Training Session on presenting and communicating gender statistics

Joint UNECE/WBI Workshop on National Gender Statistics Training Programmes
Geneva, 9-10 October 2008

Objective
Gain skills in data presentation and dissemination to highlight gender issues.

Agenda

Introduction

1: Dissemination and communication – definitions and differences

2: Statistical storytelling – how to engage your reader with interesting, clear and simple messages

3. Presenting data – professional graphs and tables that support your message

4. Guest speaker: Mr. Mervyn Fletcher, UNICEF – a journalist’s perspective on communicating statistics

5. Putting it into practice – tools and resources to help you in your work
Women's Lobby Starts Campaign to Tackle EU Gender Inequality

A group of leading female personalities launched a campaign in Brussels this week in a bid to boost the number of women in European politics given that they still remain grossly under-represented.

Slightly fewer than one third of the European Parliament's (EP) 785 seats are occupied by women, while only nine of the EU's 27 commissioners are female.

Now a group of leading women politicians has launched a campaign in Brussels aimed at bridging this gender gap when the composition of the EP and the European Commission comes up for renewal next year.

"A representative democracy without gender equality is a contradiction in terms," said Margot Wallstrom, a Swede who acts as one of the commission's five vice-presidents.

"Women and men need to be equally represented in European politics, in order to have a say on decisions that affect their lives," she added.

Wallstrom is among the few leading women politicians in the EU

The Commission under Barroso has made strides towards hiring more women

"Never before have there been so many female members of the commission," said Barroso's spokesman, Johannes Laitenberger.

While insisting that merit remains the fundamental criterion for choosing civil servants, officials also point out that women have accounted for 35 per cent of new recruits to the EU's senior management posts this year, far exceeding the 25-per-cent target rate set by Barroso in 2007.

Quotas for women?
But the EWL says the improvements are not enough.

The underlying problem is that the responsibility for electing MEPs or designating commissioners ultimately lies with individual member states.

And women's participation in politics differs widely across the continent. For instance, while nearly 60 per cent of Swedish MEPs are women, only 13 per cent of their Polish colleagues are female.

Given the difficulties of agreeing on a quota for the EU Commission, Wallstrom has proposed that each member state should in future name two candidates of different sexes for the post. It would then be up to the president to select the best candidates while aiming for the right overall gender balance.

"This is not an unrealistic idea, and it would be quite easy to implement," says Cecile Greboval, EWL's policy director.

At the campaign's launch in Brussels this week, well-known female politicians from Spain, Britain, Sweden and Italy talked about how best to bridge the gender divide, with the merits of quotas taking up much of the discussion.

Bibiana Aido, Spain's minister for equality, said the introduction of quotas in her country had generated "a favorable climate for parity," with Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero now leading the country's first ever cabinet with an equal number of male and female ministers.

Wallstrom said that despite initial controversies, a Norwegian law forcing companies to make sure that at least 40 per cent of their board members are female is now being hailed as "a huge success."

Some say quotas are counterproductive

But not all panelists agreed that quotas are the way forward.

Emma Bonino, a former commissioner who now acts as the deputy head of the Italian Senate, said the introduction of quotas in her country had merely resulted in male politicians placing their girlfriends in positions of power.

"I am one of the last in Europe to be against quotas. I am not a Machiavellian: I don't believe that the ends justify the means," she said.

The debate appeared to confirm the view of those who argue that one of the main obstacles to gender equality has been women's inability to agree on a common strategy.

Others say that women have not been sufficiently interested, or vocal, in seeking power.

"Sometimes we do not dare say that we want power. But if we start demanding it, we might get it," Bonino said.

DPA news agency (sp)
Activity  Drafting the first paragraph

Remember, the first paragraph should:

- Send a clear message
- Grab the reader’s attention
- Contain few or no numbers
- Keep it short and to the point
- Focus on 1-2 findings

Task: read the example allocated to your group. Can you come up with a better suggestion? Work on your own for 5 minutes, then discuss it with your group to come up with a final answer.

Groups 1, 3, 5, 7 - poor example 1:

The Total Fertility Rate for the UK has increased from 1.6 children per woman in 2001 to 1.8 children per woman in 2006, the highest level since 1980. In England and Wales, the estimated total fertility rate for UK born women has risen from 1.5 to 1.7 since 2002, while for women born outside of the UK the estimated rate rose from 2.3 to 2.5.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Groups 2, 4, 6, 8 - poor example 2:

New report, *Measuring Ireland's Progress, 2007*, shows life expectancy at birth was provisionally estimated at 81.5 years for Irish women and 76.7 years for Irish men in the period 2004-2006. In comparison with 2001-2003, men's life expectancy increased by 1.6 years and women's by 1.2 years, reducing the gap between men and women to 4.8 years in 2004-2006, the lowest it has been since the 1970-1972 period.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Good writing techniques

Write clearly and simply, using language and a style that the layperson can understand. Pretend you are explaining your findings to a friend or relative who is unfamiliar with the subject or statistics in general. Your readers may not be expert users who often go straight to the data tables.

