

MODULE 10

COMMUNICATING GENDER DATA

TRAINING SYLLABUS

Curriculum on Gender Statistics Training

This product was developed under the guidance of the Subgroup on Gender Statistics Training, within the Asia-Pacific Network of Statistical Training Institutes.

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About this module

The *Communicating Gender Data* module outlines the importance of effectively communicating gender data to promote gender equality and inform policy decisions. It is divided into three clusters:

- The *Concepts* cluster focuses on key communication concepts, such as the distinction between data dissemination and communication, data feminism, and missing data. It also provides guidance on creating, implementing and monitoring communication strategies and addresses the ethical considerations in working with gender data.
- The *Techniques* cluster provides concrete tools and techniques on where to find data as well as how to use and visualize data through different types of charts, tables, infographics, fact sheets and multimedia.
- The *Practice* cluster is about data storytelling through engaging with the media and use social media in amplifying gender data and offers tools for improving accessibility and engagement.

This module is targeted to both experts and non-experts on gender statistics. Data producers can use this module to strengthen their capacities in leveraging tools to create effective data products that are more accessible to users. Data users in turn can learn how to access and visualize data to convey messages effectively, or how to correctly interpret the data that are communicated to them. No advanced knowledge of statistics is necessary. However, it is strongly recommended that learners have completed modules 1, 2 and 9.

CONCEPTS

1. Communicating gender data

1.1. Why should we communicate data?

Data and evidence are the foundation of informed policies and programmes to advance gender equality. Gender data are also used to monitor progress towards making gender equality a reality. But in order for gender data to be used to drive change, the data must not only be available, but be made more accessible and communicated to users.

Typically, ‘dissemination’ is the process by which producers make data available to users. Data are usually collected and compiled by statistical agencies and released to users.¹ But dissemination is usually a one-way process and consists of releasing data, regardless of how useful they are to users. For instance, the data may not align with users’ needs, or be available in an accessible format for non-technical users (including advocates, policymakers and journalists). As a result, available data are often underused.

When data are not used, typically due to the lack of communication between data producers and users, it leads to **data waste**.

Data waste – Simply put, data waste occurs when data are not based on the needs of users and are therefore not used to make change. Data are usually produced through massive efforts and resources by statistical agencies. But when data do not relate to user demand, they are less likely to be used. Moreover, when data producers do not effectively communicate with users when new data are available, they are unlikely to be used to inform evidence-based policy advocacy, research and analysis.

It is important for data producers to go beyond the conventional one-sided approach of data dissemination and focus on effective means of communication instead.

1.2. The difference between dissemination and communication

Data communication is different from data dissemination.

- **Data dissemination** refers to the transfer of statistics and evidence to encourage their use and reuse, potentially maximizing the amount of impact the data release can have. The data are usually made available through databases, data portals and reports. Dissemination provides direct access to the statistics, without consideration of users’ specific needs.²
- **Data communication**, on the other hand, goes further, by strategically planning to whom and how to make the data available, by identifying target audiences and then leveraging different formats and channels to ensure the widest possible reach. This planned process starts at the outset of the data production cycle by engaging users (e.g., communication between users and producers to identify needs) and continues throughout the entire data production and release processes.

¹ See PARIS21 [NSDS GUIDELINES](#).

² [Successful valorization of knowledge and research results in Horizon Europe](#).

While dissemination is a one-way transfer of data and information, communication is a two-way street, engaging users in dialogue, understanding their needs and tailoring data products to best communicate to them. Communication of gender data, essentially, aims to align the supply of data with the demand for data. With better alignment, data waste can be reduced.

BOX 1: Who are data producers and who are the users?

Data producers are the organizations that are in charge of generating data. Government producers include national statistics offices, line ministries and other government departments. Some international organizations (like UNICEF) also produce data and, in rare instances, so do some private sector and civil society organizations.

Data users are any consumers of data. The most common users of gender data include policymakers and other decision-makers, government bodies, civil society organizations, academics and researchers, private-sector institutions and international organizations.

Drawing the line between data users and producers is not always easy, as many actors can both be users and producers. Moreover, it is important to note that data users are not monolithic – they have diverse needs and interests. There are also different levels of data literacy among users, so any communication strategy must keep this in mind when targeting different types of users.

For a detailed discussion of users and producers, refer to [Module 4](#) on user-producer dialogue.

1.3. Why are gender data necessary?

Certain types of data – such as gender data – have long been unavailable or underproduced. In recent years, there has been a growing demand for such data – and not just for data with sex-disaggregation, but for data that shed light on gender differences and inequalities.

The topics or issues shown through the data will naturally influence how they are communicated. That doesn't mean we should be partial or activist in their dissemination or messaging. In fact, impartiality in the way data are presented or shared is a key consideration in data science. Although some researchers question whether objectivity is truly possible, given how data have been historically produced (see Box 2 on data feminism), at least disseminating data in an unbiased way should be the goal.

When it comes to communicating data, the framing, interpretation and discussion of findings matters. The way a narrative or story is woven around data, and how the analysis reflects on wider social phenomena, can increase interest and incite further analysis and discussion of key issues. This is especially important if data are to influence advocacy and policymaking.

Integrating data feminism principles in making gender data more visible can have a powerful effect.

BOX 2: Principles of data feminism

Data feminism is a way of thinking about data as informed by an unequal distribution of power. It emphasizes how those in power (largely white, male and from the global North) predetermine what is valued and therefore what is measured. As a result of these power dynamics, many people, and issues, go uncounted. As such, the principles of data feminism are grounded in intersectional feminist thinking,

to seek to make visible the lives and experiences rendered invisible through the unequal balance of power, so that everybody is counted and visible, and no one is left behind.

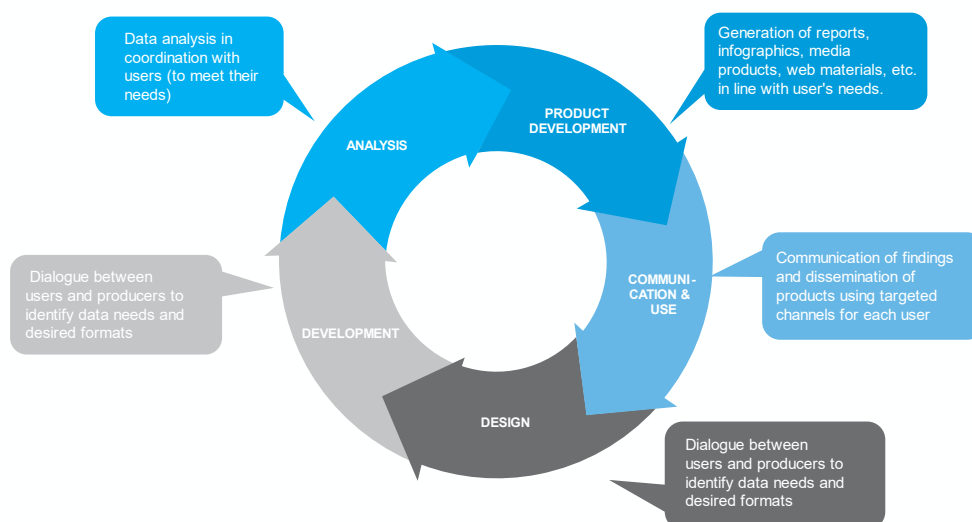
1. **Examine power.** Data feminism begins by analysing how power operates in the world.
2. **Challenge power.** Data feminism commits to challenging unequal power structures and working toward justice.
3. **Elevate emotion and embodiment.** Data feminism values multiple forms of knowledge, including the knowledge that comes from people as living, feeling bodies in the world.
4. **Rethink binaries and hierarchies.** Data feminism requires challenging the gender binary, along with other systems of counting and classification that perpetuate oppression.
5. **Embrace pluralism.** Data feminism insists that the most complete knowledge comes from synthesizing multiple perspectives, with priority given to local, Indigenous and experiential ways of knowing.
6. **Consider context.** Data feminism asserts that data are not neutral or objective. They are the products of unequal social relations, and this context is essential for conducting accurate, ethical analysis.
7. **Make labour visible.** The work of data science, like all work in the world, is the work of many hands. Data feminism makes this labour visible so that it can be recognized and valued.

Source: [Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein, *Data Feminism*](#)

1.4. The data production/communication cycle

Communication is a key element in the data production cycle. In order to ensure uptake and use of any data product, there needs to be effective communication and engagement between data users and producers at every stage of the data production cycle.

Figure 1: The data and statistics communication cycle



- Leverage existing partnerships with data producers and participate in dialogues to ensure that your needs and priorities will be heard.
- Provide inputs and feedback at every opportunity in the development and design process, to help shape the final product to be more aligned to your requirements.

