

*Measuring Labour Force Participation of Women in Uganda
Uganda country experience*

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There are two main data sources, which generate data that is interpreted to support national-level planning towards gender equality and equity. These are:

- Censuses;
- National Household Surveys

Uganda carries out Population and Housing Censuses after every ten years. It also conducts regular household surveys every after 2 years. There are also other household-based surveys like the demographic and health survey, the national service delivery surveys that are conducted every 5 years and 4 years respectively. These are the mainstay of the data gathering system and as such offer considerable opportunities for gathering gender-sensitive data in Uganda. However, there are other specialized surveys that are organized from time to time when there's demand for data such as the Gender and productivity survey.

Efforts to improve the measurement of women's work in Uganda.

In attempt to improve the measurement of women's work in Uganda, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) works very closely with all the stakeholders. The Bureau together with key stakeholders developed the compendium of concepts and definitions used in the national statistical system. These definitions that cut across all the major sectors of the economy include, among others, concepts in the labour market. In addition, key labour statistics stakeholders in Uganda came together to polish the definitions and concepts in this very important area. These definitions are used across the national statistical system to ensure consistency of data. Specifically, the following have been done:

a) Consultative meetings

When UBOS is organizing any census or a Household Survey, the questionnaire is prepared and shared out with different stakeholders for their input. To ensure that gender issues are captured, UBOS always consults with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Uganda Gender Forum. The data collection questionnaires are fully discussed and edited to include relevant questions. However, it must be noted that not all suggested questions are included.

b) Modular Approach

National Household Surveys usually focus on a few topics due to limits to the number of questions that can be included. Also the ten-year time gap between censuses, and the gap between national household surveys usually create a challenge with generation of timely information about household dynamics or gender relations. The ever changing household dynamics further aggravate this challenge.

Serious efforts have been made to enhance the gender sensitivity of these data sources by attaching a more comprehensive labour module. For example, during the 2002/03 and 2005/2006 National Household Surveys, a separate more detailed labour module was attached. This helped to capture much more detailed information on the labour market in relation to gender.

c) Gender Analysis of Census and Survey Reports

Today, gender specialists in Uganda have opted to carry out detailed gender analysis of Population and Housing Censuses and National Household Surveys. The latest to be analyzed were; 2002 Housing and Population Census, and the National Household Surveys of 2002/03 and 2005/2006.. Analysis of these reports revealed a number of gender issues that were omitted.

- In a census, interviewers are not sufficiently trained to identify women who are primarily housewives but who nevertheless work in activities related to the production of goods and services.

- The concept of ‘usually active population’ is unclear and not effectively articulated in national censuses. This concept is important for the inclusion of women’s work which may be seasonal and only captured through use of a longer reference period.
- The ways in which questions about work are asked significantly affect census results. Words such as ‘employment’, ‘job’, ‘work’ or ‘main activity’ can mean different things to different people.

The above issues and many others will assist UBOS when organizing subsequent censuses and surveys to ensure that women’s work is captured.

d) Gender and Productivity Surveys

The first ever Gender and productivity survey was conducted in Uganda between October 2007 and February 2008 to be able to capture data particularly in the area of women’s paid and unpaid work. The survey covered 4,291 households in the entire country. In addition to the regular socio-economic module usually covered in National Household surveys, individual questionnaires were developed for women and men on assets ownership, health, roles in decision making, and domestic violence. These

Questions were developed jointly between the Economic Policy Research Centre and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. In addition, consultations were made with the Ministry for Gender, Labour and Social Development. The questions were developed in such a way that women’s contributions are captured. The individual questionnaires for both men and women covered those aged 15 years and above who were currently married or had been in a marital union in the 12 months that preceded the survey. If more than one woman was eligible for interview in the household, only one was randomly selected. Questions related to women’s work were carefully framed so as to include both paid and unpaid work.

One of the factors that affect women participation in the labour market is what would happen to their remuneration after work. In the women’s questionnaire, the Survey particularly asked a question about whether individual women were earning some money. If they were earning, the survey followed this up to find out the utilization of the earnings. The question sought to find out if the choice to utilize the earnings was personally made or whether the spouse was the determinant. The question further inquired whether this was voluntary or whether it was against her will. This is one important gender dimension that has often been left out by national household surveys.

Extensive training for enumerators was carried out to be able to fully capture women’s contributions. The report for this survey is yet to be completed. Only a draft has been developed.

Key Results of Gender and Productivity Survey-2008:

- About 75 per cent of Ugandans aged 15 years and above are engaged in the labour force.
- Rural women show high labour force participation rates compared to urban women
- 46 per cent of all women in the labour force are unpaid and only 18 per cent of the men in the labour force are classified under the un-paid category.
- Women account for 73 percent of unpaid family workers and 40 percent of informal sector employment
- There are wide gender differences in wages especially in the private sector. The median monthly salary for women in paid employment at Ugsh. 40,000 is only half that for men at Ushs. 80,000.

e) Computation of Labour Market Indicators

In order to assess the contribution of women, Uganda has been computing the relevant Labour market indicators which roughly show their contribution in the economy. The indicators include their:

- Size in the Labour force
- Labour force participation rate
- Employment to population ratio
- Status in employment
- Employment by sector
- Hours of work
- Inactivity rate

For a long time, the combination of the above have been the traditional methods towards measurement of women's contribution in the economy.

Key Results – to be covered in the power point presentation

f) Institutional Efforts to build Gender Statistics

Cognizant of the fact that gender statistics is an important branch of statistics, Uganda Bureau of Statistics has recruited an officer specifically for spearheading this function. The officer is strategically located in the Directorate responsible for statistical coordination in the National Statistical System. It has been recognized that giving this responsibility to an officer as an added assignment will continue to marginalize gender statistics. In addition, through the Plan for National Statistical Development (Uganda's NSDS), the statistics unit under the Ministry responsible for Gender, has been equipped and strengthened. Collaboration between the Ministry and the National Statistical Office has also increased significantly.

FUTURE PLANS

In future surveys, we are planning measuring women's work by:

- Appending a module of activities list onto National Household Survey questionnaire, to capture the full range of economic activities in which Ugandan women are engaged which a single keyword question may not be able to measure. Standard keyword question to measure work asked in the main survey questionnaire, will always be supplemented by an appropriate activities list to capture the many working women the sole keyword question misses.
- During the design of surveys, UBOS will attempt to integrate women activity lists into questionnaires.