

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Workshop on disseminating, communicating and using gender statistics
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 29-31 May 2018

26 June 2018

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

I. Organization and attendance

1. The Workshop on disseminating, communicating and using gender statistics was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) with the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (the Committee), as part of the United Nations Development Account project 'Strengthening national capacity in the most vulnerable UNECE countries for the sustainable development of statistics'.
2. The target participant groups were staff of the Committee and users of gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan. They included Committee staff working in gender and in communications; specialists in health and in issues related to labour and employment; and users in need of basic training in using statistics with a gender perspective.
3. Participants came from ministries and other state bodies, NGOs, research institutes, universities and media outlets. Representatives of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women national and regional offices also participated. There were 80 participants, of whom 68 were women.

II. Purpose

4. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now serving as the principal guiding framework both for development activities and for statistical activities, gender equality and women's empowerment are occupying an increasingly important place among global policy concerns. The specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Goal 5), as well as the broad and deep inclusion of gender concerns throughout the Agenda, is creating growing demand for high-quality gender statistics that are regularly produced and that provide solid evidence on the status of women and men. To meet this demand, the Committee produces and disseminates relevant statistics and publications. The Committee expressed a need for capacity development to ensure that such materials are known, accessed, used and understood by their target users.
5. The primary purpose of the workshop was therefore to enhance the capacity of Committee staff to communicate about gender statistics with various types of users. A key part of this was the identification of users to invite to the workshop. At the same time, the workshop aimed to enhance the capacity of users to identify, use and interpret gender statistics.

6. The expected outcome was improved use of gender statistics by policymakers in support of evidence-based policymaking and policy monitoring.

III. Summary of proceedings

7. The workshop consisted of two parts over two and a half days: developing the capacity of internal users to present, disseminate and communicate gender statistics to users, and improving gender statistics literacy among external users.

8. In the first part, UNECE introduced the Toolkit for Training Users of Gender Statistics¹ and explained how Committee staff could adapt and use this for their own training activities. Representatives of international organizations resident in Kyrgyzstan provided information about initiatives linking gender statistics and the Sustainable Development Agenda. Invited experts from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Moldova provided guidance on best practices for communicating gender statistics. The expert from the United Kingdom made a case for statisticians to take into consideration the many different audience types and to adapt communication accordingly, including making use of journalistic principles to ensure user engagement and understanding. The expert from the Republic of Moldova detailed the processes and experiences leading up to the current situation in which the country has a multifaceted and effective approach to gender statistics communications embedded within its overall communications strategy. Committee representatives presented current practices and future plans for communicating gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan.

9. The Toolkit's modules on health and employment were applied in the second part of the workshop. The modules demonstrated the main concepts, data sources, and key indicators. The invited expert from Italy guided participants in the essentials of understanding gender statistics, using case studies on reproductive health and on women's employment. Participants engaged in practical exercises and discussions to reinforce their learning.

10. For the benefit of those users with less familiarity with gender and statistical concepts, introductory presentations were given on basic skills in gender statistics; demographic statistics with a gender perspective; and fundamentals of statistical communication for journalistic purposes.

11. The second and third days of the workshop both ended with dialogue sessions. Participants were invited to write on cards something they had learned (day 2) and an action they intended to take as a result of their learning (day 3). Volunteers shared their comments which then formed the basis of discussions. The cards were left anonymously with the organizers to be used in evaluating the workshop.

12. At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to visit the office of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, where they learned more about the Committee's work on gender statistics and on sustainable development.

¹ Available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/toolkit.html>

13. The agenda, slides used in presentations, and practical exercise handouts are available on the meeting page of the UNECE website².

IV. Conclusions

14. The workshop highlighted the good progress made in gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan, while also drawing attention to the fact that production alone is not sufficient without effective communication.

15. During the discussions many participants welcomed the emphasis on recognizing the existence of different user groups with different needs and capacities, and the need for adaptation of communication techniques for each group.

16. The workshop revealed a high level of subject-matter expertise among some user groups, at the same time bringing attention to the need for a deeper understanding of the importance of a gender perspective among users of statistics. The workshop also brought to light a great willingness among young journalists to make use of statistics and data and to bring a gender perspective to journalism, demonstrating the potential for strong partnerships to be formed with the Committee to ensure effective communication.

17. Participants from the Committee noted in their action cards that following the workshop they intend to revisit their communication platforms and products on gender statistics, with a view to enhancing the use of key messages and explanatory text and enhancing the use of visual presentations and graphical displays. Staff also mentioned that they had learned valuable lessons about the techniques of designing and delivering training workshops for users, such as the role of practical exercises and small group activities.

18. The action cards left by participants and the outcomes of the discussions could provide a basis for the Committee to formulate priorities for the future production and communication of gender statistics. Recurring themes on the cards included

- a. the desire for more visual display of statistical findings and key messages to aid interpretation for non-experts
- b. a need for increased dialogue and interaction between users and producers.

19. The feedback from participants confirmed that the workshop enhanced capacities among users. Users commented on the cards, for example, that they had learned about the definitions of paid and unpaid work and employment; the importance of a gender perspective in health; the role of gender statistics in policy formulation; and the value of statistical storytelling. Several participants mentioned specific ways that they intend to use what they had learned in the near future, including developing judicial statistics; designing their own training sessions; and formulating recommendations on the inclusion of a gender perspective in their own areas of work. A number of action cards mentioned that they wish to apply lessons learned from the examples from the Republic of Moldova.

² <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2018.5.gender.workshop>