Opportunities for dialogue:

Pre-production

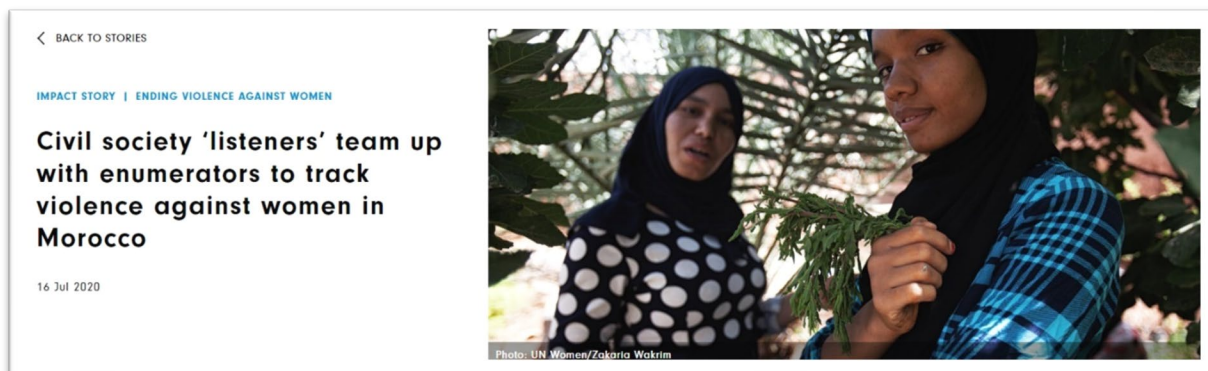
- Before producing data and generating data communication products, users' needs and priorities must be assessed. This might range from identifying priority topics and indicators, to assessing which population groups are relevant for data disaggregation and understanding the types of formats and communication methods that are considered most convenient by users.
- Reaching an understanding on all these issues is also essential to ensure data quality. For instance, user-producer dialogues might help identify the need to produce data for a specific population group, such as women with disabilities. To produce gender statistics for that group, sample sizes must be larger so that data can be disaggregated at multiple levels without compromising reliability. As a result, understanding user's needs and planning data collection and communications accordingly are essential to ensure the reliability of the data.

Post-production

- Once the data are produced, they must be communicated in a variety of formats to ensure accessibility for users with different levels of data literacy and technical expertise.
- Post-production dialogues should put the data into context so that they are relevant for the user. Numbers do not speak for themselves, so producers should explain the analysis, the relevance of the findings, and facilitate a discussion on their policy relevance.
- The [more exchanges are carried out](#), the greater the likelihood of uptake, which increases the usability of the data, as well as future data requests.

CASE STUDIES

These two cases highlight the effectiveness of user-producer dialogues in ensuring data quality, uptake and use.



[Go to the story >>](#)

Improved data on violence against women catalyses advocacy and legal change in Albania

16 Jul 2020



[Go to the story](#) >>

Box 3: Missing data, missed opportunities

Gender data have been notoriously scarce in most countries, due to underfunding in statistical systems, and a lack of political will or prioritization. This is a major problem for policymakers and gender equality advocates, leaving interventions [largely based on guesswork](#).

When UN Women’s “Making Every Woman and Girl Count” flagship programme was launched in 2016, only [13%](#) of countries had a dedicated regular budget for gender statistics, and a mere [26%](#) of global gender-related SDG indicators could be monitored. That number had risen to [39%](#) by 2020, and just past the historic halfway mark for the SDGs, gender data availability had more than doubled, allowing [56%](#) of gender-related SDG indicators to be monitored, globally.

While a promising improvement, it’s not nearly enough to inform key policies or programmes for women and girls. For example, only [42%](#) of countries had recent poverty data disaggregated by sex in 2022, and more than 80 countries were missing data for at least one SDG 5 indicator.

Data gaps matter because they render the realities of millions of women and girls invisible. That’s why disseminating gender statistics widely, and communicating findings clearly, is so important to reverse the historic gender data blindness and ensure we don’t miss opportunities to bring about evidence-based change.

2. The communication strategy

2.1 Characteristics of a communication strategy

A communication strategy helps to define clear priorities, identify target audiences, create appropriate key messages and choose the right communication channels around an overarching goal.³ Whether you are a data producer or a user, a communication strategy is essential to guide how you communicate your data and statistics to your audience/user. A strategy should be developed at the beginning of the

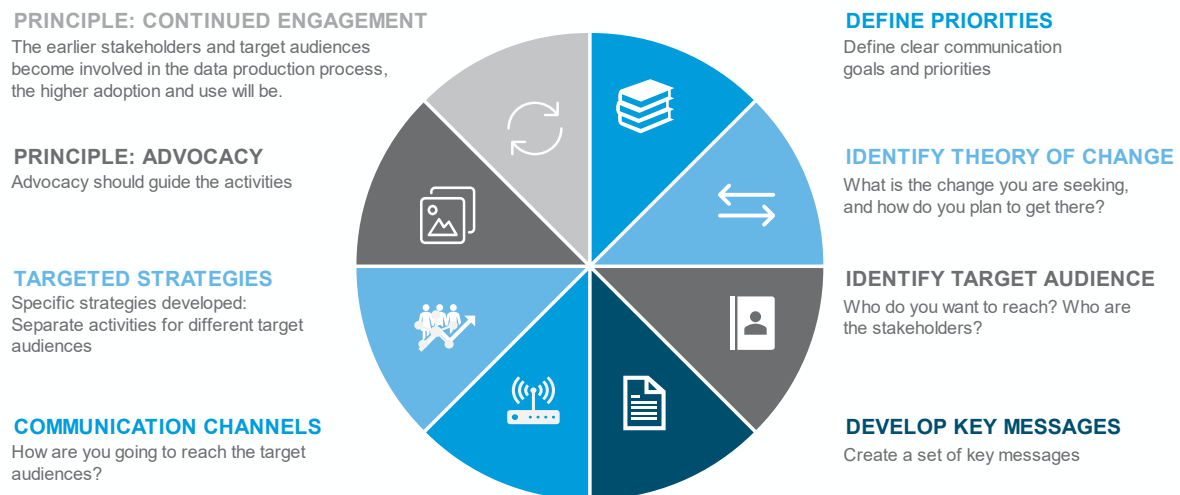
³ See UNESCAP, Creating an Effective Communication Strategy <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/T3-Guidebook.pdf>

product development cycle and should have a clear goal in mind, and a set of objectives you want to achieve. It should be guided by a theory of change that outlines the conditions that are needed to create change. This should be a living document and will evolve as your priorities and audiences change, so it will need to be revisited and refined throughout.

Data communication strategies must take into consideration:

- Target audience/users: For **data producers**, this means all potential types of data users, their skills and their interests (so that key messages will be targeted and effective). For **data users** using data to communicate to a target audience, this means identifying who you need to reach and advocate with, whether a government ministry, local officials or even the general public.
- All possible communication channels, from databases and publications to audiovisual content, infographics and social media materials (to reach every kind of user/target audience identified).
-
- Noting that users/audiences are not all the same, and that users have varying degrees of technical expertise and data literacy, targeted strategies will be needed for each type of audience/user. The level of detail in the communication product will be tailored to each audience type (see graphic below). Once the users/target audience are identified, the strategy can be developed into a concrete plan of action.

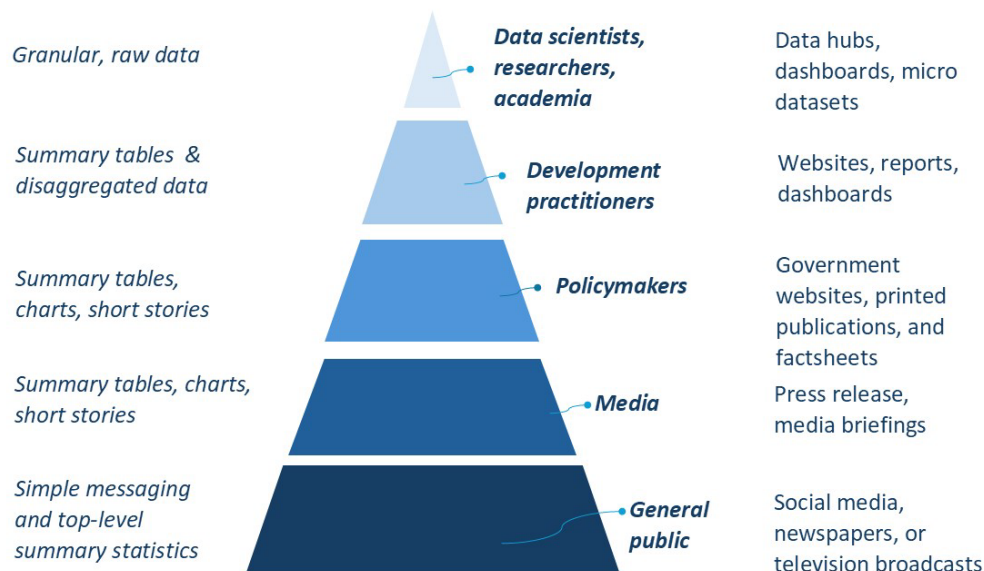
Figure 2: Characteristics of a communication strategy



HOW TO TAILOR COMMUNICATION ACCORDING TO USER TYPE

Here are some ideas of the kinds of products to develop based on the target audience/user type. Raw data can be presented through Excel or CSV tables in databases, while disaggregated data and analysis can be presented through interactive dashboards and reports. Visualizations and short stories can be presented online and through the media, and key figures and infographics can reach the general public through social media.

Figure 3: Communication products by user type



2.2 Turning a communication strategy into an action plan

ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. **Data product overview:** Summarize the key data elements that will need to be communicated. This will help in developing key messages.
2. **Purpose:** Why do you want to communicate these data? Is there something new? Is this an update from a previous exercise that is showing a trend? Understanding the data will allow you to have a better idea of why this is important to users.
3. **Target audience and partners:** To whom do you want to communicate these data and who do you need to partner with to effectively reach them? All potential users should be identified, as well as those who can amplify your messages and help you reach target audiences/data users.
4. **Activities, timelines and responsibilities:** What needs to be done to execute the plan, by when, and who will be responsible? Also keep in mind the resources, both human and financial, required to execute the activities.
5. **Channels and tools:** What formats and media will you use to communicate to the audience?
6. **Key messages:** What do you want to get across to the audiences, using the available channels? In communication, LESS IS MORE. Simplify and distil your messages to the essential takeaway for your audience. Too much information risks diluting the message and making your communication less effective.

