



IN BRIEF: EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

MAKING EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL COUNT

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In line with the global Women Count programme, UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) developed a project that is specific to the context of the region. The regional project aims to provide technical support to UN Women offices at the country level on gender statistics and to strengthen regional-level collaboration with key partners in order to better contribute to SDGs monitoring at the country and regional levels. To prepare for the development of the project, an assessment was conducted during 2016-17 to summarize ongoing initiatives by other actors and identify key gaps, challenges, opportunities and entry points for UN Women ECARO in the area of gender statistics.¹

1. Creating an enabling environment

While all 17 SDGs, and a large majority of their corresponding 169 targets, are being addressed in one way or another by Europe and Central Asia

BOX 1

Gender data gaps in Europe and Central Asia

- Currently, over half of ECA countries regularly produce gender statistics on power and decision-making, but that percentage drops to 42% for unpaid work, 41% for violence against women (VAW) and a mere 7% for satellite accounts of household production.
- Out of 40 UNECE member countries with data, only 13% have legislation requiring the NSS to conduct specialized gender-based surveys and only 8% have a regular dedicated budget for gender statistics.
- Furthermore, the reviews also indicated that only 22% of UNECE countries have a coordinating body for gender statistics.

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Council. 2013. Report of the Secretary-General on Gender Statistics. E/CN.3/2013/10.

(ECA) countries² – which are at varying stages of nationalizing and assessing current capacity to produce and use the statistics needed to monitor SDG progress – gender-responsive SDGs prioritization and monitoring continue to be a challenge in the region. Part of the challenge is related to the fact that ECA’s national statistical systems (NSS) range from the more advanced and open statistical systems found in countries such as Serbia, Moldova and Albania, to the relatively closed, politicized and under-resourced systems found in Kosovo, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The low priority afforded to gender within national statistical systems, evident in the weak organizational structures (e.g. single gender focal point), limited or no budget allocation, and absence of a strong commitment to gender monitoring and reporting in national statistical strategies and plans, also constitutes a significant barrier for gender statistics.



Women Count response: UN Women ECARO will support countries in partnership with regional stakeholders, such as UNECE and others, to identify and address institutional, legal and financial constraints to ensure gender mainstreaming in the NSS and to establish an efficient monitoring and evaluation system for the SDGs. Activities include strengthening national capacity to integrate gender statistics in strategies to address gender equality and women’s empowerment and to strengthen monitoring and evaluation framework to report on SDGs and national priorities. Improving regional inter-agency coordination and cooperation on gender statistics is also a key priority, including through joint initiatives with the Issues-Based-Coalition on Data and participation in UNDG and Regional Coordination Mechanisms, including Gender Theme Groups.

2. Increasing data production

Technical challenges limit the effective and efficient production of gender statistics. Although data production is relatively strong in the ECA region (current

data availability shows that all countries, except Turkmenistan, can produce more than two thirds of the UN minimum set of gender statistics), ongoing concerns related to data sensitivity and transparency result in necessary data either not being collected or not being released. Increasing demands for monitoring and reporting on progress towards the SDGs reveal a scarcity of disaggregated data, in addition to sex, by age, ethnicity and disability.



Women Count response: Interventions include supporting efforts at the national and regional level to improve data availability to report on national and international commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment, by strengthening the technical capacity to design, collect, reprocess and analyse data from different data sources. Financial and technical assistance to design and conduct gender related survey aligned with internationally agreed standards including for time use surveys (Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and violence against women surveys (Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Moldova) will be provided. Countries’ capacities will also be enhanced through a series of workshops on data collection and methodologies for Tier I and Tier II SDG gender-related indicators, including on women’s economic empowerment and violence against women, in collaboration with interested UN and non-UN partners.

3. Improving data accessibility and use

The assessment found that the lack of effective use of gender statistics is the most problematic issue for gender monitoring and reporting in the ECA region. While production is relatively strong, and dissemination of data and microdata is improving, gaps in the capacity to access and use that information persist. One of the key challenges in the region is that the demand for support to improve dissemination, communication and use of data seems to significantly outweigh the supply of funding and technical assistance in this area.



Women Count response: Promoting greater access to and use of timely and high-quality data are therefore key priorities of the regional project.

Activities include technical and financial support to countries to improve the regular dissemination and communication of gender statistics through development of demand-driven and user-friendly publication (e.g. Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Tajikistan); developing a gender data visualization portal regional framework and support at least two countries (e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Belarus) to customize it; organizing national and regional capacity building activities on dissemination and communication strategies and promoting the use of data through the development of regional and national thematic analytical reports, briefs and factsheets on gender equality and the SDGs.

Key Achievements in 2018

The ECARO project kicked-off officially in May 2018.