Terms meaningful to an economist may be foreign to a layperson, so avoid jargon. Use everyday language as much as possible. If you have to use difficult terms or acronyms, you should explain them the first time they are used.

Use:

- Language that people understand;
- Short sentences, short paragraphs;
- One main idea per paragraph;
- Subheadings to guide the reader’s eye;
- Bulleted lists for easy scanning;
- A good editor. Go beyond Spell-Check; ask a colleague to read your article;
- Numbers in a consistent fashion: For example, choose 20 or twenty, and stick with your choice;
- Rounded numbers (both long decimals and big numbers);
- Embedded quotes (these are sentences that generally explain “how” or “why”, and which journalists like to use verbatim in their news stories in quotes);
- URLs, or electronic links, to provide your reader with a full report containing further information.

Avoid:

- “Elevator statistics”: This went up, this went down, this went up;
- Jargon and technical terms;
- Acronyms;
- All capital letters and all italics: Mixed upper and lower case is easier to read;
- “Table reading”, that is, describing every cell of a complex table in your text.
Activity  Write a good headline

Remember, headlines should:

• Be informative, appealing, magnetic, interesting and newsy
• Attract the reader
• Most important finding
• One line of type
• Not try to tell everything
• Contain few numbers, if any at all

Task: read through the three press releases below and suggest 1-2 possible headlines

Press release 1:

Of those who began to study at universities and institutes of higher education at age 25 in the 2006/2007 academic year, half were women and one-third were men. This is revealed in the new version of the booklet “Women and Men in Sweden 2008”.

“Women and Men in Sweden 2008” exposes the access of women and men to political, economic and democratic rights in society.

Gender equality has progressed since the 1970s

Men were over-represented in all parliamentary committees during the 1970s.

In May 2008 the distribution of the sexes was even. The distribution of the sexes is defined as even when there is a 40-60 percent distribution of each sex.

Women and men have also become closer regarding participation in the labour force. Last year 81 percent of women and 87 percent of men were in the labour force. The corresponding proportions in 1970 were 60 and 90 percent respectively.

Fathers of small children have become somewhat better at taking parental benefits. In 1974 when parental insurance was introduced, no fathers took these benefits while in 2007 the corresponding figure was 21 percent of fathers.

What title would you suggest?
Press release 2:

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 30/09/2008

Title?

MEDIA RELEASE

September 30, 2008

Over 116,000 marriages were registered in Australia during 2007, according to new figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

This is the highest number of marriages registered in a single year since 1990. The crude marriage rate (marriages per 1000 population) has however, decreased in the last 20 years from 7.1 in 1988 to 5.5 in 2007.

The number of marriages registered in 2007 grew by almost 2% from 2006, with Western Australian and Tasmanian registrations showing the largest growth, up by 6% and 5% respectively.

Over the past 20 years, couples have been delaying the age at which they marry. In 2007, the median age at first-time marriage was 29.6 years for males and 27.6 years for females, compared to 26.1 years and 24.0 years in 1989.

There was a continued trend towards civil ceremonies throughout 2007, with 63% of couples choosing a Civil Celebrant to officiate their marriage, compared to 20 years ago when almost 60% of marriages conducted were by a Religious Minister.

Other findings include:

- The proportion of couples who chose to live together prior to marriage grew to 76.8%.
- March was the most popular month to marry, with over 15,000 marriages occurring in that month. This was followed by November and October, each with over 12,000 marriages.

Further information is available in Marriages, Australia, 2007 (cat. no. 3306.0.55.001), for free download from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>.

This page last updated 30 September 2008

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Proposed titles
Press release 3:

Friday, December 8, 2006

More women are teaching full-time in Canadian universities, and although they still earn less on average than their male counterparts, the difference in salaries has narrowed, according to a new study.

Among full-time professors who began their jobs in the 1960s, men earned approximately $10,000 to $15,000 more per year than women depending on their age. Among more recent cohorts starting work since the mid-1980s, men were earning approximately $5,000 more than women.

The difference in salaries narrowed because successive cohorts of male faculty earned less throughout their career than their predecessors did.

In other words, female professors gained ground relative to male professors because new male faculty members were earning less. The earnings profiles of men for each birth cohort studied were lower because entry salaries, adjusted for inflation, were falling.

In contrast, the earnings profile of female academics born between 1930 and 1934 did not differ greatly from that of women born between 1965 and 1969.

The study also found that the male-female differences were smaller in schools with seniority-based pay systems than in those with merit-based pay systems. Salary differences between men and women were larger for faculty up to 50 years of age in schools with a merit-based pay system.

Differences between men and women in areas such as rank, country in which their degrees were obtained, and the fields in which they teach, accounted for most of the difference in average salaries. But not all of it.

These differences accounted for less of the salary difference for more recent birth cohorts, although the earnings gaps among these cohorts were smaller.