CASE STUDY

The Women Count programme of UN Women is driven by a global communication strategy that is customized and implemented by regional and country offices based on their particular contexts and needs. **Annex 2** provides the template a communication strategy template used by the programme.

2.3 Monitoring

To close the communications loop, it is important to monitor the impact or effectiveness of a communications plan by examining the uptake of produced data and products. An effective monitoring plan of a communication strategy uses Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess progress. A monitoring plan should follow these steps:

1. Identify clear objectives

- Establish what your communication strategy is trying to achieve, such as improving advocacy outcomes or uptake and use of data and research products.

2. Select relevant KPIs

- Choose KPIs directly related to your communication strategy objectives. These could include:
 - **Reach and Awareness KPIs:** Number of impressions, social media reach, or website traffic.
 - **Engagement KPIs:** Likes, shares, comments, click-through rates (CTR), or email open rates.
 - **Uptake:** citations of your research products in other publications, and other social mentions.
 - **Media coverage:** articles covering the launch of your survey, report or campaign.
 - **Customer/Stakeholder Satisfaction:** Post-training or readership surveys.

3. Set Baselines and Targets

- Define baseline metrics for your selected KPIs (e.g., current engagement rates) and set realistic, time-bound targets based on past performance or industry benchmarks.

4. Use analytics tools

- Leverage digital tools to track your KPIs. For example:
 - **Google Analytics** for tracking website visits and conversion rates.
 - **Social media analytics** for monitoring engagement and reach.
 - **Email marketing platforms** (like Mailchimp) for tracking open and click-through rates.
 - **Google Scholar** for tracking citations.
 - **Media monitoring** services for monitoring media mentions.

5. Track regularly

- Monitor KPI performance regularly (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) to track progress. Regular reports can help you identify trends, gaps, or areas needing improvement.

6. Evaluate and optimize

- Use the insights from your KPI monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of your communication strategy. If KPIs aren't meeting targets, adjust elements of your strategy such as messaging, timing, or platforms.

3. Ethics

Ethical considerations need to permeate data collection, production, dissemination and communication. This means ensuring that data are collected with the informed consent of respondents to surveys or other methods, and while protecting their privacy and confidentiality. This is particularly important when collecting data on sensitive issues that could potentially pose a safety risk to respondents, such as data on gender-based violence.⁴

Ethical considerations also entail ensuring safe storage to protect the produced data themselves, both from online (or offline) security breaches or misuse. At the same time, it is essential to ensure the quality and reliability of produced and/or analysed data by eliminating, or at least minimizing, any potential for biases or distortions. Transparency of data collection and analysis methodology is critical.

When using third-party data sources, additional considerations – such as on ownership, governance and availability) must also be taken into account (see ‘source issues’ in Box 4).

| Box 4: Dos and Don'ts | |
|---|---|
| DO: | DON'T: |
| DATA PRODUCERS | DATA PRODUCERS |
| Respect privacy: Protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals or organizations whose data are used in reporting, using anonymization or aggregation techniques when necessary. | Don't Violate Confidentiality: Never disclose personal or confidential data without consent or proper anonymization, even if the data seems harmless on its own. |
| Ensure data accuracy and integrity of data used in reporting, including by verifying data sources and avoiding misrepresentation. | Don't Misrepresent Data: Avoid cherry-picking data to fit a particular narrative or intentionally distorting data points to exaggerate findings. |
| Acknowledge and address data bias in data collection, analysis and reporting that could lead to inaccurate or misleading conclusions. | Don't Ignore Data Limitations: Present all data with its limitations (e.g., small sample size or outdated data). Failing to do so may lead to false conclusions. |
| Ensure data security: Safeguard data against unauthorized access, breaches or misuse. | Don't Ignore the Impact of Data Use: Consider how your data analysis might affect different groups and avoid decisions or actions that disproportionately harm or exclude vulnerable populations. |
| Transparency: Disclose the methods, assumptions and limitations of data | Don't Withhold Important Findings Avoid selectively omitting results that do not support your hypothesis or narrative, especially when these findings could provide valuable insights or balance. |

⁴ For more on this, see UN Women's [Guidance on Collecting Violence against Women Data Through Telephone Interviews](#); the multi-agency [Checklist for ensuring the quality of violence against women surveys](#); and United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs [Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women](#).

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>analysis and interpretation to enable readers to understand the context and any potential biases.</p> <p>DATA USERS</p> <p>Obtain informed consent from individuals when collecting and using their data for journalistic purposes.</p> <p>Data quality: Assess the reliability and credibility of data sources and data-provider's reputation when using data.</p> <p>Data ownership: Clarify ownership rights and permissions when using third-party data sources to avoid copyright infringement or intellectual property issues.</p> <p>Data availability: Ensure the accessibility of data sources used in reporting to enable verification and replication of findings by other journalists or researchers.</p> <p>Data governance: Understand the legal and ethical frameworks governing the use and sharing of data, including compliance with copyright, intellectual property and data protection laws.</p> | <p>DATA USERS</p> <p>Don't Use Data for Harmful Purposes: Avoid using data in ways that could harm individuals, communities, or organizations, such as promoting discrimination or violating human rights.</p> <p>Don't Omit Context: Data without context can be misleading. Avoid presenting data in isolation or out of context, which could lead to misinterpretation.</p> <p>Don't Misuse Statistics: Avoid manipulating statistics to imply causality where only correlation exists, or using misleading visualizations (e.g., distorting graph scales).</p> <p>Don't Overgeneralize: Avoid applying conclusions drawn from a limited dataset to a broader population or situation than the data can support.</p> <p>Source: TBD</p> |
|--|--|

When it comes to disseminating and communicating gender data findings, producers have the responsibility to disclose limitations and potential biases, and to try to ensure proper interpretation by users, such as journalists, academics and politicians. For example, during press conferences or on-on-one interviews, producers should pay close attention to the accuracy of the wording of questions, and make corrections or clarifications as needed. They can also proactively respond to any misleading public comments or interpretations, either through public or private communication channels, as appropriate.

Data users also have a responsibility to ensure that they accurately present findings and consider societal implications. For journalists, this means not simply looking for an angle that will 'sell' or get more clicks and exercising care in the wording of headlines that can distort information or mislead audiences. For academics and politicians, this means not 'spinning' findings to reinforce personal or political agendas. In many cases, correct interpretation comes down to asking the right questions.

TECHNIQUES

4. Where to find data

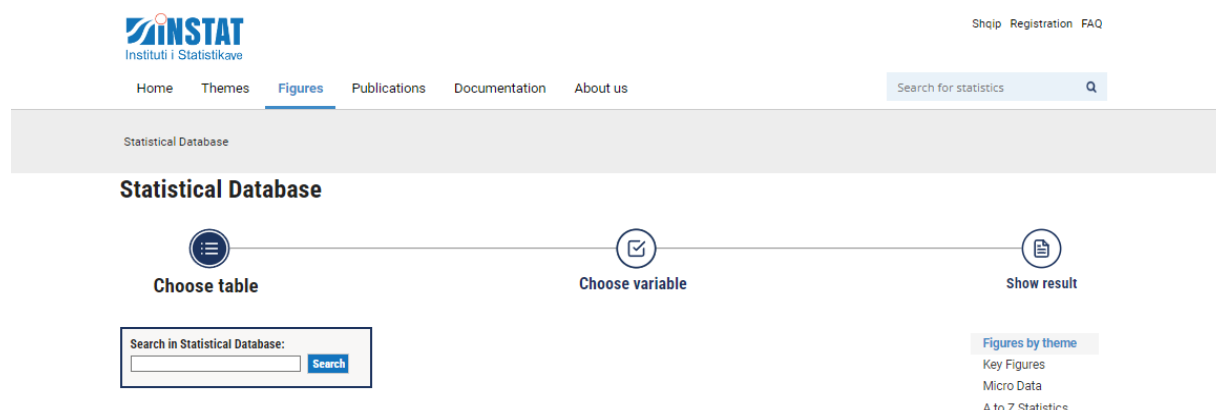
Data producers can make data and statistics available through spreadsheets, portals and other knowledge products. These are the data sources that users can leverage for better access to evidence.

4.1 Databases and data portals

Data producers should understand how to create these tools for users; users can learn how to use these tools. A **database** is a comprehensive, sometimes exhaustive, collection of computer files or records pertaining to a specific subject.⁵ A database manages data using a logical structure. A **data portal** is a tool that data producers (or users) can build to make data more accessible to users.⁶ Portals serve as an online gateway allowing other users to access complex data in a more intuitive and user-friendly way than databases, which are more technical and often inaccessible to non-expert users.

Country databases and portals store nationally calculated estimates and are generally managed by the National Statistical Office (NSO) of a country or another specific data-producing ministry, such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education. The [Database of the Institute of Statistics of Albania](#) (INSTAT), for example, efficiently groups key statistics in a data store organized by thematic areas. It allows for a selection of variables; results can be shown in table or graph formats; and it enables quick, efficient data retrieval.

Figure 4: The INSTAT database and gender equality indicators



⁵ [OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms](#).

