

An overview about the use of statistic on adolescents and young women in Costa Rica, Latin America: the experience of the National Council of Youth.

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1. Presentation

The National Council of Public Policies of Youth, or National Council on Youth (NCY), is a government institution from the Ministry of Culture and Youth. Since 2002, the NCY acquired the responsibility for the development of national policies on youth, as well as specific programs and models, most of them with the expectation of nation-wide replication by other institutions and organizations.

As described in the institutional mission, the NCY has the responsibility to do research oriented to the design and implementation of national policies for young people. With the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the NCY has developed innovative tools for the processing of information on youth in Costa Rica. The NCY is responsible for the actualization of this information and for the definition of new research ideas and initiatives. Other initiatives include the creation and maintenance of a network of researchers on youth.

The objective of this paper is to share the Costa Rican experience on the use of data for the design and implementation of policies on youth. Specifically, the document will focus on the implementation of a national statistic system, specific tools, and topics concerning adolescent and young women. The main sources used in this article are tools produced by NCY with the technical and economic support of UNFPA Costa Rica. Other resources include national statistical instruments.

¹ Paper presented for the Session 3 of the Global Forum on Gender Statistics 2012, dedicated to “Measuring empowerment of young women and adolescent girls”, and to the collection, dissemination, analysis, and use of data of young women and adolescent girls for the development and monitoring of evidence-based policies and programs to improve their well-being.

2. A brief contextualization

Costa Rica is a small country located in Latin America. Its population grows to 4 562 087 inhabitants, according to statistical data of 2009.

In 2011, according with Human Development Index, Costa Rica has a High Human Development Ranking.

HDI Rank	Human Development Index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Value Mean years of schooling (years)	Expected years of schooling (years)	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (constant 2005 PPP \$)	GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank	Nonincome HDI Value
69	0.744	79.3	8.3	11.7	10,497	4	0.785

Source: Table 1: Human Development Index and its components. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table1.pdf

According to legal framework, General Law for the Young Person (2002), and Ibero-American Convention of Youth Rights (2008), a young person is considered someone the ages of 12 and 35. This wide age range includes adolescents from 12 to 17, young people from 18 to 24, 25 to 29, and 30 to 35 years of age, cohorts suggested by NCY to work with this population.

In Costa Rica 41, 9% of the whole population is young, distributed by age as follows:

Costa Rica: Young people by sex and group of age 2009						
Age Group	Sex					
	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
12 a 14	126.921	6,6%	115.347	6,0%	242.268	12,7%

15 a 17	140.858	7,4%	138.794	7,3%	279.652	14,6%
18 a 24	312.294	16,3%	313.743	16,4%	626.037	32,8%
25 a 29	188.006	9,8%	187.694	9,8%	375.700	19,7%
30 a 35	180.804	9,5%	206.393	10,8%	387.197	20,3%
	948.883	49,7%	961.971	50,3%	1.910.854	100,0%

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Census, National Survey of Households and Multiple Purposes 2009.

3. General statistics in Costa Rica

There are different institutions dedicated to the production, analysis and synthesis of statistical information in Costa Rica.

The most important of them it is National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC). Its main products and tools are the **National census of population and household** (applied once every 10 years, being the most recent from 2011), and the **National Survey of Households and Multiple Purposes** (applied each year). This information is available on line throughout the Redatam System for processing data. As well as national scale information, population specific efforts have been developed. For example, in collaboration with the National Institute of Women, the INEC has developed the System of indicators of Gender.ⁱ

Other specific data concerning different thematics, populations and approaches, is produced by different public entities. For example, the application of the **National Survey on Sexual and Reproductive Health** (2010) by the Ministry of Public Health with support of UNFPA; and a recent and yet unpublished results of the Survey about the Use of Time by National Institute of Women.ⁱⁱ

Institutional information is collected by different public entities, mainly related to vital statistics from administrative sources. For example the national register of birth, death and civil status are collected by the National Registry. According to Law of Paternal Responsibility is obligatory to declare the father of the children by their mothers. The morbidity and mortality data is offered by Costa Rican Social

Security Fund. Information about education is registered by Ministry of Public Education.

