Strengthening administrative data systems to improve gender statistics

Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, 13th Meeting, New York, 7-8 November 2019
Outline

• Characteristics of administrative data
• Overview and impetus of IAEG-GS Advisory Group
  • Why this work now?
• Methodological approach
• Preliminary findings
  • Previous work - what do we still need to know?
  • Statistical query results
• Preliminary recommendations
• Next steps
  • Topics and questions to explore – case studies
  • NSO experiences (Morocco & Jordan)
Definition/characteristics of admin data

• Data collected through the routine delivery of a service
  • Most often by government providers, but also through private sectors
• Continuous/routine collection
• Multi-site, high population coverage
• Base data structured by individuals or events
  • This data may be aggregated at any point within the system (from collection -> final reporting)
• Geographic or facility characteristics included
• Examples: health information systems (HIS) and education management information systems (EMIS)
Characteristics (2)

• Collection of data for statistical purposes is not the primary reason the admin system exists

• Data generated by admin data systems are, by their very nature, generally focused on processes (not outcomes) and locally specific
  • To what extent can gender data derived from admin systems be aligned with international reporting needs?
  • Or...to what extent can gender data derived from admin systems complement reporting needs, particularly for local policy and planning?
IAEG-GS Advisory Group on Strengthening Administrative Systems to Close Gender Data Gaps

• Convened in 2019 at request of IAEG-GS Global Secretariat

• Members: Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Jordan, Morocco, Uganda, Zimbabwe, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ILO, OECD, UNFPA, UNICEF (Chair) UNODC, UNSD, UN Women, World Bank

• Objectives:
  • Provide country guidance on how admin systems can be maximized as a source of gender data for global and (sub)national reporting
    • Investments guided by maturity of existing admin systems
  • Build upon (limited) evidence base on the value and potential of admin data for gender statistics
When the **right data** are in the **right hands** at the **right time**, decisions can be better informed, more gender-responsive, and more likely to protect women’s and girls’ rights.
Why this work now?

• Calls for better gender statistics for many years – ‘paucity’ of data
• Several mapping exercises by topic (health, education, etc.) and country/region – major data gaps highlighted
• Increasing cost of data – need to do more with existing systems (and need for more timely data)
• 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
  • ‘Leave no one behind’ – more and multiple disaggregation (sex and...)
  • Multiple calls for “better use of admin data,” but limited discussion re what this means, particularly vis-à-vis gender statistics, on a practical level
Methodological approach

✓ Desk review of previous work
  • What do we still need to know?

✓ Short statistical query of IAEG-GS Advisory Group member countries (7 in total)

• Case studies: 3-4 selected countries (Nov./Dec.)

• Draft recommendations and discussion paper (Dec.)

Input and review by Advisory Group
## Previous work – understanding the gender data gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thematic focus</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>104 gender-relevant indicators in Africa</td>
<td>Open Data Watch; Data2X</td>
<td>48% indicators missing or lacking sex-disaggregation; Health (best coverage); Environment (worst)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>43 health-related SDG indicators</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Able to provide gender statistics on 16 indicators; One-in-seven country indicator values had no data since 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Gender statistics and the SDGs</td>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>10 out of 54 gender-related SDG indicators can be reliably monitored at global level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Gender-relevant environmental SDGs</td>
<td>UN ESCAP</td>
<td>Limited amount of sex disaggregation across environment indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Previous work - admin data systems and statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, date</th>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Data ecosystems for sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics Canada, Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
<td>The use of administrative data in statistical systems [several publications]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rizinde et al, 2018</td>
<td>Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Rwanda: The role of administrative data inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabyonga-Orem, 2017</td>
<td>Monitoring Sustainable Development Goal 3: how ready are the health information systems in low-income and middle-income countries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacFeely &amp; Barnat 2017</td>
<td>Statistical capacity building for sustainable development: Developing the fundamental pillars necessary for modern national statistical systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connelly et al, 2016</td>
<td>The role of administrative data in the big data revolution in social science research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank, 2016</td>
<td>Using Administrative Data to Assess the Impact and Sustainability of Rwanda’s Land Tenure Regularization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas et al, 2016</td>
<td>What systems are essential to achieving the sustainable development goals and what will it take to marshal them?</td>
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</table>
### Previous work - admin data systems and gender statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, date</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Key themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| UN Women, 2019 | Advancing administrative sources of data for monitoring gender-specific sustainable development goals in Africa | • 63% of the 54 gender-specific SDG indicators can come from admin sources  
• Relatively more cost-effective source  
• Notable and varied quality concerns and capacity challenges |
| Centre of Excellence for CRVS systems, 2019 | Harnessing CRVS systems for gender-related SDGs  
Gender and CRVS: making the invisible visible  
Leaving no-one behind | • Strengthening CRVS systems are inputs for measuring SDGs and are goals themselves  
• CRVS systems benefit women and girls in several ways |
| UN Women, 2018 | ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls. Data Collection and Use | • Provides clarity on different types of data collected and their different uses/purposes |
| EIGE, 2016 | Administrative data collection on violence against women: Good practices | • Admin data to monitor and evaluate adequacy and effectiveness of policy and practice to prevent VAW |
What do we still need to know?