⁶ Note that the terms database and data portal are often used interchangeably, although they are different.

| |
|---|
|  Forests |
|  Gender Equality |
|  Demographic indicators |
|  Education |
|  Health and social protection |
|  Economic empowerment |
|  Power and decision-making |
|  Access to ICT |
|  Freedom from violence |
|  Gender indices |
|  Indicators from the social survey |

Global databases: Global or international databases typically include data for numerous indicators and countries. These databases are particularly useful for comparative purposes. As such, it is important that the estimates included in global databases are in line with international concepts and definitions. In select instances, national estimates might be adjusted to ensure comparability across countries. This can sometimes result in discrepancies between national and international estimates for the same data point. It is important to use footnotes and/or metadata sheets to note these methodological challenges. As a data user, it is also important to read the metadata to understand these challenges. The [Global SDG Indicators Database](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/)⁷ is an example of a global database. It is an interactive platform that allows users to get data for a range of indicators, geographic regions and time periods. After selecting the desired variables, the data outputs are presented in a table that can be exported for analysis.

Interactive data portals: Portals and dashboards allow users to easily manipulate data for ease of use. An example is [UN Women's Data portal](https://data.unwomen.org/data-portal).⁸ The interface allows users to make queries (select data, indicators, regions, time periods, etc.) and set parameters to generate data visualizations instantly, in the form of maps, bar graphs and line charts, among others.

Databases for more expert data users include:

- **Pre-processed micro-databases:** These are databases that draw on microdata (e.g. survey or census data) but where some basic calculations have already been completed by developers. As opposed to microdata repositories, micro-databases have survey and census estimates ready to use. Thus, the user can make selections – pertaining to population groups, age groups, variables, etc. – and cross-tabulate information as desired, without utilizing statistical software. One such example is DHS STATcompiler, a tool that allows users to build custom tables, charts and maps from thousands of indicators extracted from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) across 90 countries.⁹

⁷ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

⁸ <https://data.unwomen.org/data-portal>

⁹ <https://dhsprogram.com/data/STATcompiler.cfm>

- **Microdata repositories:** These are repositories of survey data or census data where users can access individual-level records, rather than nationally aggregated estimates. Examples of microdata repositories include DHS¹⁰ and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)¹¹ repositories, for surveys, as well as the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)¹² for census data. DHS and MICS data sets are examples of survey data with information on multiple indicators of well-being for women and men, including maternal and reproductive health, family planning, nutrition, etc.¹³ After requesting access to data sets, these can be downloaded and analysed with statistical software such as STATA, SPSS or R.

CASE STUDY

In Kyrgyzstan, young journalists from the School of Data non-governmental organization (NGO) partnered with the popular Kloop Media outlet to produce compelling stories using gender data from multiple official sources including the country's data portal, on issues such as women's political participation, violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to education, and barriers to women's labour force participation. The stories, which presented data in creative ways, increased visibility of that data for a broader audience.

"Understanding and explaining gender inequality requires evidence. Data provide a means to substantiate inequalities, track progress over time, and gauge whether any progress is being made towards achieving gender equality."

- *Altynai Mambetova, co-founder of the School of Data*



[Go to the story>>](#)

¹⁰ https://dhsprogram.com/data/dataset_admin/login_main.cfm?CFID=150963&CFTOKEN=e1c1d13f58d34a15-DBEC21C1-F1FB-3EB5-7CDC977190C0B912

¹¹ <https://mics.unicef.org/surveys>

¹² <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/data.shtml>

¹³ <https://dhsprogram.com/topics/More-Topics.cfm>

4.2. Statistical reports

Reports are an organized synthesis of data, usually from a survey or other data-collection exercise by a producer. Statistical reports contain a synthesis of findings and include data presented in charts and tables. Communicating data via reports is one of the most common channels of communication between data users and producers. Statistical reports typically describe the survey methodology, providing information on survey design, the data collection process, strengths and limitations, a copy of the questionnaire used, etc. This information is important for the user to assess the reliability of findings and to interpret the data correctly. Most importantly, statistical reports are descriptive in nature, summarizing findings, rather than analysing them as evidence for policy implications.

Examples

[Gender and Environment Survey Report: Kingdom of Tonga](#)– The 2022 Gender and Environment Survey (GES) Tonga is a comprehensive national household survey exploring the multidimensional relationship of women and men with the environment in the Kingdom of Tonga. The survey estimates household and individual-level exposure to the immediate consequences of recent disasters and the prolonged impacts of climate change. It also evaluates the reciprocal influences of both women and men on the environment through their daily economic activities and livelihoods.

[Bangladesh time-use survey](#)– Bangladesh conducted its first time-use survey (TUS) in 2021. This statistical report offers insights into how gender roles shape the division of labour between men and women. The findings from the survey are enabling Bangladesh to monitor progress on SDG indicator 5.4.1 on unpaid care and domestic work for the first time. [Among its various uses](#), the TUS findings have already led to the creation of a satellite account measuring the contribution of women’s unpaid work to the economy, helped initiate a discussion on the development of a national unpaid care work programme, informed an update of the National Women Development Policy, and fuelled advocacy by civil society organizations.

4.3 Research reports

Unlike statistical reports, which aim to be descriptive, research reports bring together data and analysis from different surveys and data sets to highlight areas of priority, and often use that evidence to assess progress over time on an issue or set of issues and make policy recommendations. Such reports can focus on one country, countries in a region or subregion, or can be of global import. These reports typically include data in the form of tables, graphs or infographics, which are used to build an evidence base. Audiences for research reports include academia, policymakers, gender advocates and civil society.

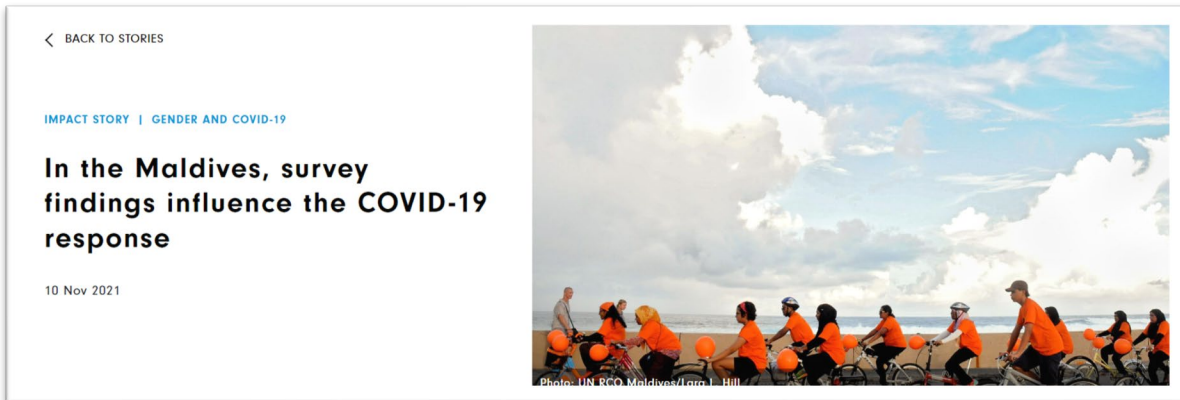
Country reports: [Afghanistan crisis update: Women and girls in displacement](#) –This report examines the needs, fears and barriers encountered by Afghan women and girls who are internally displaced or who have fled abroad, following the fall of Afghanistan’s government to Taliban rule.

Regional reports: [Two years on: The lingering gendered consequences of COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific](#) – this is a follow-up study of rapid gender assessments in the Asia-Pacific region, highlighting gaps and where policies need to be strengthened.

Global reports: [Progress of the World's Women](#), UN Women's flagship report focuses on a particular theme, brings together the latest data and research to argue for policy reform in that area. Another example is the [SDG Gender Snapshot](#), which provides an overview of SDG indicators using a gender lens, highlighting where progress has been made and where more needs to be done.

CASE STUDY

UN Women's research report on the COVID-19 rapid gender assessments in the Asia-Pacific region influenced several positive initiatives in the Maldives.



[Go to the story>>](#)

Box 5: Data users - Checklist for communicating gender data effectively

The following tips can help ensure that gender-related findings are communicated effectively in visualizations:

- ☐ Identify the target audience before crafting your product and tailor the content, the level of detail, and the type of language to your target audience.
- ☐ Focus on topics that are a priority for the target audience and integrate a gender perspective in the analysis.
- ☐ Use gender statistics for non-statistical products as well. When used effectively, data can help get your point across and convey powerful messages. Avoid jargon for non-technical audiences.
- ☐ Always include insights and context into the gender data used and discuss the caveats of the data. This is especially important to ensure the correct interpretation of the estimates.
- ☐ Always keep a balance between information showcased through graphs and text, to enable readers to get the full picture in an engaging way. You can even add text boxes to call readers' attention to a certain topic, definition or fact.

- ☐ In the presentation of gender statistics through graphs, women and men should be presented side-by-side and the words “women” and “men” and “girls” and “boys” should be used instead of “females” and “males” (which have a social connotation).¹⁴
- ☐ Women should always be presented before men both in text and visualizations.
- ☐ Unless there is a reason not to (e.g. keeping alphabetical order), organize your data from lowest to highest value before showcasing it through graphs and charts. Displaying the data in a ranked manner allows readers to make comparisons easily. If visualizing multiple sets of data, choose the parameter you wish to compare (i.e. women) and order data according to that value.
- ☐ Data should be rounded to 1,000, 100 or 10 and percentages should be rounded to integers, to facilitate comparison between women and men.

Source: UNSD. 2016. *Integrating a gender perspective into statistics*. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/gender/Integrating-a-Gender-Perspective-into-Statistics-E.pdf>

For more, see Section 5 on Data Visualization.

