



Photo: UN Women Suomi

WOMEN COUNT PHASE II

BANGLADESH

The issue

Since 2018, Women Count has contributed to significant improvements in how gender data are produced and used in Bangladesh. Despite these gains, persistent challenges remain, including:

- The limited availability and accessibility of gender statistics hinder the comprehensive formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, processes and programmes focusing on gender equality, including allocating adequate resources.
- Weak coordination mechanisms, and data management and information systems for administrative data at the local/subnational level pose barriers to the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics, barring the effective monitoring of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Existing capacities and knowledge about gender data of key statistical actors are insufficient to conduct gender data analyses and use gender statistics to inform policymaking.

Our response

In phase II, Women Count in Bangladesh will expand work to:

- **Create an enabling environment:** Strengthen gender statistics coordination within the national statistical system (NSS) through technical support to mainstream gender data in national plans and strategies, such as the National Statistical Development Strategy (NSDS) 2024; develop a road map and an inter-agency coordination mechanism to guide NSDS implementation; operationalize the Gender Statistics Cell (GSC) to mainstream gender statistics across all wings of BBS effectively; and scale-up training for data users and producers by expanding engagement with stakeholders such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and media.
- **Increase data production:** Support the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) to generate data on key areas, such as violence against women (VAW) and women's economic empowerment (WEE); support statistical modernization and innovation; and help BBS introduce a new system for certifying administrative data.
- **Improve data accessibility and use:** Produce and widely disseminate new publications, such as infographics and policy briefs, and organize user-producer dialogues to track progress towards gender equality; extend technical support to Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting to enhance national monitoring of the SDGs and strengthen engagement with parliamentarians to inform gender-responsive policymaking.

Thematic priorities



Economic empowerment: Support the country's first-ever Household Production Satellite Account, using 2021 Time-Use Survey (TUS) data, to help measure the economic importance of women's unpaid care and domestic work by assessing its share in the extended economy and shape gender-responsive care policies, services and infrastructure; and support data production on women migrant workers to inform policymaking.



Violence against women: Complement the VAW Prevalence Survey undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and BBS by supporting a deep-dive into unexplored areas of VAW in Bangladesh, such as the nexus between climate change and VAW, focusing on climate-vulnerable areas in Bangladesh.

Results 2023

Creating an enabling environment

- **Bangladesh updates its National Action Plan for the National Women's Development Policy, with concrete initiatives to improve gender statistics in 48 ministries.** Led by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), with technical support from UN Women, an important policy framework, the National Action Plan (NAP) 2021–2030 for the National Women's Development Policy (2011) (NWDP), was updated in 2023 with a strong commitment and concrete actions to improve gender statistics. The new NAP-NWDP, covering 48 ministries, outlines key initiatives on gender statistics, such as the regular publication of gender budget reports with gender-focused analysis on expenditures and utilization, ensuring the collection of sex-disaggregated data by all ministries and agencies, conducting and publishing research on women's time-use, and incorporating the value of women's unpaid care and domestic in the formal accounting system. The NAP includes targets that will be monitored by MoWCA.
- **After Women Count advocacy, the first revision of the Bangladesh National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in over a decade now includes a comprehensive section on gender statistics.** Aligned with the 8th Five-Year Plan, in 2023 the Government of Bangladesh initiated the process of updating and revising the 2013 NSDS, to expand its commitments on gender statistics. UN Women leveraged opportunities to advocate for mainstreaming gender in the NSDS, and the draft NSDS now sets out clear, forward-looking actions on gender statistics. These include the regular production of critical data on VAW, and

unpaid care and domestic work, and the development of standardized methodologies following international best standards, to improve the governance, production and use of gender statistics in the NSS. UN Women underscored the need for a comprehensive section on gender statistics with such forward-looking actions at three high-level stakeholder consultations organized by BBS on NSDS development in April, May and June 2023. To be finalized in 2024, the new NSDS will serve as a strategic blueprint for the coming six years, (2024–2030), underscoring the vision of the NSS to improve evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development, in alignment with national and international development agendas, including the SDGs. The NSDS represents a critical entry point for strengthening gender statistics for evidence-based policymaking.