Priority questions informing statistical query:

- To what extent are admin data suitable for closing gender gaps in SDG reporting? What challenges do countries face?
- Are there specific challenges for generating statistics from admin data that are unique to, or more pronounced for, gender statistics?
- What other data can admin systems provide (or should aim to provide) to inform the broader gender data landscape for local programming and planning?
- What specific investments are needed to ensure that admin data systems can yield needed gender statistics?
- How do we leverage the broader field of work to improve admin data and data systems so that they deliver on this potential?
Prioritization of indicators informing assessment of suitability of admin data for SDG gender reporting

- Gender-specific indicators as defined by UN Women (54)
- Indicators that are suitable for collection through administrative data sources (36)
- Indicators that are conceptually clear, and for which established methods and standards are available (21)
Among IAEG-GS Advisory Group Member Countries...

Proportion of countries collecting 21 gender-specific SDG indicators through admin data systems, by collection and use status
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Reasons provided for not using admin data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Poverty</td>
<td>1.3.1 Social protection</td>
<td>Requires inputs/linkages of multiple agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.2 Secure tenure rights</td>
<td>Inclusion of ‘perception’ makes it difficult to use admin data – how could admin systems capture this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Health</td>
<td>3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.8.1 Essential health services</td>
<td>Indicator is very broad with several sources of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Education</td>
<td>4.1.1 Minimum proficiency</td>
<td>Difficulties with standardisation due to use of different learning assessments through the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3.1 Youth and adults in education</td>
<td>Prefer to use surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Gender</td>
<td>5.b.1 Mobile phone ownership</td>
<td>The data are owned by private companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.c.1 Systems to track pub. allocat..</td>
<td>Indicator is ‘proportion of countries’, unclear what raw data is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Work</td>
<td>8.5.1 Hourly earnings</td>
<td>Admin data often don’t track hours worked (just earnings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Cities</td>
<td>11.2.1 Public transport</td>
<td>Inclusion of ‘convenient transit’ makes it difficult to use admin data – how is this defined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Justice</td>
<td>16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.2.2 Human trafficking</td>
<td>-</td>
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Identified challenges to using admin data for SDG gender indicators

- Most pressing data quality issue – completeness (41%)
  - Concerns that admin data represent a small proportion of total population or total number of events
- Next issue – data access (18%)
  - Collected but not shared
- Very few reported that data aren’t being collected at the right unit level to allow for the compilation of gender statistics
Are there challenges specific to, or more pronounced, for generating gender statistics from admin data?

- In large part, no...
  - Challenges mostly relate to digitization, protection of personal information, standardisation of concepts/definitions, lack of metadata, no sharing, dysfunctional systems, coordination bottlenecks
  - If only ‘sex’ is needed, it is among the easier disaggregation variables to capture (e.g. compared to disability or migratory status) and less sensitive than race/ethnicity
  - Sex can be cross-tabulated with other disaggregates in core admin systems

- However...
  - To the extent that women/girls are less likely to have IDs or access services, they are less likely to be captured by admin data
    - Potential selective under-coverage by sex
  - Unless specifically serving gender diverse populations, admin systems lack ability to capture non-binary genders or trans persons
  - If gender-sensitive information beyond sex is needed, it is challenging to include new questions in admin forms
What other gender data from admin sources should we be taking advantage of for programming and results?