5. How to use data: Data visualization

Now that you know what the data sources are, you can extract relevant data from portals and reports¹⁵ and create visualizations.

5.1 The importance of data visualization

What is data visualization? The graphical representation that gives meaning to the data and improves how data are viewed and understood. This provides a visual summary of data, in ways that make it easier to interpret than looking at written text and or complex data tables.

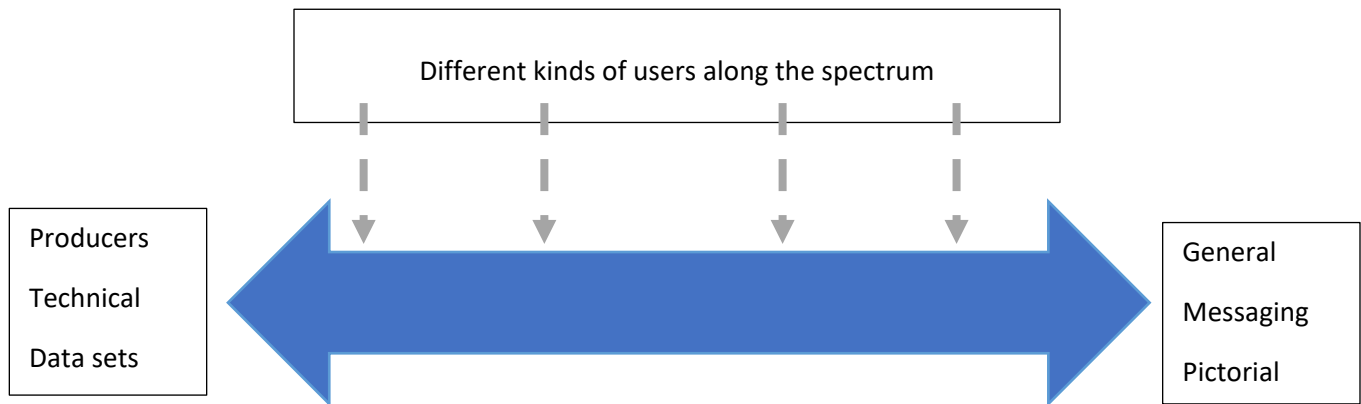
Why is data visualization useful? Charts and graphs make it easier for our brains to understand and communicate data findings. Data visualization also makes it easier to detect patterns, trends and outliers in groups of data. When done well, it will confer meaning to complicated data and statistics and help to make the message clear and concise.

Who are the users of data visualizations? At their most complex, visualizations can be aimed at more technical users and require some level of interpretation. At their simplest, they can take the form of an infographic, which pictorially depicts the data and includes messaging that can be used for advocacy to more general users, including on social media.

¹⁴ UNSD <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/gender/Integrating-a-Gender-Perspective-into-Statistics-E.pdf>

¹⁵ Note that both data portals and research reports utilize data visualization as well.

Figure 5: The spectrum of technical to general data users



5.2 Principles of data visualization

1. CLARITY
 - Keep the data visual easy to understand and convey the message clearly.
 - Focus on maximizing the impact and minimizing the noise.
 - If an element does not add any value to the visual, do not include it.
2. NARRATIVE
 - Use data to get a message across
 - Tell a story putting the data in context so they are more accessible to the audience.
3. DESIGN
 - Strike a balance between the visual design and practical utility of the visual element.

Data visualizations are made up of the following elements: Graphs, maps, icons and typography. Using these elements, you can create charts, infographics or fact sheets.

5.3 . Types of charts

Elements of a chart:

- **Title:** The title of the graph must provide an accurate description of the information in the graph, leaving no room for interpretation. It should contain a description of the indicator, the disaggregation type (if relevant) and the year. (e.g. Proportion of women ages 20–24 in a union before age 18, percentage, 2014).
- **Axes:** These are called Cartesian coordinates, where each point on the graph is defined by two numbers: Category X Axis (the horizontal line) and Category Y Axis (the vertical line)
- **Axis label:** This is the text that appears right next to the axis and indicates what is being measured and the unit (e.g. year, percentage).
- **Data labels:** Some charts visualize the data points by showing the data labels. Depending on whether you want to indicate a trend or relative value the data labels may or may not be used.

- **Legends:** For charts with more than one data series, legends are used to distinguish the different elements in the chart, such as the patterns or colours.
- **Data source:** This information appears at the bottom of the chart and identifies the origin of the information depicted in the chart.

Bar chart

- Best suited to present categorical data with bars that have dimensions proportional to their values.
- Organize bars in order for easy comparison: smallest to largest or largest to smallest.
- If a chart is highlighting information on both women/girls and men/boys, place the women/girls' bars right next to the men/boys' bars.
- Do not truncate the axis from the bottom as the results would be misleading.

Line chart

- Useful for visualizing continuous variables, such as time series (series of data showcasing trends over time).
- Unlike bar charts, in this case, truncating the vertical axis may help in reading the trend better.
- Line charts can compare different groups on the same chart, like men and women, or age-groups, for instance.

Pie chart

- Best used for measuring parts of a whole – all the slices should add up to 100 per cent.

Scatter plot

- Useful to look at the relationship between two variables, as defined by the X and Y axes.
- Scatter plots visualize distribution and outliers.
- Each variable plotted results in a cloud of dots, each dot representing a data point. The more the dots seem to cluster around a line, the higher the association between the variables.

Maps

- Best used to visualize data on a geographical map and compare values across geographical areas.
- Used only when geographical distribution matters.
- Maps can only visualize one data point in one time.
- Choropleth maps display divided geographical areas or regions that are coloured, shaded or patterned in relation to a data variable, to show variations across a geographical area.

Pictograms

- Visual symbols used to convey information quickly and effectively
- Useful for communicating complex data in an engaging way.
- Each pictogram should use a symbol or icon to convey one clear idea or concept to prevent misinterpretation.
- Should not reinforce cultural and gender bias

- Should be culturally appropriate

Advanced charts

- Box plots
- Radar charts
- Sankey charts
- Combination charts

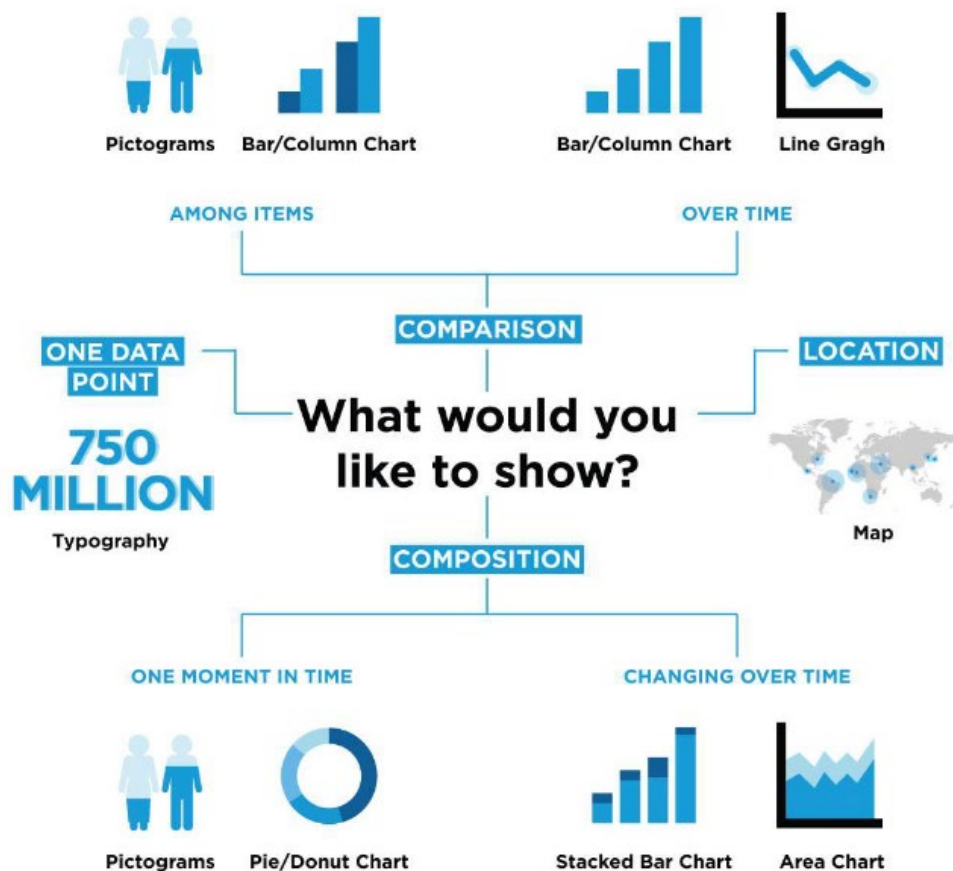
Which chart to use?

For **comparison**, i.e., seeing how two items are similar or different, use a bar chart. To compare change over time, use a line chart.

For **composition**, i.e., what parts make up a whole, use a pie chart. To look at composition change over time, use an area chart.

For **location**, use a map.

Figure 6: Which visualization to use for your purpose



For detailed instructions on creating charts, see Exercises 1-8 in **Annex 3**.

5.4 Tables

A well-designed table enhances the presentation of information in a simple structure, improves data organization, and aids in communication. Whether presented in a report, presentation, or for managing data, tables are an effective tool to convey information efficiently.

