



IN BRIEF: BANGLADESH

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT

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The Women Count premise is that the gaps in gender statistics are linked to three distinct but inter-related problems:

- Weak policy space and legal and financial environments due to limited political will and understanding of the importance of quality gender statistics
- Technical challenges, particularly about sensitive, methodologically demanding or emerging areas; and
- A confluence of limited data dissemination and communication capacities of national statistical systems (NSS) and limited ability of governments and other stakeholders to utilize and advocate for gender statistics to inform decisions, policy research, advocacy, policies and programmes.

A national assessment of the status of gender statistics in Bangladesh was conducted between February and May 2018. The assessment aimed to provide answers to the key question: To what extent do the

BOX 1

Gender data gaps are pervasive

There are 54 gender-specific indicators in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the SDGs in Bangladesh:

- 19 (37%) are readily available*
- 13 (24%) are partially available*
- 22 (40%) are not available

Note: Indicators 5.5.1(a) and 5.5.1(b) are counted as one indicator, as are Indicators 4.4.1(a) and 4.4.1(c).

abovementioned problems explain the status of gender statistics in the Bangladesh Statistical System (BSS)? The results of the assessment provide well-informed bases for the design of the Women Count project in Bangladesh, including the selection of priority outputs and activities.

1. Creating an enabling environment

In Bangladesh, while there are numerous laws, policies and plans to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, systems for facilitating efficient production, access and dissemination of gender data are weak or virtually non-existent, including lack of information systems for gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring of the National Women development Policy (NWDP), lack of coordination mechanisms for gender statistics in the BSS, and limited integration of gender in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). As a result, even though the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (MEFSDG), which is the national adaptation of the global monitoring and indicators framework, covers all 232 of the indicators and 54 gender-specific indicators, the availability of gender data and statistics are uneven in several aspects, including across sectors and topics, as well as in regularity and timeliness (see Box 1).



Women Count response: Working in partnership with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Women and

Children's Affairs (MoWCA) and other key actors, the Women Count project in Bangladesh will support the BBS to address the gaps in the implementation of the Statistics Act 2013 and the NSDS. A Bangladesh Minimum Set of Gender Indicators (BMSGI) will be formulated as the organizing framework and basis to produce gender statistics and indicators that meet the various reporting and monitoring requirements on gender equality and women's empowerment. To strengthen the technical and coordination capacity of the BBS and working with other government bodies, a gender statistics coordination mechanism led by the BBS will be established and institutionalized.

2. Increasing data production

Key challenges include limited technical and financial capacity of the BSS, with many surveys and censuses still dependent on donor funding and technical and financial support from UN Agencies. While several rounds of censuses and surveys have already been

conducted by the BSS, most data collection activities continue to depend on this outside support, including for questionnaire and sample design and data processing and analyses. Therefore, BSS does not have a system of designated statistics, meaning that there is no assurance that a particular data collection will be resourced and carried out on a regular basis. As a result, methodological consistency and continuity, as well as, data quality and comparability over time continue to be acute challenges.



Women Count response: Women Count will strengthen the production of gender data, including through training and capacity building, by supporting data collection on priority data needs such as time-use, violence against women, and sex-disaggregated population statistics. Technical and financial support will be provided to the Bangladesh Statistical System to regularly generate, compile and disseminate data for the BMSGI, and a user-friendly database compiled from administrative and programme data will also be produced for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in close collaboration with BBS.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

The BBS does not have a data dissemination policy nor an advance-release calendar. Access to statistics is not easy for non-government users and there is an inadequate capacity and management system. Furthermore, the Government usually lacks resources and the capacity for adequate data analysis, and it needs better-equipped staff as well as better data-management processes and systems.



Women Count response: To respond to these challenges, a digital system to facilitate data dissemination, communication and use will be supported, regular statistical and analytic reports on gender across the SDGs will be produced, user-producer dialogues will be institutionalized, along with customized trainings to improve users' capacities for gender data analysis.

Key Achievements in 2018

The Women Count Bangladesh project is awaiting formal approval by the Government (including signature of a Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Agreement). As a result, activities planned for 2018 have been significantly delayed and will be prioritized once the required administrative agreements with the Government, expected during the first quarter of 2019, are secured. Nevertheless, several activities took place as part of the preparations for project implementation, including:

- Finalization of the Women Count Bangladesh project document (prodoc) in close coordination with the BBS and other stakeholders, led to a substantive agreement on the actions to be implemented jointly by the Government and UN Women. As a result, the prodoc directly responds to all needs of the BSS to institutionalize the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics in Bangladesh.
- UN Women supported the participation of BBS representatives to attend the 7th Workshop on Foreign Partners for Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in September 2018 to present their efforts in strengthening gender statistics in Bangladesh. After the workshop, Bangladesh was invited to become a member of the new Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training established by UN Women and the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific (SIAP). The role of this subgroup is to: facilitate information-sharing on gender data production, dissemination and use; develop a framework for gender statistics training; promote coordination among gender-statistics training providers; and develop and improve training programmes. As a member, BBS will share and learn from the best practices of other national statistical agencies in the region to strengthen its training programme.

FIGURE 1

Measuring Progress in 2018



Significant administrative delays in finalising a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics prevented the implementation of most activities in 2018.

Plans for 2019

In 2019, Women Count Bangladesh planned activities include:

Enabling environment

- Supporting SID and BBS to formulate recommendations and a costed action plan for implementing the Statistics Act, to address the need for gender statistics in its implementation and a corresponding advocacy plan for its adoption;
- Supporting the General Economic Division, SID and BBS to formulate recommendations and a costed action plan to address the gaps in gender-specific indicators in the MEFSDG and corresponding data requirements based on a systematic review and assessment;
- Supporting SID and BBS in setting up a coordination mechanism for gender statistics across the BSS—an Inter-agency Committee on Gender Statistics (IAC-GS).

Data production

- Supporting BBS to process/reprocess existing data to generate gender statistics and indicators with further disaggregation not existing in current tabulations and publish results;
- Supporting the BBS and MoWCA to identify priority Tier II gender-specific SDG indicators, develop a methodology for data collection, conduct a pilot study on data collection and the production of indicators, and publish/disseminate the results;
- Supporting preparations for violence against woman and time use surveys to be conducted in 2020;
- Supporting MoWCA to develop and maintain a user-friendly database for gender data and statistics compiled from administrative, programme and other non-traditional data sources and formulating guidelines on data-sharing, data flows and system updating/maintenance;
- Providing technical and financial support to the BBS to compile available data and to publish (in its Gender Statistics Compendium) and disseminate the compilation.

Data accessibility and use

- Preparing a “Statistics Reports on Gender Across the SDGs” with subnational disaggregation;
- Supporting the development and use of an SDG gender web portal for disseminating gender-specific SDG indicators and tracking progress on associated targets;
- Providing financial support for user-producer meetings by BBS and UN Women at national and subnational (division) levels;
- Providing research grants and support for studies by academics, CSOs and other non-governmental actors for producing and disseminating policy briefs and other knowledge products that utilize gender statistics;
- Designing and implementing a capacity-development course for data users on gender statistics analysis and use in planning, budgeting, policymaking and decision-making.