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Measuring time-use and valuing unpaid work

Have time-use surveys been used to guide unpaid care work policies and programmes? Case studies from Europe and Central Asia

Note by Data2X consultant*

Abstract

Time-use surveys are a rich source of information on many aspects of life, including how gender roles shape the types of paid and unpaid work we do. These surveys are burdensome on respondents and expensive to conduct - is the value of this information being fully realised and transformed into better policies and programmes? A series of case studies explores recent experiences of several countries in Europe and Central Asia and the extent to which time-use surveys are having any direct or indirect impact.

1. Recognizing and valuing the work people do to care for children, older people and adults with special needs is a significant gender issue. This is because it tends to be women that do most of this work and often in addition to other paid and unpaid forms of labour. In almost every country in Europe and Central Asia that has conducted a recent time-use survey, women spend more hours per day doing a combination of paid and unpaid work than men (Figure 1). In all cases except for Sweden, the majority of time women spend working is on unpaid domestic work. There is no gender

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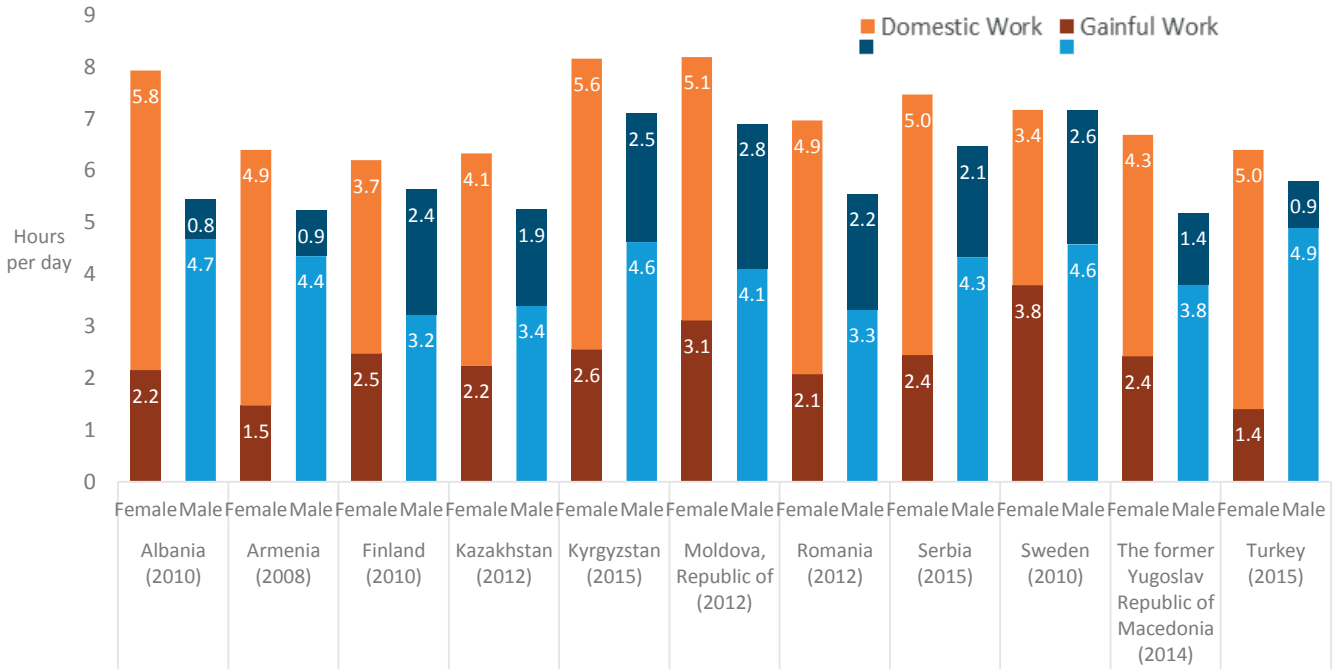
gap in Sweden, where both women and men do an average of 7.2 hours per day of paid and unpaid work and both do more paid work than domestic work.

Figure 1: Time-use by sex, in hours per day, various countries in Europe and Central Asia



Notes: Domestic work includes housework, child and adult care, gardening and pet care, construction and repairs, shopping and services, and household management. Gainful work includes time spent on main and second jobs (including informal employment) and related activities, breaks and travel during working hours, and on job seeking.

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database (http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/en/).