Two important periodic studies concerning the national status on social development are the Situation of the Country, an annual publication, elaborated by a collective committee lead by the heads of our five public universities, and the Situation on Rights of Childhood and Adolescence, developed by UNICEF and the University of Costa Rica.

Another institution with a statistical system for monitoring of key indicators are the Observatory of Development and Population, and the Central American Center, both from University of Costa Rica.

Finally, an important tool of aggregated information is the **Cantonal Human Development Atlas** (2007 and 2011), developed by UNDP and University of Costa Rica, which consist of an index of human development in each county or canton. This atlas considers different factors of health, education and material well-being. Deriving from this, there are two important indexes, first, the “Cantonal human Development Index Concerning Gender” and “Cantonal Index of Empowerment on Gender”. Both express information at cantonal level by sex and constitute tools for the development of local policies. Finally, this Atlas does not consider specific information about adolescents and young people.ⁱⁱⁱ

4. Specific statistics on adolescents and young people produced by National Council of Youth

There are three different tools developed by National Council of Youth, related to governmental production of data.

First of all, the **I National Survey of Youth** (2007) was developed under the idea of building a state of the art concerning the situation of young people in the country, This information would be the guide for the design and implementation of strategies and programs based on population tendencies and specific needs. The

studio was applied to young people, women and men, between 15 to 35 years old, nationals and immigrants, inhabitants of national territory.^{iv}

The main topics of the survey include issues such as family and personal relationships, health, partner relationships and sexuality, formation and education, work, use of time, and a special module on immigrants.

In gender terms, women and men answered questions about the use of money, experiences of violence inside the family, household tasks, use of time, sexual and reproductive cares, and a wide group of questions about sexuality concerning the beginning of the sexual activity, health practices and preferences, perception of discrimination for being a young man or woman, , disabilities.

The survey was not applied to adolescents from 14 years old or less, attending the wide group of age of young people in Costa Rica, and particularly for the inclusion of items in the questionnaire concerning sexual liberties and marriage, permitted work age², and methodological considerations.

Second, there are two local surveys and investigations for the support of two joint programmers for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, in which NCY and UNFPA take part together, along with other UN Agencies local governments and public institutions.

The **Cantonal Survey about the reality of young people of Upala and Desamparados** (2010) was made in the framework of “Costa Rica: Joint Programme on Youth, Employment and Migration: A One-Stop Shop for Youth Employment”. The survey had the objective of characterize the situation of young people from the cantons of Upala and Desamparados, to guide the model of comprehensive care and services of the one-stop shop to promote youth employability and entrepreneurship. The population of the studio was young people, women and men, between 15 to 35 years old, nationals and immigrants, inhabitants of each canton.^v

² In Costa Rica, adolescents are allowed to work from the age of 15, and with parental authorization and strict regulation of the working hours and conditions.

The general topics consulted were education, work, information and communication technologies, responsibilities of care giving, reality of canton, and migration.

In gender terms, women and men answered questions about the reasons for abandoning formal education, work trajectories and status, responsibilities at home, types of income and quality of living, parenting and care practices, access to services, personal relationships and empowerment, costs of studying; discrimination by sex; different economic activities; household tasks and sexuality.

Other local studio is the **Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey on HIV** from two littoral cantons, Limón and Puntarenas, made in the frame work of a Joint Programme named 'Giro 180°' (A 180° Turn) to prevent HIV and aids, and promote healthy lifestyles among adolescents. The objectives of the Survey was to measure HIV and aids' knowledge including prevention, attitudes towards HIV and aids, people living with HIV and aids; sexual behaviors and perception of risk. Results from the KAP Survey were used as base line to the Program, and a final KAP Survey was applied to measure impact.