Use a table for the following purposes:

1. **Organization:** Tables help structure data in a clear and concise manner, making it easier to read and understand.
2. **Comparison:** They allow for easy comparison of different data points across rows and columns.
3. **Data Presentation:** Tables are useful for presenting quantitative data, making it visually appealing and easier to interpret.
4. **Summary:** They can summarize large amounts of information, providing an at-a-glance view, and can be used both for numerical data and non-numerical information.

Keep the following principles in mind when designing a table:

- **Organize Rows and Columns:** If the **columns** represent variables or categories, then **rows** represent observations or data points, or vice versa, depending on your layout.
- **Hierarchical layout:** order data by value or other categories, and if necessary, group related data to highlight comparisons or trends.
- **Summary Statistics:** If relevant, include summary statistics (like totals, averages, or percentages) at the bottom or end of the table.
- **Maintain Visual Clarity:** Keep the design simple; avoid excessive lines or shading that can distract from the data and add visual clutter.
- **Alignment:** Align numerical data to the right and text to the left for easy comparison.
- **Spacing:** Ensure adequate spacing between rows and columns for readability.
- **Borders and shading:** Using a gentle shading on alternate rows can help the reader scan the table more easily. Avoid using thick borders that may make the data difficult to read.

Figure 7A: Non-numerical information presented in a table

Figure 7B: Numerical data presented in a table

| Country/ territory | Women | Men | Double adult | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------------|-------|
| Cook Islands | 1.6 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 1.0 |
| Kiribati | 1.8 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 2.4 |
| Marshall Islands | 1.6 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 1.2 |
| Micronesia (Federated States of) | 1.8 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 2.5 |
| Nauru | 2.0 | 1.7 | 3.5 | 3.1 |
| Niue | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 0.9 |
| Palau | 1.6 | 1.0 | 2.1 | 0.8 |
| Solomon Islands | 2.4 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 2.7 |
| Tokelau | 1.5 | 1.4 | 2.5 | 1.7 |
| Tonga | 2.0 | 1.7 | 3.1 | 2.4 |
| Tuvalu | 1.5 | 1.0 | 2.8 | 2.2 |
| Vanuatu | 2.4 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 2.0 |

| | Country/territory | Survey |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Cook Islands | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2015 |
| 2 | Kiribati | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019 |
| 3 | Marshall Islands | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019 |
| 4 | Micronesia (Federated States of) | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2013 |
| 5 | Nauru | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2012 |
| 6 | Niue | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2015 |
| 7 | Palau | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2014 |
| 8 | Samoa | Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census, 2016 |
| 9 | Solomon Islands | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2012 |
| 10 | Tokelau | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2015 |
| 11 | Tonga | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2015 |
| 12 | Tuvalu | Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2015 |
| 13 | Vanuatu | National Sustainable Development Plan Baseline Survey, 2019 (Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2019) |

5.5 Infographics

Several elements of data visualization, such as charts or maps, can be combined with typography and icons to present information clearly and in a concise manner. An infographic can be used to explain a situation, concept or analysis. An effective infographic tells a compelling story by combining gender data, visuals and narrative (see Figure 8).

1. **Gender data:** The data is usually the focus of an infographic, to convey key messages effectively. However, focus on just a few data points as the key driver of the story, without overwhelming the audience with too many numbers and facts.
2. **Visuals:** The visual is the central elements of an infographic and should be the key storytelling device. The visual can combine icons and typography but should be simple, concise and easy to understand, using a strong and cohesive colour and style.
3. **Narrative:** The narrative conveys the key message of an infographic, starting from the title and woven through the infographic. It can be part of the visual in the typography, as well as any takeaway. Minimize the amount of text in infographics – keep it short, jargon-free and to-the-point, and just to help complete the story being told. See Figure 9 as an example.

Figure 8: Three principles of infographic design

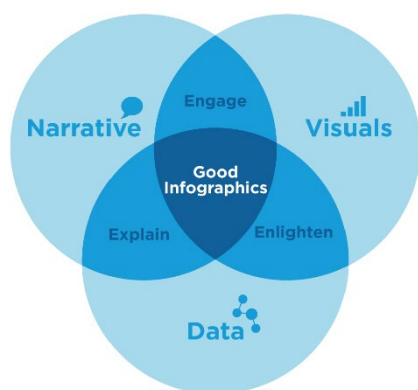


Figure 9: Social media asset on the report *Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*



Box 6: Designing infographics

The Adobe Creative Suite, including Illustrator, is an industry standard among designers for creating visualizations and infographics. While these and other design tools may require a bit more professional skills in design, there are other options that are more accessible and easier to learn.

Canva and Infogram are two popular, cost-effective, easy-to-use tools to create infographics, presentations, posters and other data visualizations. The tools can be used by those who have little or no experience in creating data visuals, although its ability to produce more complex assets is limited. For a tutorial on Canva see Exercise 9 in **Annex 3**.

Figure 10: Elements of an effective infographic



5.6 . Fact sheets

A factsheet is an informational overview intended for a general and non-technical audience that:

- is a **stand-alone** concise document (1–4 pages)
- usually presents information on **one topic or multiple topics** with a common thread (e.g., same country)
- presents a snapshot of key **findings** or quick **facts**
- has a visually appealing presentation, with different **visual elements** (photos, icons, illustrations, charts, colour, shaded boxes, typography)

Anatomy of a fact sheet

- Start by giving a clear title that truly summarizes the content of the fact sheet without making it too technical.
- Give brief background to set the context. It is usually best to have a narrative or a key takeaway for users, which will also help organize the data you present.
- Where relevant, include an image to help your audience resonate with the issue. Avoid using images that stereotype or can be taken out of context in the data set. In the case of data pertaining to sensitive topics, such as violence against women, avoid images that might portray or signify victimization or violence.
- Given the limited space, the use of images is only encouraged in headers or cover pages.
- Choose three to five key points you want to highlight.

- Contextualize text with accurately and succinctly labelled data visuals. Visuals make the document more accessible and catch people's attention. Make sure the data sources are provided for transparency and crediting, and to allow users to access the data directly if needed.
- Maintain a coherent visual identity, colour scheme, typography and margin sizes throughout the factsheet.

5.7 . Multimedia

Presenting data through original multimedia content that people want to watch, listen to and share is one of the most effective ways of engaging diverse audiences, from civil society to governments, policymakers to journalists and the general public. Multimedia tools allow us to provide vivid, intimate portraits of women and girls behind the data, making these data more accessible and exciting. For detailed guidance on storytelling, see section 6.

Multimedia content usually combines two or more types of media, such as photo, audio, video or web, and is consumed in a wide variety of formats and venues: social media and mobile devices, news media, branded advertising content, film screenings, virtual events, and more. In this context, the production quality and style should match the format being used. For example, a scripted, documentary-style video shared on YouTube would need to be created using a higher quality standard, whereas a quick and casual self-recorded video for TikTok might actually perform better with a lower production value. Regardless of the platform, successful multimedia products require advance planning and research, adequate budgets, and quality assurance processes to ensure successful distribution and engagement.

Planning to create multimedia content? Keep these tips in mind.

1. What is the purpose and the story you want to tell? Is it to educate, advocate, inspire action?
2. Who is the target audience?
 - Who are we speaking to? Be as specific and narrow as possible - try to drill down on the specific demographics of your target audience (i.e., age, sector, region/languages, interests, etc.)
 - Why will they watch? In other words, why should my target audience care?
 - What do we want them to do after watching the audiovisual content? Share the content, volunteer, donate, advocate?
3. How, where and when will you reach your target audience?
 - Where is my target audience most likely to see this content? The platform will determine the best format for the multimedia content.
 - Is there a plan for the multimedia content to be published on a high-traffic web page, within a new publication or on another platform that will also help boost engagement?
 - What other platform-specific factors should be considered to inform the format and style of this content? Depending on where this content will live, the length, tone of content, aspect ratio/composition and even thumbnail design will need to be considered.
4. Is this the best format to communicate gender data to my target audience? For example, if a multimedia product is largely composed of text and images, could it work better as a web article? Could it be designed as a static social media asset and still be as effective? How are audio, video

and interactivity aiding you in delivering this particular message? The more complex the product, the higher the budget will need to be.

5. What is your budget and timeline? Here are some considerations that can impact both:
 - Custom interactivity
 - Recording audio, video and voiceovers
 - Third-party footage, photos or music (copyrighted content will need to be paid for)
 - Editing video, or development of a web product
 - Translations, subtitles, etc.
6. How will you measure success? Is it about total views, downloads, audience retention, new followers?

CASE STUDY: Video on the Gender and Environment Survey of Tonga

After undertaking its first-ever [Gender and Environment Survey](#) (GES) in 2022 – one of only a handful conducted globally – the Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) and UN Women co-produced a short [video](#) capturing the voices from women and men impacted by disasters and surveyed in various Tongan islands.

At one point, Manusiu Vaiangina, a woman surveyed in the town of ‘Ohonua, ‘Eua, gets teary-eyed and says: “When I see what is happening with the environment and how it is changing, it makes me very anxious.”

It’s emotive voices like these that stood out for Makelesi Kioa, Principal Programme Officer and Acting CEO for the Women’s Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED) within Tonga’s Ministry of Internal Affairs. “I look at their faces when they’re in the video and I really see a huge hardship that they’ve been through. With that, I’m trying to figure out what would be a good project to help those women out there build or help them with their livelihoods.”

Sione Lolohea, the Government Statistician with TSD, says the video sought to do just that – reach a larger audience, enhance awareness and influence policymakers.