2. Policies and programmes that aim to increase women's labour force participation should consider the demands of care work and how this can be managed alongside income generating activities. Time-use surveys (TUS) are the best source of reliable estimates on how much time is spent on child and adult care and the characteristics of the people who do that work. While their status as a rich source of information for gender analysis and evidence-based policymaking has been established, TUSs are rare due to their cost and related difficulties in their administration. This paper seeks to establish, to what extent are TUSs, where they have been conducted, have actually been used to inform policies on unpaid care work? This is part of a wider research programme on Time-use Surveys and unpaid work being conducted at Data2X (see below).

I. About Data2X and the Women's Work and Employment Partnership

3. Data2X, housed at the UN Foundation, with support from William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to improve both what and how data is collected in

order to close gaps in information about the lives of women and girls. Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Bank, Data2X launched the Women's Work and Employment partnership in 2014 to support research on how to operationalizes the new conceptual framework for measuring work and employment. The second phase of the partnership will continue from 2017-19, with an additional component on measuring unpaid care work. Data2X will examine how time-use surveys have collected information on unpaid care work and how this information has been used to develop national policies and programmes. Case studies, based on desk review and contributions from national experts, have been prepared in all regions, including Europe and Central Asia, following a common approach described below.

II. Framework for analyzing the impact of time-use surveys on policy

4. Consultants with expertise in gender statistics were recruited to prepare several case studies for each region in the world. They used a common framework developed by Data2X to explore the issue from the producer and user perspective based around the following questions:

   (a) **Identify and Prioritize:** Who identified the need to implement a time-use survey (e.g., a line ministry, a coordinating ministry, the NSO) and why (eg., to help address gender or other data gaps, for advocacy and policy use, to comply with legislation, because it follows international best practices)?

   (b) **Collect and Analyze:** What survey instruments were used as well as how and why the instruments were chosen (e.g., standalone survey versus module in household or other survey, categorization used, time frame, sampling strategy and sample size)? Who collected the data and for whom? Who paid and how (budgetary or extra budgetary, internal or external funding source)? What type of analysis was undertaken and how was the analysis linked to the study objectives? What was the quality of the analysis? Did the analysis result in policy implications?

   (c) **Inform and Influence:** How were time-use data findings disseminated and by whom? What role did different actors (civil society, government, data producers) play?

   (d) **Develop Policy & Monitor Progress:** How time-use data findings indirectly or directly influenced policies, and if not, what were the obstacles or constraints?

5. In the Europe and Central Asia region, four countries were selected – Albania, Finland, Kazakhstan and Moldova – to provide a cross section of regional experiences. As shown in the table below, each had conducted a TUS relatively recently using a 24-hour diary to track time-use over two random days (one weekday and one weekend day). Some examples of the diaries used are provided in Annex 1.

Table 1: Summary of time-use surveys conducted in the four case study countries

	Number of TUS conducted	Type of survey	Year(s)	Classification	Diary	Funded by
Albania	1	Dedicated time-use survey	2010-11, (2020)	HETUS	2 days 10 min intervals	UNFPA funded enumerator training and fieldwork Statistics Sweden provided technical assistance
Finland	4	Dedicated time-use survey	1979, 1987-1988, 1999-2000, 2009-2010	HETUS	2 days 10 min intervals	Six Finnish government organizations
Kazakhstan	2	Module attached to the Household Living Standards Survey	2006, 2012, (2018)	ICATUS	2 days 10 min intervals	Kazakhstan Government
Moldova	1	Dedicated time-use survey	2011-12	HETUS	2 days 10 min intervals	United Nations and Swedish Government as part of the joint project on 'Strengthening the National Statistical System'

Note: Years in brackets indicates the timing of surveys planned for the future.

III. Findings

A. Identify and Prioritize

6. Whether the time-use survey is demand or supply driven is an important indication of the extent to which the data are likely to be used in public policies and programmes, one important form of 'data uptake'. If data are being collected to fill gaps in official statistics, rather than to provide evidence of gender and other issues, they are less likely to be used by policy and decision-makers.

7. In Albania, Kazakhstan and Moldova, the drivers for conducting a time-use survey are mainly on the data production or supply side. All countries have projects to strengthen statistics and bring them in line with European and international standards, including conducting surveys on time-use. Although

time-use surveys are not compulsory, they are encouraged and are the basis for producing some of the SDG indicators that countries will be requested to report on in future[1].