The third tool is the **Monitoring System of the Condition of the Young Person (MSCYP), which** is an integrated statistical system with information about young people from ages 12 to 35. The System is located and controlled by National Council of Youth, and obtains support for its sustainability from UNFPA, and the advisory of Development Observatory from the University of Costa Rica. The System is an online tool, and allows the processing of information, and the generation of crosstabs and other reports from the selection of the . It was designed in 2006, and was upgraded in 2011.^{vi}

The areas of the monitoring system are demography; health (morbidity and mortality); social health and environment; education; employment and employability; and social exclusion. The information is available by year, considering data availability; sex; area of residence, rural and urban contexts; and age by age groups.

The sources of the MSCYP include the National Survey of Households and Multiple Purposes, by INEC, Ministry of Education, Costa Rican Social Security Fund, and Observatory of Development-University of Costa Rica.

This System is still unknown by many researchers or it has a reduced use among stakeholders and investigators. Researchers prefer obtain information produced by others, instead of produce their own data. Training sessions are required to promote the use of the MSCYP in other governmental institutions, especially from the National System of Youth.

The MSCYP has the value of integrate information produced by different entities, allow complementarities of institutions, and unify information under the youth lenses.

In the long term the MSCYP projects itself as a monitoring and impact evaluation system of global policies programs and projects of Costa Rica, both from the social and economical background.

The final tool that will be mention is the **National Survey of Sexual and Reproductive Health** (2010). It was held by the Ministry of Health, and it was applied to women and men from 15 to 80 years old. This survey includes general characteristics, access to information about sexuality, pregnancy history for men and women, family planning preferences, fertility, views on reproductive rights, first intercourse and sexual practices, sexually transmitted diseases, knowledge, attitudes and practices towards HIV and aids, sexual dysfunctions, attitudes toward sexual diversity, sexual violence and gender roles.

5. Policies, programs and services based on adolescent and youth statistics

According to specific adolescent and youth statistics produced by the National Council of Youth presented above, in this section the relationship between the information from different tools and it use to support policies, programs or services will be presented, in particular those who respond to the results and data from the Integrated National System, the National Survey of Youth, the Cantonal Survey,

and the KAP studies. It is considered the results from the National Survey on Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Based on the experience of this processes it is observed that each instrument provide an universe of possibilities for the application of data; so, because of limitations of exposition, just a few elements will be shown. The examples chosen will be described next.

National Policy of Sexuality (2010 - 2021)

It was elaborated by the Ministry of Health. In addition to the National Survey of Sexual and Reproductive Health (2010), the National Survey of Youth (2007) was taken in to account as part of the diagnosis of the situation of sexuality in Costa Rica. Personnel of National Council of Youth took part of the process of design, building and validation of this policy, and it let to the incorporation of legal criteria from Ibero-American Convention of Young People's Rights, and Public Policy of Young People (2010-2013).

"According to the results of the National Youth Survey, 2007, 76.1% of young people of Costa Rica, that is 1 227 514 persons, have had sex, and 23.5% have not yet started its sexual life. In exploring the use of contraceptives in women from 15 to 24 y/o, we observe that 54.4% use condoms, 32.8% contraceptive pills,, surgical methods around 3%, and other methods by 14.2%. Finally 1% reports the use of natural methods.

A similar situation of women is presented with the contraceptive methods used by the man between the ages of 15 to 24. 48.6% of the consulted population report the use of condoms, 39.1% pills, 1.8% surgical methods, 0.7% natural methods and 13.5% other methods (National Survey of Youth, 2007)." (2011, Ministry of Health).

This policy is directed to the whole inhabitants of Costa Rica. Its main goal is to guarantee and the pursuit of the right to safe sexuality, informed, co-responsible for all the Costa Rican people, as an integral part of the human right to health.