Importance of admin data at (sub)national level:

• While admin data may not adhere to statistical standards/concepts, they can provide useful information to policymakers given their frequency/detail

• Essential for planning and delivering gender-responsive services to communities
  • In this sense, admin data doesn’t need to be internationally comparable – needs to be locally specific

• Valuable for monitoring changes over time/progress toward gender equality outcomes measured once every 3-10 years in household surveys
  • Essential for informing why some outcomes were (or weren’t) achieved – what resources were allocated, what services were provided, etc.?
Examples

• Proportion of adolescent girls and women (aged 15-49 years) who have their needs for family planning satisfied with modern methods
  • Use of admin data:
    • To assess availability and utilisation of services to provide access to contraception and SRH education
    • For analysis of barriers restricting women’s access (i.e. marital status, parental consent requirements, age restrictions) – understanding the legal and regulatory framework
    • Resources allocated (funds, human resources, etc.)

• Proportion of girls who have undergone FGM
  • Use of admin data:
    • Resources allocated (funds, human resources, etc.)
    • Types of services available and utilisation
    • Estimation of the types of FGM and pattern of service utilisation (from health and medical records, police records) – is the system responding adequately?
Preliminary recommendations

• Admin data systems are a key (untapped) source of gender data and further investment should be encouraged to improve availability/use

• Admin data are not a replacement for survey data in key areas (particularly for international monitoring) but a complement
  • Can’t measure perceptions/behaviors or provide meaningful insight into certain phenomenon

• Disaggregation of data in administrative systems should focus on providing the ability to cross-tabulate by multiple dimensions
  • In mature systems, this will mean individual data records that can be linked across key elements
  • For less mature systems – clear recommendations on critical cross-tabulations are required (need for prioritization to avoid “fruitless disaggregation”)

Preliminary recommendations (2)

• Priority should be given to strengthening sectoral admin data systems of most relevance to gender equality outcomes, including:
  • Education sector: learning outcomes, progression, school retention
  • Health/social welfare: adolescent childbearing, access to family services/support
  • CRVS and identification: birth registration, single parent registration, marital registration, access to formal ID, etc.

• Efforts should take advantage of existing system investments rather than engage as “stand-alone” components
  • Requires clear articulation of priority gender data needs by sectoral system
Next steps – case studies

Case studies – semi-structured interviews with NSOs and key line ministries to unpack key issues, challenges and opportunities

• Challenges
  • Completeness of data – are data incomplete at point of collection or vis-à-vis what gets shared/published? How do we build confidence in the data?
  • Aggregation – what processes/infrastructure need to be put in place to ensure that individual records are not lost as data go ‘up the chain’ – (e.g. immunization) or in the move from paper to digital registers (Morocco)?
  • Admin forms – ensuring essential gender information is collected
    • What role can NSOs play in the development of best practice guidelines for sectoral admin data systems?
Next steps - case studies (2)

Opportunities to leverage systems improvements to yield better gender data

• What admin systems should be prioritized and why?
  • What criteria should be used to prioritize investments?

• Are there basic disaggregation tabulations that should be built into admin systems? What are the most important cross-tabs?

• How can gender statisticians engage in broader admin data processes to ensure that gender data needs are reflected?
  • Is there a clear institutional owner for the work needed to be done?
  • How do gender statisticians engage with line ministries? Do better coordination mechanisms need to be put in place?
  • What capacity building is needed?
Next steps

• Review and finalization of guidance
• Peer-reviewed article - key challenges and future opportunities for the use of administrative data (co-authored by IAEG-GS Advisory Group)

• Identification of additional potential work for IAEG-GS to support (beyond scope of current workstream)
  • National ID systems – inclusion, outreach, more being counted
  • Data linkage (for what? across systems/between types of data?)
  • Geographic data from admin data systems – subnational analysis (improve cross tab analysis)
  • Other?
NSO Experiences
(Morocco & Jordan)
THANK YOU

Lauren Pandolfelli
lpandolfelli@unicef.org

Karen Carter
kcarter@unicef.org

Nicola Richards
Consultant