8. Finland, which has conducted several time-use surveys, is an example of where data needs and intended use for the results is the main driving factor behind why the survey is conducted. Six public agencies fund the TUS and each have particular uses for the data in mind[2]:

   (a) **The Social Security Institution**: effects of family leave policies on time-use of families

   (b) **The National Consumer Research Centre**: the Household Satellite Account, the rhythms of everyday life

   (c) **The Ministry of Education and Culture**: evaluation of cultural policy, time-use of families and children

   (d) **The Family Federation**: time-use of families with children, the effects of working time on the family, being alone, division of domestic work between men and women, lone mothers

   (e) **The National Broadcasting Company**: Planning of timing of television programmes

   (f) **The Ministry of the Environment**: housing planning, climate planning.

B. Collect and analyze

9. In all cases, it was the national statistical office that developed the methodology for data collection based on European harmonized standards (Albania, Finland and Moldova) or the international recommendations developed through the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) (Kazakhstan). The HETUS classification grouping on household and family care (unpaid work) includes both child care (physical care and supervision, teaching the child, reading, playing and talking with the child and accompanying the child) and adult care (physical care of a dependent adult household member, other help to a dependent adult household member, and help to a non-dependent adult household member)[3]. The trial International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS) includes the activity group of 'provision of caregiving services to household members' which comprises child care (caring for children/physical care; teaching, training, helping children; accompanying children to places; minding children (passive care)) and adult care (caring for adults/physical care; caring for adults/emotional support; accompanying adults to places)[4].

10. The local versions of activity classifications used in the four countries studied differ slightly but provide the basis for producing internationally comparable statistics on childcare. They also allow for comparable statistics on adult care to be produced, except in the case of Moldova which did not seem to include provision of care to adult members of the household as a sub-category in their classification.

11. In all four countries, basic analysis and presentation of the results was done by the national statistical office and a range of different products were developed, as discussed in the section below. Finland

[1] SDG indicators on time-use.

[2] Pääkkönen, H. Statistics Finland. February 2011. Examples of use of time use statistics in policymaking or policy evaluation in Finland. [Internal memo provided on request for information in preparation of this case study].

[3] Eurostat. 2008. Harmonized European Time use surveys (HETUS) Guidelines.

[4] United Nations Statistics Division. 2005. *Guide to Producing statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work.* UN: New York.

was the only country that was able to provide a list of known further analysis and research that had been conducted using time-use survey data. This was a valuable input to exploring the impact of data on time-use and its application to policies relevant to unpaid care work. Maintaining such information, either as an internal record, as was the case in Finland, or as part of the NSO website, is an example of a good practice that could be replicated in other countries and for other surveys.

C. Inform and influence

12. The main channels for disseminating time-use survey results are through national 'launch' events at the time of release and the websites of national statistical offices. The products developed to present and explain the results range from short publications describing the methodology and main findings and including basic tables (Kazakhstan, Albania) to more detailed analysis and a series of articles (Finland), and thematic reports and infographics aimed at the media and other broad audiences (Moldova).

13. In Albania, anonymized TUS microdata is made available for download from the INSTAT website but who accesses this and how they use the data is not monitored. Access to microdata from the Kazakhstan TUS can be requested for research purposes, in accordance with the national statistical office standard policy on the provision of microdata[5]. In Moldova, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has an online database that includes a section on gender statistics, and a table on time-use is available. It allows data users to produce tables on any or all of the activities measured in the survey and to disaggregate this information by sex and/or age group[6].

14. In Finland, the time-use survey results are used to develop the national Household Satellite Account, which is done in collaboration with the National Consumer Research Centre attached to the University of Helsinki. Using the input approach, the value of household production is calculated based on time spent on household work (using data from the TUS) and what goods and services have been bought to make products like meals and do the laundry and cleaning (using data from the Household Budget Survey). It has found that the national gross domestic product would be around 40 percent higher if all household production were included in the national accounts[7]. A researcher working on this explained that while these results have created public discussion, there is no evidence showing how these studies have had any direct impact on policy[8].

D. Policy and programme development

15. Time-use statistics are evident in documents produced by government and development partners. For example, in Albania, a 'Gender Brief' produced in 2016 about national gender concerns quotes the

[5] Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee on Statistics: The rules of disclosure and use of de-identified microdata database files for research purposes. http://stat.gov.kz/faces/homePage/aboutAgencyRegulations/Orders_CS? _adf.ctrl-state=rjxrxwgd9_66&_afrLoop=7742219457446650

[6] National Bureau of Statistics. Statistical databank: Gender statistics. http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/en/50%20Statistica%20gender/?rxid=33e14253-2dc1-414f-b06b-d7f669f3af55

[7] Soinne, Katri. Statistics Finland. 2016. Household Satellite Account: Abstract/Outline of the presentation. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/Finland_s5_abstract.pdf (accessed 31 August 2017).