Although it does not refer directly to women or young people, its approaches are intended to address human rights, gender, and diversity. Some intervention areas of the policy include information, sensitization, communication and dissemination; sexual citizenship; comprehensive education of sexuality; integrated, comprehensive and warm services for the attention of sexual and reproductive health, and sexual violence. Each area has policy guidelines and strategies.^{vii}

Design of mass media campaign

In 2009, a mass media campaign was developed by NCY. For this purpose, five topics were chosen, which consist of issues of human rights considered in Ibero-American Convention on Young People's Rights: non-discrimination, education, work, social participation, sexuality.

According to NSY 2007, the above mentioned situations are salient among the perceptions and opinions of young people, particularly related to discrimination. The **Mass media campaign** was then developed, to promote human rights on young people for a wide national audience, and include radio, television, banners and printed material for its divulgation.

Situations of discrimination that young people have														
	By sex and age group													
	Sex				Age group									
	Men		Women		15 a 17 años		18 a 24 años		25 a 29 años		30 a 35 años		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
For being Young	419965	51,6	447308	55,9	141476	51,5	328372	56,5	180785	53,4	216641	51,6	867273	53,7
Race or ethnic discrimination	417469	51,3	452249	56,6	158811	57,8	320975	55,2	172796	51,1	217135	51,7	869718	53,9
For being man	85136	10,5	88891	11,1	23503	8,6	64090	11,0	38497	11,4	47937	11,4	174028	10,8
For being women	276348	33,9	326773	40,9	78878	28,7	220001	37,9	134781	39,8	169462	40,4	603121	37,4
Sexual preference	503496	61,8	525451	65,7	152105	55,4	390990	67,3	213844	63,2	272008	64,8	1028947	63,8
Disability	585468	71,9	615131	76,9	187479	68,2	443946	76,4	258217	76,3	310957	74,1	1200599	74,4
For being immigrant	599562	73,6	590825	73,9	184416	67,1	436511	75,1	259080	76,6	310381	73,9	1190387	73,8
socioeconomic condition	463717	56,9	490318	61,3	143436	52,2	343914	59,2	212853	62,9	253832	60,5	954035	59,1

Fuente: Observatorio de la Persona Joven, I Encuesta Nacional de Juventud, 2007.

The text says:

“All young people have rights to be included, regardless of our age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or any other condition.

To comply this right is responsibility from all people “

The text mentioned before (audio and video) was completed by the following text on printed materials.

“As a young person, we all have the right to sexual information as source of personal development, affectivity and communicative expression. Moreover, we have the right to confidentiality and to respect from health services personal, in sexual health and reproductive health.

“The right to non-discrimination does not support any discrimination based on age (being young), color, national origin, membership of a minority national, ethnic or cultural, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, opinions, social status, physical ability, or capacity, the place where one lives, economic resources or any other personal or social condition.”

Both educational materials and mass media information were based on statistics results of National Survey on youth (2007), for the only purpose to sensitize and attend about discrimination.

In the same way the campaign was designed to motivate empowerment of young people for the exercise of their rights to education, work, sexuality and participation.

Design of educational material

According to National Survey of Youth, discrimination based on sexual orientation is one most significant situations reported by young people in 2007. This situation is indicated by young men (61,8%), young women (65,7), adolescents (55,4%), and young people in general (63,8%).

Furthermore, in 2009 the Ibero-American Convention for Young People's Rights was ratified in Costa Rica, and considered non-discrimination by sexual orientation as part of the leading concept of Non-discrimination. Additionally, the "Approaching Youth: towards a positive viewing of young people", considers different topics concerning the work with and for young people, as well as a critical approach to traditional ways of perceive and relate to young people. For instance, one of the main topics includes a plural perception of young people considering their particular conditions of living

In 2011, attending the requirements mentioned above and according to them, NCY in association with Research Center for Central America on Human Rights (CIPAC-DH), a GLBTI Non Government Organization, published a "**Manual of sensitization to non-discrimination on sexual orientation and gender identity**". This guide presents conceptual orientations and a proposal of workshop with different sessions for its application with public servers and other publics.

