender-neutral" fields).

02

Sensitive topics are hard to measure (privacy, safety, stigma; respondent burden and longer questionnaires).

03

Human resource constraints (limited awareness, sporadic training, staff turnover, loss of expertise).

04

Weak legal/institutional mandates and low organizational positioning of gender functions in some contexts.

05

Funding instability (gender statistics often deprioritized; sustainability risks).

06

Dissemination and use gaps (limited visibility, weak user coordination, limited evidence of policy uptake).

Example – Kenya

Measuring sensitive topics such as VAW and FGM requires specialized methodologies and enhanced technical capacity.

Example – Ethiopia

High staff turnover weakens institutional continuity and leads to the loss of expertise in gender-sensitive data practices.

Example - Tanzania

Irregular funding undermines the institutionalization and long-term sustainability of gender statistics.

Mainstreaming the gender perspective improves quality of official statistics

and should be seen as part of improving the quality of data produced by national statistical systems

Improves the quality of processes

Coordination of the NSS	**Mexico:** Specialized Technical Committee on Information with a Gender Perspective → sets system-wide norms and coordinates producers
User–producer engagement	**Morocco:** Needs assessment combining user questionnaires + stakeholder dialogues → aligns gender data priorities with policy demand
Enhancing statistical standards	**SNA:** Promotion of extended accounts to capture unpaid household and care services, largely performed by women and excluded from traditional economic measures → more accurate statistics
Methodological soundness	**Ecuador:** Gender-based violence survey includes rigorous ethical framework + training of female enumerators → improves data quality on sensitive topics

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Improves the quality of outputs

Relevance	Accuracy	Timeliness	Clarity	Accessibility	Coherence & comparability
Statistics better meet user needs by addressing policy-relevant gender issues.	Gender-sensitive concepts and tools reduce bias and improve closeness to "true values."	Supports dissemination at strategic points in the policy cycle and improves periodicity	Improves interpretation through gender responsive analysis, presentation, metadata and inclusive communication.	Improves usability and reach for diverse audiences; supports open access and tailored outputs.	Strengthens consistency across sources/domains and comparability over time.
Switzerland "relevance-checking mechanism" for new statistics strengthens routine sex-disaggregation where applicable	**Ghana** Technology-enabled reporting tools can address underreporting for sensitive topics	**Italy** "Light" time-use survey to increase frequency → improves timeliness of gender-relevant data	**Dominican Republic** Quarterly maps and infographics → improves clarity and communication of gender statistics	**Tanzania** Dissemination in local languages improves accessibility	**Kenya** Uses internationally standardized DHS GBV module → strengthens comparability across countries and over time

Organizational Enablers for Mainstreaming the gender perspective in the NSS:

- **Leadership:** Senior commitment and accountability across the NSS
- **Mandates:** Legal/policy requirements for sex-disaggregation and gender perspective
- **Coordination**: Formal producer–user collaboration and interagency mechanisms
- **Institutional setup**: Gender unit/focal points with authority across domains
- **Resources**: Dedicated financing for regular, sustainable production
- **Capacity** : Continuous training and guidance to prevent gender bias

Colombia: Managerial-level differential and intersectional group → closes data gaps and strengthens intersectional coverage group

Ecuador: Special Commission on Gender & Priority Groups Statistics → coordinates production and strengthens gender/priority-group data

Sweden: Gender-equality impact assessments in budget process → institutionalizes accountability and gender-responsive planning

Philippines: Mandatory stakeholder consultations + ≥5% agency budget for gender activities → embeds gender from planning and sustains implementation

Morocco: Gender-responsive budgeting anchored in Organic Finance Law → institutionalizes indicators, accountability, and demand for gender data

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