[8] Observations provided by Ms. Kristiina Aalto, Consumer Society Research Centre, in an email to the author dated 28 August 2017.

time-use survey findings on imbalances in time spent on unpaid work by women and men[9]. The issue and associated data are also included in the Albanian National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 and the National Employment and Skills Policy, but not in the Business and Investment Development Strategy 2014-2020, which includes targets for increasing women's participation in business.

16. An important use of official statistics is in ensuring governments are accountable for their commitments and spending. In Finland, TUS data has been used in research into the effectiveness of national policies. For example, the Finnish government introduced a tax reduction on buying domestic services in 2001 that enabled households to deduct some of the costs of services like cleaning, cooking, laundry, and care services for children and adults. The policy aimed to increase employment, decrease informal work, and to promote the supply of household services. Research published in 2015 draws on a range of sources, including TUS data, to assess whether the policy has had the desired impact[10].

17. Finland is well known for implementing family-friendly policies that help women and men balance the demands of home and work life. It has invested in this area for more than 30 years and performs well on related indicators by comparison to other countries[11]. The Veto Programme was implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health between 2003 and 2007 with the aim of making working life more attractive both in the immediate and long term[12]. One aspect of this is the need to be able to balance work and family life including care for children, older people and other family members in need of assistance.

18. The Veto programme was influenced by findings from the TUS, in particular analysis done by Piekkola and Ruuskanen using the 1999-2000 TUS and labour market status of the survey participants between 2001 and 2004. Their analysis looked at time-use and work attachment at two particular life phases: mother's return to work from maternal leave and exit from employment by older people. It found that women do nine hours more housework than men on average, but the gap is greatest for young women. At that time, only 25 percent of children aged under three were in childcare outside the home, compared to 50 percent in Sweden and 70 percent in Denmark, a reflection of the policy to compensate Finnish women to spend time at home. They recommended that public policy continue to encourage fathers to also stay at home. The ongoing investment in time-use surveys and regular revision of care work-related policies suggests TUS data is an important information source for government. The latest Child and Family Policy in Finland adopted in 2013, outlines changes to the Finnish family leave system, which is designed to help both parents stay home with children in different circumstances[13].

19. In Kazakhstan, the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 was adopted before the TUS data were produced and therefore they are not directly linked. The strategy includes analysis of women's role in economic production and identifies priorities to increase their

[9] UN Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Albania (2016). Gender Brief Albania 2016. See: http://un.org.al/publications/gender-brief

[10] Aalto, K. 2015. *The Finnish Tax Reduction for Domestic Costs: Consumption Patterns* in Carbonnier, C. and Morel, N. The Political Economy of Household Services in Europe. Palgrave Macmillan.

[11] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2005. Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life, Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, Volume 4.

[12] Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. 2008. Longer careers? 'Veto' Programme Indicators. Reports of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2008:27.
https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74405/Selv200827.pdf?sequence=1

[13] Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. 2013. Child and Family Policy in Finland.

economic empowerment, with family care responsibilities noted as a barrier for women to be engaged in paid work. Actions to be taken include "measures for supporting men and women who are engaged in taking care of children and their up-bringing, as well as mechanisms for involving men in taking care of the children"[14]. The national strategy establishes a framework for monitoring progress in achieving its objectives, including listing the statistical indicators to be used. These include ownership of land, access to credit, labour force measures, income and poverty measures and access to social welfare payments. The share of women and men in unpaid care work is not included. The gender statistics section of the Committee on Statistics website is structured around the goals of the strategy and provides the latest data for the identified indicators[15].

20. There have been reported attempts to introduce legislation to conceptualize unpaid domestic work in support of gender equality policies, but these were not supported in the Kazakh parliament[16]. The Labour Code includes the provision of maternity and childcare leave (also for men) and in 2008, the government introduced compulsory social insurance for pregnancy, childbirth and maternity leave for working women. These examples may be evidence of an indirect link to the findings from the TUS data, as well as a shift towards introducing policies that are standard for developed countries.