Design of attention models

Model for Prevention and attention of adolescent pregnancy

The NSY and NSSRS have been used to design a Model to be applied for health and social entities, at local and national level, by Inter-institutional Council for the Care of Teenage Mothers.

For the building of this Model, a statistical approach was considered to address the needs of to maternity and pregnancy with adolescent girls. For this purpose, data from the NSY has been used to analyze the situation.

The next data is relevant for this goal:

"In the National Survey of Youth (ENJ/2007) who studied, among other groups, a national sample of adolescents aged between 15 and 17, identified within the sector of teens who have had sex, 14.4% for the first intercourse occurred between

10 and 13 years, giving this more often in rural areas (24.7%) than in urban areas (8%). This again refers to situations of sexual abuse, and therefore, a problem which requires an urgent and priority attention.

This survey also indicates that 28% of boys aged 15 to 17 years had a partner, which in the case of young women the percentage increases (37.1%). From this group of adolescents with partners, none of the men surveyed were married and 3.1% were cohabiting, while for the case of female teenagers 3.2% of them were married, and 20.6% in free union.

Pairing in adolescence, according to the results of this survey, is also expressed differently in men and women in relation to the age of your partner. For men, this occurs in greater proportion with adolescents (88.5% with children under 17 years), and in the case of women (13.9%), it is with older people (76% aged between 18 and 24). From these data we can infer the existence of power imbalances in relationships established by adolescents, given the age differences with their peers.”

“According to ENJ/2007, the respondents aged between 15 and 17, identified as the major sources of information about sexuality to schools (44.1%) and family (42.8%). The 87.4% of the adolescents said they received information on STI prevention, and 85% of contraceptive methods. Of this population, who reported having sex, 55.1% of women mentioned condom use, while the percentage for men is 54.3%. The 59.9% reported using contraceptives during sex.”

The objective of this Model is to prevent unplanned pregnancy among adolescents, and provide whole cares to pregnant adolescents through joint services base on Human Rights approaches.

Model for promoting healthy life styles and prevent HIV and AIDS between adolescents

Research was one step of the Joint Program “180° Turn” for the training, education of adolescents, and to create awareness and modifications of health and

educational services, as well as communitarian and government organizations. The Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey has been one of the inputs for design of the Model for the Promotion of Healthy Life Styles and HIV and aids Prevention between Adolescents.

The **Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey on HIV** led by Program '180° Turn' in prevention of HIV and aids made emphasis in topics unknown by adolescents, and was intended to guide the adolescents by training them in scientific based information on sexuality and healthy lifestyles, and peer to peer interaction. Results from the KAP survey, and consultations with adolescents were used to design training materials, actions and strategies in the intervened communities.

6. Final considerations

These examples show some uses of statistical data in public policies, actions for young people, advocacy and visibility of young people. However, some of these tasks are specific to a locality or age group; it is clear the challenge of universal strategies as presented. This step requires political will, government actions, support from international agencies, and training in the diagnosis and use of statistics about women and youth.

Existing information shows the use of different criteria for collecting information, for example, the use of legal or psychological criteria for defining adolescents. The definition of age groups does not follow a unified approach in public institutions. These aspects are limitations in data collection. Therefore one of the challenges is to develop tools and unified procedures for gathering of information.

In terms of gender, it is necessary to design tools, surveys and systems with a gender and youth approach, to identify specific needs of men and women.

The Production of statistical information can not be separated from process of knowledge generation and its use in formulation of public policy, development of

actions, approaches, and accountability, especially on the Convention on the Rights of Youth.

In this task, the official youth and women organizations, such as the National Council of Youth, have a major responsibility and require the strengthening of institutional capacities in the production, analysis and use of data, and the allocation of research budgets.

There is a need for training in the use of online data sources, the use of general research for decision making.

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ⁱⁱⁱ http://pnud.or.cr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=186&Itemid=42

^{iv} <http://www.cpj.go.cr/investigacion-opj/primer-encuesta-nacional-de-juventud>

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