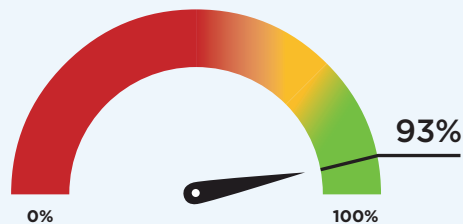
- One of the key advances in 2018 is in the production of new data on violence against women (VAW). In Georgia, UN Women supported the analysis and dissemination of the 2017 National Study on VAW. The study generated data on sexual harassment as well as baseline data for SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. This data, which has been formally communicated to the SDG Secretariat in the Prime Minister's Office, is being used by gender equality activists to advocate for new legislation addressing sexual harassment in public spaces (the new law was subsequently passed by Parliament in May 2019). This successful experience is being shared with other countries from the region that are planning to conduct similar surveys in the future.
- In Albania, UN Women, in collaboration with UNDP, provided financial and technical support to conduct the third national VAW prevalence survey, using an internationally recognized methodology. The survey results are expected in 2019 and will provide the first-ever collected data on incidence of dating violence, sexual harassment and stalking. As a result, this will boost Albania's NSO (INSTAT's) capacity to provide the data needed for its national policy and

report on violence-related indicators (5.2.1 and 5.2.2) under SDG 5 and will inform national action plans and strategies to protect women and girls from all forms of violence.

- UN Women has contributed significantly to peer learning and improved regional coordination and collaboration, resulting in gender statistics being more intentionally integrated in country level UN Support. Through participation in the Issue-Based Coalition on Data for the SDGs (IBC-SDGs Data), synergies between ongoing and planned work by UN agencies on SDG data at the regional and national level were identified. Consequently, UN Women was able to contribute to the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) exercise undertaken by UN agencies to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the five countries where MAPS was conducted (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Montenegro).
- Through advocacy and a stronger partnership with UNECE Steering Groups on Gender Statistics and Statistics for SDGs, it was agreed that UN Women ECARO will co-organize the Workshop on Gender Statistics for Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries, to be held on 13-14 May 2019 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland and a session organizer on institutional mechanisms to support gender statistics during the Work Session on Gender Statistics (15-17 May 2019). This provides an opportunity for UN Women to support the participation of policy makers and gender specialists, to ensure that a diverse group of stakeholders is represented and benefits from this forum.
- Training workshops for national statisticians and other data producers from selected countries in the region, such as Albania, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan were jointly organized by UN Women and relevant national stakeholders and UN partner agencies. In particular, training sessions in Kyrgyzstan were carried out in partnership with UNODC and included 97 participants from the National Statistical Committee and Ministry of Internal Affairs. They focused on new data-collection methods on VAW and human trafficking. In pre- and post-training evaluations, 94 per cent of participants reported improved knowledge that will "enhance their capacity to collect and report accurately data on gender-based crimes".

FIGURE 1

Measuring Progress in 2018



Significant progress was made in Europe and Central Asia as a result of strong demand for support from pathfinder and non-pathfinder countries (e.g. Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and increased coordination with UN Agencies forging strategic partnership with UNECE to advance advocacy on gender statistics across in the region.

Plans for 2019

In 2019, Women Count Europe and Central Asia project activities will include:

Enabling environment

- Supporting countries to mainstream gender into statistical business processes, including technical assistance to assess needs, identify gaps, establish national coordination mechanism on data exchange, and integrate gender statistics into strategic planning;
- Producing gender-related SDG factsheets as advocacy materials to be used for SDG nationalization and localization;
- Supporting countries to establish an effective monitoring and evaluation framework to report on national priorities and international commitments, including mapping gender-related SDGs indicators;

- Organizing and participating in user-producer events at the national and the regional level, in partnership with the UNECE, Eurostat and IBC–SDGs.

Data production

- Improving capacity-building for countries to produce Tier I and Tier II gender-related SDGs indicators, by conducting a gender survey (such as a Time Use Survey), and processing additional indicators from available data at the national level (Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Survey, Enterprise surveys, etc.);
- Supporting countries to assess and explore the administrative data relevant for producing gender-related indicators;
- Supporting user-producer dialogue by organizing national, sub-regional and regional workshops and forums on Data for SDGs (Conference on Gender Data for SDGs/Georgia, B+25 Regional Review/Session on Data, Summer school on data for CSOs from Central Asia countries, etc.).

Data accessibility and use

- Developing a Beta Version of Gender Data Visualization Platform and supporting at least two countries from the region to customize and operationalize it;
- Promoting the use of data through developing regional and national thematic analytical reports, briefs and factsheets on gender and the SDGs;
- Supporting countries to improve statistical literacy by promoting new formats and tools to disseminate gender statistics, such as user-friendly publications, competitions to write human stories, hackathons, etc.

ENDNOTES

1 UN Women. 2017. Assessment of opportunities for UN Women to support the development of gender statistics in Europe and Central Asia. http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2017/unw%20eca%20ro_assessment%20report%20gender%20stat%20sdgs_feb%202017.pdf?la=en&vs=5901

2 UNECE countries in Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.