21. In Moldova, in December 2016, a new National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021 was approved[17]. The strategy is strongly based on evidence, quoting a wide range of statistics on labour market demand and supply. Data on unpaid and paid work by women and men was used to justify the need for innovative and flexible forms of employment[18]. The strategy and action plan include a range of interventions related to increasing the participation of women in the labour market, such as developing new tools to support women in business and improving gender analysis of labour market information. There is no explicit detail on how the strategy will consider and address the impact of unpaid care work on labour market participation.

22. TUS results are used by international organizations for planning and programming. Support to the Moldovan government from the United Nations system is guided by the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022[19]. The framework draws on TUS results in identifying unpaid care work as a priority and designing responses to address imbalances in women and men's involvement in this type of work. Strategies include increasing access to childcare services and the promotion of innovative approaches of self-employment and entrepreneurship.

IV. Lessons learned

23. The European region benefits from long term investment in TUS by a number of countries and a harmonized approach through Eurostat, which helps the less developed systems of the region. For example, Albania, a European Union accession country, has received funding and technical support

[14] Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2005. Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016. Approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan #1677 of 29 November 2005. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Kazakhstan-Gender-Strategy-2006-2016.pdf

[15] Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee on Statistics: The official statistical information > Operational data (express information, bulletins) > Gender statistics and indicators for the Millennium Development Goals. http://www.stat.gov.kz

[16] ADB. 2013. Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment.

[17] Government of the Republic of Moldova. 2016. Government Decision No. 1473 of 30.12.2016 on the approval of the National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021. http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=369765

[18] Observation by Ms. Aurelia Spataru, UNDP Project Officer in an email to the author dated 1 September 2017.

[19] Government of the Republic of Moldova and United Nations Moldova. 2017.

to meet EU statistical standards on measuring time-use. Conducting a TUS is not obligatory for EU countries, but is encouraged and the 2008 Harmonized Guidelines on Time-use Surveys (HETUS) provide a well-tested methodology.

24. Finding a clear link between time-use survey data and national policy is difficult. Even in countries like Finland, where there have been multiple surveys and examples of research, it is not possible to find a documented link explaining how the results have influenced policy, at least not in English. One of the reasons that finding these connections is challenging is that preparing government policy is an organic process that differs within and between countries. The drivers for new and changed policies may involve political, social, economic and environmental factors, to varying degrees. Time-use data is one of many inputs to policies relating to unpaid care work and the extent of the role it plays is difficult to measure.

25. In addition to policies and programmes related to unpaid care work, the TUS has provided data on people with disabilities, school studies, volunteering, transportation, health and transportation and is likely to have had some impact on policymaking in those sectors as well.

26. The national statistical office was the entry point for preparing these case studies and a disconnect between data production and data use is a factor in making it difficult to measure data uptake. As documentation is generally limited, developing a good case study relies on getting inputs from people who have been involved and have the institutional memory. The national statistical offices is often not involved in the policymaking or use of the data they produce, making it difficult to determine how the information has influenced national policies and programmes.

27. Language may be a barrier to monitoring the extent of data uptake as documentation and resulting research is produced in the national language(s). Also, research articles are often trapped behind pay walls and therefore not easily accessible for inclusion in desk reviews. A database or list of research that has drawn on TUS data would be a valuable resource, if one does not already exist.

28. The ECA region also benefits from the opportunity to meet and share experiences in measuring time-use at the regularly held UNECE Work Sessions on Gender Statistics. These meetings bring country representatives, development partners and potentially academia and civil society organizations together to discuss issues relating to data production and use. Time-use statistics have been a recurring item on the meeting agenda for some time. Recent meetings have emphasised the need to include data use as a regular theme of all discussions, providing a potential resource on TUS data uptake in the future.

V. Recommendations

29. The UNECE Work Sessions on Gender Statistics are an opportunity to explore how to address the disconnect between data production and use so that national statistical systems in developing countries are better informed about the value of the information they produce.