- **The Government of Bangladesh endorses strategic international partnerships on gender-just climate solutions and has plans to scale-up environment and disaster-related statistics in particular.** With funding support from UN Women, BBS enhanced its exposure to knowledge and peer-learning on gender statistics across the gender-climate nexus, through the participation of the Deputy Director of BBS for the Rajshahi District Statistics Office at the Gender and Environment Data Conference in Dubai, a pre-Climate Change Conference (COP28) event in late November 2023. The event facilitated the exchange of best practices and explored innovative solutions to common challenges related to producing and using data on the gender-climate nexus. At COP28, Bangladesh also endorsed the "Gender-Responsive Just Transitions & Climate Action Partnership", focusing on financing, data and opportunities to attain gender-just climate solutions. This endorsement is a testament to the Government's commitment to scale-up evidence-generation to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including on the impact of the climate crisis. This commitment is further bolstered in the draft NSDS 2024, where "enhancing statistical systems to improve climate change, the environment, and disaster-related statistics" is outlined as one of the six priority areas.

Increasing data production

- **UN Women provides input to questionnaires for VAW survey and prepares for a qualitative deep dive.** In 2023, UN Women laid the foundations to support BBS to dive deeper into the qualitative nature and root causes of unexplored aspects of VAW in Bangladesh, such as a focus on VAW in climate-vulnerable areas. This will be done with support from UNFPA, after the quantitative primary data-collection and analysis

for the third VAW prevalence survey¹ is completed (in March–July 2024). At an inception workshop hosted by BBS and UNFPA in October 2023, UN Women Bangladesh provided input to the quantitative questionnaires for all five modules of the VAW prevalence survey (physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, emotional violence, technology-facilitated violence, controlling behaviour, and cost of violence), including advocating for the consistent use of gender-sensitive language, especially when translating questions into Bengali, and the costing of VAW, with forward-looking actions.

Improving data use

- **Time-use data were used in CSO advocacy, to advance discussions on the care economy, and to inform the NAP-NWDP.** In 2023, data from the TUS 2021 were used for advocacy across sectors and forums, such as to inform the [Charter of Demand](#) developed by a coalition of CSOs from the inter-generational feminist movement in Bangladesh under an initiative supported by UN Women. TUS findings were also used to advance discussions on the care economy in the Local Consultative Group on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (LCG WAGE), the primary Government-UN-development partners coordination mechanism, which decided to prioritize the care economy in its 2024 workplan and a dedicated discussion on the care economy is tentatively scheduled for the 14th LCG WAGE meeting in 2024. In addition, TUS data were used in a national factsheet on gender statistics aligned with the SDGs (which is pending final review and approval by MoWCA). Data from the TUS 2021 were also used to inform the revision of the NAP-NWDP, which now specifies that BBS and its Statistics and Informatics Division must conduct a TUS on a regular basis and continue to assess the economic value of unpaid care and domestic work.
- **TUS data were widely disseminated and partnerships were leveraged to begin the production of a BBS Household Production Satellite account, in line with the Prime Minister's directive to value women's unpaid work.** The final [Time-Use Survey 2021](#) report was published in English by BBS in July 2023, with support from UN Women, following an extensive

process of review and approval by the Ministry of Planning. The report was also widely disseminated by BBS, including to all 64 district-level BBS offices, District Departments of Women Affairs (DWA), and Deputy Commissioners' (DC) offices across the country. Dissemination of the TUS findings was further strengthened by the publication of 10 data cards (five in English and five in Bengali), on UN Women's [Facebook](#) page, reaching more than 7,600 engagements. Following the priority accorded by the [Prime Minister to include women's unpaid work in GDP calculation](#), in April 2023, UN Women leveraged its regional agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to request its technical assistance to support BBS in its preparation of a Household Production Satellite Account, with a first meeting held in October 2023. Building on the current Gender Strategy and commitment to SDG Indicator 5.4.1 in the 8th Five-Year Plan, there is potential to use the Household Production Satellite Account to influence the forthcoming 9th Five-Year Plan (2026–2030) and inform care-related policies and initiatives.

Plans for 2024

In 2024, key priorities will include:

1. **Creating an enabling environment:** Provide capacity-building and training support to data users and producers, such as ministries, departments and agencies to improve the collection and use of gender data for advocacy and reporting and expand possible collaboration between UN Women and BBS on gender statistics across the gender-climate nexus.
2. **Increasing data production:** Provide technical support to BBS to generate data on key areas, such as VAW and WEE, through the development of a Household Production Satellite Account using data from the TUS 2021 and a qualitative deep dive into the unexplored nature of VAW, complementing the national VAW prevalence survey.
3. **Increasing data accessibility and use:** Strengthen the evidence-base to report on progress towards gender equality by assisting BBS to develop quality knowledge products and enhance the accessibility and uptake of gender data by organizing user-producer dialogues and engaging with policymakers to inform policies.

¹ The second VAW prevalence survey was in 2015.