“We normally produce numbers and tables and graphs, but when we produce videos, we see that the stories bring the numbers to life. It creates empathy for those communities. It’s more memorable,” says Lolohea. “Our main role has always been numbers and quantitative data, but we do need more of this to capture qualitative experiences.”

His colleague, Mele Manitisia, Principal Statistician for the Population and Social Programme at TSD, adds that policymakers are connecting with the video. “I remember after the in-country launch, the Minister for Internal Affairs came to us and said: ‘Wow, what a powerful video!’ Then, at the Regional Climate Change Meeting in Vanuatu [in May 2024], I ended my presentation with the video, and it worked. I think all the participants had heard about the volcanic eruption, but when they saw the video, they kept referring to it all week. I kept hearing things like: ‘Do you remember what the woman said about the water?’”

She says multimedia data products are definitely something they plan to invest in for future reports.

Read more about the GES Survey on [UN Women’s Data Hub](#).

PRACTICE

6. Data storytelling

All communication is storytelling, and when we communicate gender data, we are finding the story within the data and highlighting the women and girls behind the data, whose lived experiences we are trying to convey. In order to effectively tell a story using data, we must always present data in context.

BOX 7: What does it mean to present DATA IN CONTEXT?

Context is one of the key principles of data feminism covered in Box 2. This principle is based on the notion that data are never neutral or objective. The characteristics and values of people involved along the value chain influence the process every step of the way, including what gets measured and what remains invisible. If we are to use data effectively, we need to examine and understand the context in which they were conceptualized, designed, collected, analysed, reported on and used.

For example, stories can delve into the process of how certain previously unmeasured gender data have managed to be collected. See [this example on data about intersectionality](#) in Colombia, this example on [gender and the environment data](#), or this story on how [LGBTIQ+ people were counted for the first time in Nepal's Census](#).

Another way context is important is to understand the story behind each data point. This includes a discussion of how the data fit into a current situation, the methodological underpinnings, analysis and so on. See this story on [emerging data on violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), this story on [how women with disabilities have been affected by the pandemic](#), or this story on [the challenges of collecting data and analysis on how war in Ukraine is impacting women and girls](#).

To this end, through the Women Count programme, UN Women and PARIS21 have been providing [training for data users such as journalists](#), activists and data enthusiasts on how to craft compelling narratives and products using gender data. This has also included hosting gender data bootcamps and competitions and providing professional mentorship and production support.

6.1 Relationships with the media

Building relationships between gender data producers and the media are key to both improving access to gender data and statistics and ensuring coverage of new data releases. For data producers, the engagement should go well beyond circulating press releases at the launch of survey reports but should focus on building long-term partnerships with journalists to get a sense of their need, and to provide data in a way that they will be most likely to be used. For media users, it is also important to build relationships with producers, both to ensure they can be reached for questions if anything about the data is unclear, and so to provide feedback on what stories they are working on, and what data gaps they may be facing.


Relationship-building requires ensuring that communication flows between data producers and the media are systematized, so that data producers can routinely generate products that meet the needs and interests of the media and their audience, and so that journalists effectively use these data in their stories.

CASE STUDIES

Devex Focus on gender data

FOCUS ON: GENDER DATA

This focus area, powered by UN Women, highlights how data is being used to inform policy and advocacy to advance gender equality. Gender data is crucial to make every woman and girl count. Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking



GLOBAL HEALTH

Interactive: What is the state of the world population?

Powered by



Women Count is UN Women's gender data programme, created to improve how gender data is produced, used and shared, so that all women and girls are counted.
Data.unwomen.org

TWEETS BY UN WOMEN

Through a partnership with UN Women, the development news outlet Devex created a focus area on gender data (<https://www.devex.com/focus/gender-data>) with the aim to increase coverage of gender data issues. As a result of the partnership, there was an explosion of articles including, and about, gender data and high engagement with readers. The focus area received more than 160,000 online visitors; produced 51 pieces of content, including op-eds, blogs and articles; and shared 12 newsletters with 1.4 million people. Moreover, social media outreach under the partnership generated over 8.5 million impressions.

BBC 100 Women focus on unpaid care



The coronavirus pandemic could wipe out 25 years of increasing gender equality, new global data from UN Women suggests.

UN Women also partnered with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to highlight findings from Rapid Gender Assessments conducted during COVID-19 to shed light on women's unpaid work during

the pandemic through the BBC's 100 Women initiative. As a result of the partnership, UN Women developed a data brief, "[Whose time to care: Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19](#)". The brief presented findings in a concise and accessible way. The BBC then used the data in the brief for an article, "[Coronavirus and gender: More chores for women set back gains in equality](#)", which was translated into 10 languages, reaching some 1 million readers. The BBC also supplemented the article with social media stories and interactives. As a result of the BBC's coverage, the data were also replicated by CNBC, CNN and other international and regional news outlets, including data on mothers' exodus from the workforce (also covered in the brief), which was picked up by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Recommendations for data producers for building dialogue with journalists

- Build and leverage long-lasting relationships with media organizations and individual journalists. This can be done by inviting them to events, and partnering with organizations that work with journalists, such as press associations. Institutionalizing dialogue between data producers and media professionals can help target data production and reduce data waste significantly.
- Build the capacity of journalists on both statistics and gender. While some data journalists already have statistical capacity, some will need training on gender issues. This can be done through partnerships with academic institutions and schools of communications and journalism, or through hands-on training events catering to media personnel. Training on how to analyse and understand statistics and report on gender issues will help improve how journalists write about gender and use gender data in their reporting.
- During press conferences and briefings where media are present, be prepared with key messages and talking points that should be reiterated throughout the event. Stick to fewer key messages for the most effective impact. Keep in mind that you want to reach the audience of the media organization and not just the reporter, and tailor messaging for the ultimate audience.
- Avoid technical jargon but be clear about the facts using simple language, leaving no room for misinterpreting the data.
- Be helpful to reporters by being responsive and designing materials that support your message and are useful to the media, like fact sheets, and provide access to the data through Excel files.
- Create a culture of transparency – do not say "no comment", or go off the record, and never misrepresent the facts or make up answers. If journalists ask questions for which you don't have answers, be honest but get their contact details to follow up with them.

Recommendations for journalists for using data and working with data producers

- Be mindful of the differences between official and non-official statistics and choose official statistics whenever available. Also, educate your audience about this. Convey that official statistics typically carry more weight, as they are compiled in a more rigorous way, utilizing large sample sizes and making use of large teams of enumerators. If utilizing non-official statistics (such as small surveys, private sector data, and other ad hoc data-collection exercises), highlight the ad hoc nature of the data and their limitations to your audience.
- Once you have selected the data you want to use, ensure that you fully understand it – when in doubt, read the associated metadata (see Modules 1 and 2 for details on Metadata) for definitions, methods of computation, data sources and caveats. This will help interpret the data correctly.

- If you find caveats on your data, include information about these conditions or limitations in your media product, either through footnotes or through simple explanations so the readers understand the reliability and significance of the figures.
- Make sure you are interpreting the data correctly and using the right language. Besides reading the metadata, pay attention to the use of words such as percentage, percentage points, proportion, ratio and rate (see Module 2 for details on the differences). Similarly, statistical concepts such as mean, median and average aren't typically interchangeable, so be mindful. (See Module 2 on Interpreting Gender Data for details on this).
- If you can't find the data you are looking for, don't assume the data do not exist. Reach out to the National Statistics Office for guidance. On occasion, they may grant journalists access to specific data sets or work with them to draft stories. Remember to contact statisticians well in advance to ensure the data can be provided in a timely manner.
- If the data are not available in the exact format you are looking for, you can also contact national statisticians to request different formats, or you can transform it yourself. In many countries (as explained above), National Statistical Training Institutes organize periodic training events for journalists to gain this type of knowledge. If you modify the data yourself, consider sending your findings back to the data producers for their final validation before publication.
- If you find that, even after contacting national statisticians, the data you are looking for are unavailable, use your media product to highlight important gender data gaps and raise public awareness on the importance of enhancing the availability of gender statistics.

CASE STUDY

Add a case study from a data journalist's perspective on the benefits of working with a data producer to get data for reporting

6.2 Writing a gender data story

Gender data stories can be published on organizational websites and blogs, and if strong relationships with the media are being fostered, these stories can be pitched to media organizations for publication in print or online news outlets.

There are two types of gender data stories that are typically written. One is a story of change. This kind of story is about gender data itself – showing how gender data leads to change, such as a time-use survey leading to a national policy on care. The other kind of story is evidence-based advocacy – it uses gender data as evidence to highlight an issue and propose solutions.

Story of change: A story of change demonstrates the way in which changes in how gender data are collected, used or disseminated leads to real life changes in policy and practice.

The types of data discussed in the story can include:

- Official statistics
- Census data
- Survey data
- Administrative data, including civil registration and vital statistics data

- Randomized control trial data
- 'Big' or digital data
- Citizen-generated data

Ideally, this kind of story should focus on an **outcome** that results from gender data becoming available and highlight the resulting policy change, reflect on how a programme is implemented and services are delivered, or on changes in social institutions and norms. If it is too early for an outcome to be observed, then a story may focus on the **potential outcome** and the promise of change in policy or practice, using examples of other situations or countries where that outcome has been reached, for example. A story of change may focus on the power of gender data to inform decision-making, outreach to communities and to illuminate a situation that needs a solution. For instance, a survey on infrastructure may reveal the need to invest in safe public transportation that serves women in a community.

