



Guidelines to operationalize the definition of work adopted by the 19th ICLS

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19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)

- Global standard-setting mechanism in labour statistics
- ILO hosts & acts as Secretariat
- Meets every 5 years (since 1923)
- Tripartite structure: Governments (NSO, MoL), Employers' and Workers' representatives
- Observers: International and regional organizations, NGOs





19th ICLS Resolution I

- 19th ICLS took place in October 2013
- Agreed new standards to replace existing standards regarding employment and unemployment which have been the reference point for labour market statistics since 1982
- New standards developed after wide international consultation between 2008 and 2013



19th ICLS Resolution I (2)

- **Main updates:**
 - New definition of employment – focus on work for pay or profit
 - Previous definition included some unpaid forms of work but was applied inconsistently across countries
 - In theory expect to see lower employment estimates but impact can be limited in many countries
 - Unemployment definition unchanged
 - However if employment estimate is lower – unemployment estimate can be higher
 - New broad definition of work
 - All work to produce goods or services for use by yourself or others
 - Needed to allow all labour input to GDP to be measured
 - Employment is one form of work, others including volunteering, own use production work, unpaid trainee work and other forms of work
 - New labour underutilization measures defined to supplement the unemployment rate



Forms of Work Framework (1):

By main intended destination & transaction type

Work

(i.e. ALL activities to produce goods and services)

For own final use
(by households)

For use by others (i.e. other units)

For remuneration (i.e. for pay or profit)

Without remuneration

Own-use
production
work

Employment
(work for pay or profit)

*Reference concept for
Labour Force statistics*

Unpaid
trainee
work

Other work
activities
(e.g. unpaid
compulsory
work)

Volunteer
work

Services

Goods

Services

Goods

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Implications for gender statistics

- First definition of 'work' and different forms of work provides standards for comprehensive measurement of different working activities including those more frequently undertaken by women (housework, childcare etc)
- If implemented the new standards will substantially improve our understanding of issues such as scale of a 'double burden' on women while also giving an improved view of interaction with the labour market



Implications of changes

Labour force surveys need to be updated to reflect new definitions

In addition to measuring employment and labour underutilization it is recommended to measure other forms of work to meet policy maker needs

Very important for issues including gender equality

Good communications and implementation plans needed for countries implementing changes



ILO pilot studies in follow up to 19th ICLS

- Started in 2015, nearly completed
- Purpose to develop guidance
- ILO partnering with 10 countries* to run pilot studies testing different questionnaire designs
- Cognitive and field testing to establish if different questionnaires work well
- Once completed the ILO will publish guidance and recommendations on questionnaire design (first guidance end 2016)

* *Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Tunisia, Ecuador, Peru, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Philippines, Vietnam*



ILO pilot studies in follow up to 19th ICLS – early reflections

- Cognitive tests showed various issues of note for achieving international comparability and good measurement
 - Differences in understanding of terms across cultures (e.g. household, profit, payment in kind)
 - No obvious differences between comprehension between men and women although cultural norms and frequency of activities do effect reporting – particularly of working time
- Various issues require further work such as measurement of working time in unpaid activities such as housework and childcare and measurement of the boundary between own use production of goods and employment
- Some interesting findings from field tests on contributing family workers of gender relevance



Future work

- Developing guidance and toolkits to support LFS implementation based on new standards
- Further work to address issues requiring further testing and development
- Supporting countries in LFS implementation
- Training – LMSA, possible gender targeting training programmes
- Collaborating with other international agencies to support development and improvement of guidance and capacity building