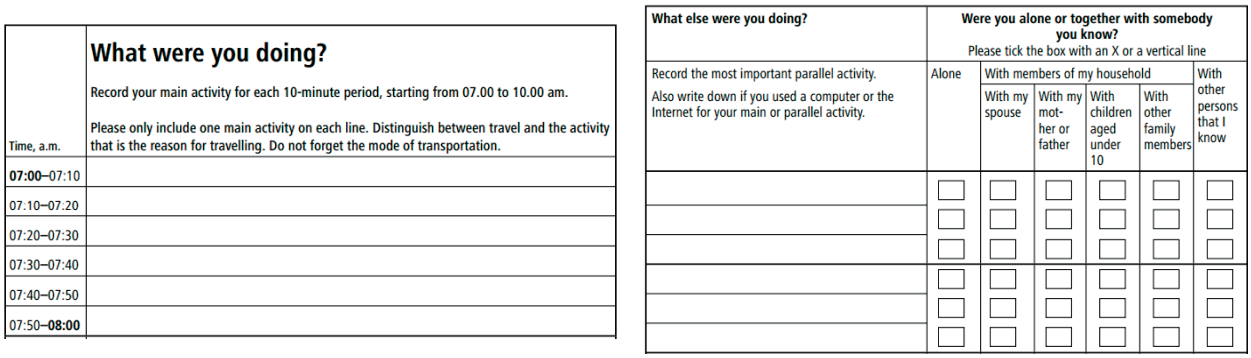
30. National statistical offices should consider compiling a list of secondary analysis and applications of time-use surveys and other data sources in order to track data uptake and provide feedback to statisticians on the utility of their work.

VI. Next steps for Data2X case studies

31. Data2X is collating the case studies from all regions into a global document on experiences and lessons learned on data uptake of TUS for unpaid care work policies. That should be finalized in early 2018 and made available through the Data2X website (data2X.org).

Annex 1: Examples of time-use survey diaries

Figure 2 – Diary used in the 2009-2010 Finland Time-use Survey

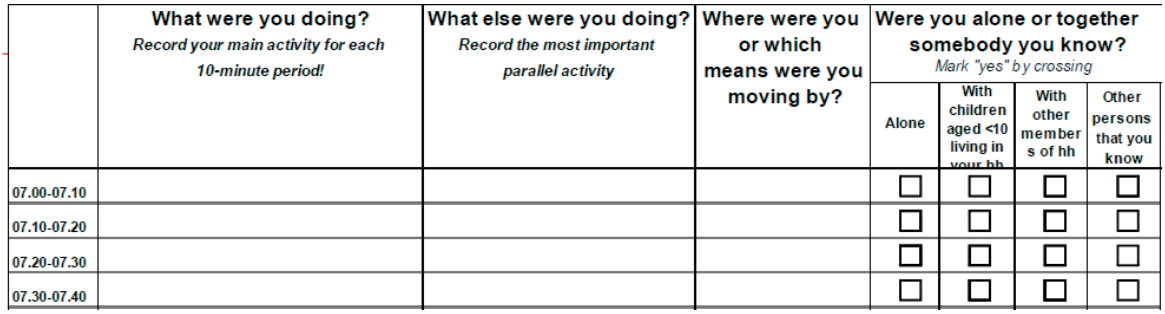


Time, a.m.	**What were you doing?** Record your main activity for each 10-minute period, starting from 07.00 to 10.00 am. Please only include one main activity on each line. Distinguish between travel and the activity that is the reason for travelling. Do not forget the mode of transportation.
07:00–07:10	
07:10–07:20	
07:20–07:30	
07:30–07:40	
07:40–07:50	
07:50–**08:00**	

What else were you doing? Record the most important parallel activity. Also write down if you used a computer or the Internet for your main or parallel activity.	**Were you alone or together with somebody you know?** Please tick the box with an X or a vertical line					
	Alone	With members of my household				With other persons that I know
		With my spouse	With my mother or father	With children aged under 10	With other family members	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Source: Pääkkönen, Hannu and Hanif, Riitta. Statistics Finland. 2012. *Time-use Changes in Finland through the 2000s*.

Figure 3: Excerpt of time-use diary used in the 2012 Kazakhstan Time-use Survey



	What were you doing? *Record your main activity for each 10-minute period!*	**What else were you doing?** *Record the most important parallel activity*	**Where were you or which means were you moving by?**	**Were you alone or together somebody you know?** *Mark "yes" by crossing*			
				Alone	With children aged <10 living in your hh	With other members of hh	Other persons that you know
07.00-07.10				☐	☐	☐	☐
07.10-07.20				☐	☐	☐	☐
07.20-07.30				☐	☐	☐	☐
07.30-07.40				☐	☐	☐	☐

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2016. Presentation given at the United Nations Statistics Division Expert Meeting on the Revision of ICATUS held in New York on 28-30 June 2016.