For examples of gender data stories of change, see:

- [Time-use data in Senegal spur advocacy, policy and programme revisions](#)
- [Uganda's violence against women survey heralds legislative and policy changes](#)
- [COVID-19 survey on violence against women in Colombia heralds local-level data and changes](#)
- [Bangladesh blazes trails on measuring women's unpaid work](#)
- [In the Maldives, survey findings influence the COVID-19 response](#)
- [In Jordan, RGAs influence national plans and prompt programmatic responses](#)
- [In Chile, data on women's paid and unpaid work prompt subsidy for working caregivers and inform upcoming national care policy](#)
- [Rapid gender assessment helps target Albanian Government programmes and budgeting](#)
- [In Georgia, violence against women study ushers in country's first sexual harassment law](#)

Evidence-based advocacy story: Gender data is leveraged as a storytelling device to provide compelling evidence on an issue. It helps illustrate the key arguments and the solution being proposed.

Data can help people understand an issue. In evidence stories, the focus will be on a topic, whether it is related to current affairs in the news (migrant family separations in the US), emerging areas of concern regarding gender equality (women's unpaid care work), important holidays or commemorations (International Day to End Violence against Women), research findings (new analysis on gender and poverty) or other topics of interest.

Gender-data-as-evidence stories should embed dynamic data visualizations and infographics to further illustrate how the data are being used to tell the story and make a compelling argument. In this type of story, the data sources can be varied, but the focus will be on enlivening the story by using data to illustrate the narrative.

For examples of gender evidence-based advocacy stories, see:

- [Caring for carers: Recognizing the rights and contributions of older women](#)
- [Why climate change matters for women](#)
- [Poverty is not gender-neutral](#)
- [Leaving no girl behind in education](#)

- [It will take 22 years to close SDG gender data gaps](#)
- [Big data analysis finds little mention of gender in climate speeches](#)
- [More than 2 million moms left the labour force in 2020 according to new global estimates](#)
- [Rapid gender analysis in Haiti reveals earthquake-related impacts on women and girls](#)
- [Emerging data on violence against women confirm a shadow pandemic](#)
- [The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden, but by how much?](#)
- [Surveys show that COVID-19 has gendered effects in Asia and the Pacific](#)

Tips for writing effective gender data stories

1. Use a strong **headline**/title to capture the reader’s attention and convey the key message.
2. Summarize the key points in **the lead sentence or introductory paragraph**. In the case of stories of change, a story may open with a human-interest angle, either with a quote or a story from a woman affected by the change, which lends further context to the situation.
3. In the **main body**, provide the context for the gender data being presented, add further detail, and include colour in the form of quotes from people involved, particularly in stories of change.
4. Where relevant (particularly in evidence-based stories), illustrate the data through charts and infographics and make sure they are properly sourced and labelled.
5. **End** with a call to action, either with some recommendations for change, or a link to read more. Stories of change can end with a colourful ‘kicker’ quote or details about what is next.

Recommendations

- Be clear about your objective and your target audience before writing any story.
- Use an accessible writing style, avoiding technical jargon.
- Make sure data and evidence are fact-checked and include reliable sources.
- Make the topic relevant by connecting it with current events or highlighting what is new.
- Don’t use too much data that would confuse the reader, focusing on a few key findings instead. Where there is a lot of data, visualize it in a chart instead.
- Be concise and limit the length to 800 words is possible.
- Bring in voices of real-life people affected by the story as well as experts who can speak to the subject matter.

CASE STUDIES

Story of change: [Uganda’s violence against women survey heralds legislative and policy changes](#)

Evidence-based advocacy: [Leaving no girl behind in education](#)

6.3 Writing a press release

A professional press release has five main components:

1. Heading – For documents to be issued, use your organization’s letterhead. For web releases, a letterhead is not needed. Include the date of the press release and the text “For Immediate Release” or “Under embargo until DATE”.

2. Headline – A short and “catchy” headline should grab the reader’s attention and very briefly summarize the main takeaway. Use the present tense to convey immediacy. Some examples:

“Hundreds of vulnerable children evacuated for second time as Sudan war continues to put millions of children at risk” ([UNICEF, 27 December 2023](#) – focus is on numbers and action taken)

“More women and girls killed in 2022 even as overall homicide numbers fall, says new research from UNODC and UN Women” ([UN Women, 22 November 2023](#) – focus on a report launch, emphasizing data)

3. Body – The first paragraph should summarize the key message of the press release. The first sentence should state what is happening, and the subsequent sentences in the paragraph should provide additional information concisely, focusing on the facts and avoiding extraneous detail. Also start the sentence with the location from which the press release is being issued. Examples:

PORT SUDAN/NEW YORK, 27 December 2023 – 253 babies and children have been safely evacuated from transit centres in Wad Madani, Sudan to a safer location in the country, after fighting in Al Jazirah state erupted this month. For many of the children, this is the second time they have been evacuated after they were evacuated from Mygoma orphanages in Khartoum earlier in the year following the outbreak of the war in April. ([UNICEF, 27 December 2023](#))

New York/Vienna — Nearly 89,000 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2022 across the globe, says a new research paper, “Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide)”, from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women. ([UN Women, 22 November 2023](#))

4. The five Ws: Who? What? Where? When? Why? – Now that the main focus is established, provide more details. These usually follow the prompts of the 5 Ws. Who is doing what, and who is most affected? What is happening? When and where is this happening? Why is this happening, or why is this newsworthy? Include ‘colour’ in the form of quotes, along with key data and findings. Quotes can be from high-level representatives, but should also include the voices of women and girls affected as well.

5. Call to Action – Include a link to the report or other resource you want to highlight. Include the names of the media contacts, so journalists know who to call to request an interview or for more information.

READ THE FULL PRESS RELEASES

[Hundreds of vulnerable children evacuated for second time as Sudan war continues to put millions of children at risk](#)

[More women and girls killed in 2022 even as overall homicide numbers fall, says new research from UNODC and UN Women](#)

6.4 Using data in social media

Social media networking is, by definition, about interaction and engaging an audience. Building an audience, engaging your audience through comments, reactions and a call to action represent the best opportunities of social media. Social media are web-based services or platforms that allow users to create profiles and convey messages to a network of followers – the most popular social media

platforms include Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube and LinkedIn. Each of these focus on different types of media and engage their users in different ways.

Box 8: The different social media platforms and how they vary

Facebook is the world's most popular social media network, allowing users to post various types of content, either publicly or privately to their own network, and create professional or leisure-focused groups or pages. It has more than 3 billion monthly active users.

YouTube is a video-based network, allowing users to post their own video-based content, watch others, and create customized playlists. It has 2.49 billion active users.

WhatsApp is an instant messaging mobile application that allows users to send private messages (protected by end-to-end encryption), photos or other media content. It has at least 2 billion monthly active users.

Instagram is a photo-based network built around sharing photos and videos. It has 2 billion monthly active users.

TikTok is a video-sharing app that allows users to create and share short-form videos from mobile devices, often accompanied by music. It has more than 1.5 billion monthly users.

WeChat (or Weixin 微信 in Chinese) is an instant messaging, social media and mobile payment app. It has at least 1.33 billion monthly active users.

Source: User estimates based on <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>, as of January 2024.

One of the key characteristics of social media is its focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Social media has transformed the landscape of how information is shared and communicated globally as well as the relationship between citizens and governments. It is a powerful tool for communicating gender-related information across the globe. A distinct feature of social media compared to other forms of communication is that it generates user engagement and community dialogue, as opposed to communication only flowing unilaterally.

Because social media is a free-flowing exchange of information and dialogue driven by individuals, content is consumed and interacted with at a much faster pace. Content consumption and user behaviour on social media can vary depending on the type of post or activity, user demographics (age, literacy level) as well as time and day of the week/month/year. Thus, social media content must be:

- **CONCISE:** Simple, easy to understand and must not pack in too many different data points at once.
- **ATTENTION-GRABBING:** Hook the user in with a compelling, meaningful and punchy message. Pair that with powerful imagery or visuals.
- **AUTHENTIC:** Where you can, link to human stories or current affairs, and always be true to your own voice and brand message.
- **JARGON FREE:** Avoid using technical specialized terms not understood by everyone.
- **NON-MISLEADING:** Ethically inform and persuade, without blowing something out of proportion.

Figure 11: SDG social media asset



Good practices in creating assets:

- Keep in mind format sizes:
 - o Instagram: 1080x1080 px
 - o Facebook: 1200x630 px
 - o Twitter: 1024x512 px
- Write an image description or 'alt text' that describes what is in the picture. You can add this to the 'backend' of your image.
- Content should be shareable with every device: phone, laptop, desktop, tablets.
- Include a call to action – link to a report or site.

Good practices in creating content:

- Create relevant content (e.g. connected to current affairs or trending topics) and shareable materials.
- Craft your message to suit the target audience's interests and knowledge-level of the topic.
- Make sure gender data takes centre-stage. Brevity is key in social media, so place your most compelling or convincing gender data as the focus of the message.
- Ensure your story is accurate.
- Ensure your story is culturally sensitive and doesn't reinforce stereotypes.

Annex 1: Resources

[UN Women/SIAP Gender Statistics Training Curriculum](#)

[UN Women/PARIS21 e-learning module on Communicating Gender Statistics for Gender Equality](#)

[UN Women/PARIS21 e-learning module on Communicating Gender Statistics on Women's Economic Empowerment](#)

[East and Southern Africa gender statistics resource hub](#)

[Counted and Visible Toolkit](#)

[Repository of Gender Statistics Training Experts](#)