The study also noted that the number of women teaching full-time in Canadian universities has increased. Between 1970 and 2001, the percentage of women teaching full-time at Canadian universities more than doubled from 13% to 29%.

The study "The evolution of male-female wage differentials in Canadian universities: 1970 to 2001" was prepared by Casey Warman (Queen's University and Statistics Canada) and Frances Woolley and Chris Worswick (Carleton University). The study is part of the NewRealitiesof Gender in Canadian Society project, organized by the Family and Labour Studies Division, and featuring work conducted in Statistics Canada's Research Data Centres and is available for free online (http://www.econ.queensu.ca/working_papers/papers/qed_wp_1099.pdf).

For more information about this study, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gustave Goldmann (613-951-1472), Research Data Centres program.

Proposed titles
Activity

What is wrong with this graph?
Tables – a before and after example

Before:

Final energy consumption by sector - Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27.83</td>
<td>31.15</td>
<td>31.59</td>
<td>9.63</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>33.96</td>
<td>27.25</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>28.26</td>
<td>30.41</td>
<td>23.95</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td>27.66</td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>24.33</td>
<td>21.45</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>39.54</td>
<td>23.73</td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>39.10</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Public Enterprise, Ireland.

What's wrong with this table?

- Borders and shading distract the eye and clutter the presentation
- The source is not indicated
- Geographic area is not specified
- Table is spread across width of page, making it harder to read
- Values are centered rather than right-aligned
- Two decimal places is more information than necessary
- Total should have the same number of decimal places as the other values
- If the message is to focus on trends over time within a particular sector, this information would be easier to extract if it were in columns, rather than rows
- There is no explanation of why agriculture is “n/a” in 1980 and 1985

After:

Share of total energy consumption, by sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Agriculture¹</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Public Enterprise, Ireland.

¹ Information on energy consumption by the agricultural sector was not collected until 1990.

This table is better because:

- Minimal borders provide an uncluttered view of the data
- The table is only as wide as needed to accommodate the headings
- Columns are ordered by highest to lowest share of consumption (based on latest figures)
- Years are ordered with most recent values first
- Values are only to one decimal place and right-aligned
- Source and footnotes are used to provide necessary explanations
- Title changed to something more descriptive
Answers

Activity – Writing the lead paragraph (page 4)

Please note - there is no “right” answer for this activity. The examples below show just one possibility for writing a lead paragraph that could better attract the reader’s attention.

Before: The Total Fertility Rate for the UK has increased from 1.6 children per woman in 2001 to 1.8 children per woman in 2006, the highest level since 1980. In England and Wales, the estimated total fertility rate for UK born women has risen from 1.5 to 1.7 since 2002, while for women born outside of the UK the estimated rate rose from 2.3 to 2.5.

After: Women in the United Kingdom are having more children. In fact, the average is the highest it has been since 1980. In 2006, the average number of children per woman was 1.8, up from 1.6 in 2001.

This statistic, known as the total fertility rate, differs between groups in the population. For example, in England and Wales, the estimated total fertility rate for UK born women is 1.7, while for women born outside of the UK, the rate is 2.5.

Before: New report, *Measuring Ireland’s Progress, 2007*, shows life expectancy at birth was provisionally estimated at 81.5 years for Irish women and 76.7 years for Irish men in the period 2004-2006. In comparison with 2001-2003, men's life expectancy increased by 1.6 years and women's by 1.2 years, reducing the gap between men and women to 4.8 years in 2004-2006, the lowest it has been since the 1970-1972 period.

After: Life expectancy of Irish people is increasing. Current estimates for life expectancy at birth are 81 years for women and 76 for men. The increase over recent years has been slightly greater for men, narrowing the gap between the sexes to five years, the lowest it has been since 1970.

Activity – Write a good headline (pages 6 - 8)

The actual headlines used in the three press releases were:
1. More women than men continue on to higher education
2. Marriages continue to increase in 2007: ABS
3. Study: Wage differences between male and female university professors
Activity – “What is wrong with this graph” (page 9)

- Three dimensional presentation hides the data on men and makes it difficult to see the difference between women and men
- There is no ordering of the data set – countries are presented in some random order
- No source indicated
- No indication of the time period that is covered
- UK is abbreviated
- Difficult to read the country names when they are vertically aligned
- No definition of obese or adult population
- Grey background on the graph is unnecessary
- The values for women are shown in blue and men in red, which doesn’t take advantage of the traditional association of colors with each sex.

A better example:

![Share of obese adult population in selected UNECE countries, 2005](chart.png)

**Share of obese adult population in selected UNECE countries, 2005**

**Source:** UNECE Gender Statistics Database (www.unece.org/stats/data).

**Note:** Obesity is measured by body mass index, defined as a person’s weight (in kg) divided by height squared (in m): kg/m². An adult (aged 15 years and older) is considered obese if BMI exceeds 30 kg/m². *Data refer to 2003.*