

Report
19th Meeting of the
Generations and Gender Programme Council of Partners

Online

21 June 2022

Participation

There were GGP team representatives from 25 countries (Argentina, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay) and team representatives from Hong Kong (China) and Taiwan (China) attending the meeting. Together with representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the GGP Central Hub, the meeting had a total of 52 participants.

1. Opening

The Council of Partners (CoP) meeting took place online on 21 June 2022 (13:00 – 15:00 CEST) on the Webex platform. The meeting was chaired by Zsolt Spéder (Hungarian Demographic Research Institute), the Chair of the Council of Partners, and moderated by Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the secretariat of the Council of Partners. Following the welcoming remarks by the Chair of the Council of Partners and the secretariat of the Council of Partners, the meeting participants adopted the proposed agenda and the minutes of the last meeting.¹

2. Overview of developments in the GGP

Anne Gauthier, Director of the GGP Central Hub at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) provided an overview of developments in the GGP and discussed new projects for the future.

The main streams of activities were presented along the following three categories:

ESFRI Roadmap

The GGP was included in the 2021 ESFRI Roadmap which constitutes a seal of excellence recognizing GGP as major research infrastructure albeit not including funding per se. Being on the Roadmap also makes the GGP eligible for specific European Commission funding (INFRA-dev) and makes it easier for countries to get infrastructure funding at the national level

¹ Accessible on the UNECE website: <https://unece.org/info/Population/events/354185>

(and this is not restricted to EU countries). Being on the Roadmap also means providing the GGP with a period of 10 years to obtain its own legal status and financial sustainability.

GGG-II

The GGP embarked into a new round of data collection (GGG-II) with a revised questionnaire, fresh samples, new participating countries, and a new mixed mode of data collection. The expectation is for 15+ countries to be collecting data. The actual implementation, however, varies with some countries using CAPI only (Argentina (Buenos Aires), Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Republic of Moldova), others CAWI only (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden), and some mixed modes (Austria, Czechia, France).

The codebook has been shifted to Colectica, which means that the codebook is now fully compliant with the documentation standards (DDI) in the field.

GGP-5D project

The GGP-5D project is a new project for 2022-2026 with the cooperation of 15 partners. 5D means five dimensions of readiness: 1) technical excellence, 2) impact and engagement, 3) financial sustainability, 4) legal framework, 5) positioning and landscape. These five dimensions of readiness will be captured in an overall indicator of readiness for strategic partnership. This is an exciting stage both in terms of field work for GGS and in terms of the development of the research infrastructure.

3. Presentation of the GGP Methods group

Aat Liefbroer presented on the work of the GGP Methods Group, highlighting three major issues: 1) representativeness, 2) weighting, 3) mode effects.

1. The first issue of representativeness focused on rather low response rates in many countries, especially in WEB mode. Many countries where data have been collected are looking into the issue of the representativeness of such data. It is important to produce written documents with findings that can be shared with the Methods Group for synthesis. A good example is Norway, which produced such technical material. In the example of the Norwegian GGS, the response rate was 33.5%, which is a solid outcome for a web-based survey. The non-response pattern was quite in line with that of face-to-face surveys. Men were 8% underrepresented (43% instead of 51%). There was also a clear overrepresentation of higher educated people (ISCED 0-2: 15.5% rather than 27.5%, ISCED 6: 17.2% rather than 11.4%). Representation by age, region and level of urbanity was adequate.
2. The second issue discussed was weighting. Weighting is important to obtain correct estimates and correct standard errors of estimates. The approach to weighting used by the European Social Survey (round 9) will be followed. The following three elements will be taken into account: 1) clustering and stratification, 2) designing weights to correct unequal inclusion probabilities, 3) post-stratification weights to correct for selective non-response. Necessary information should be provided by the national teams. Relevant weights will be

constructed by the Central Hub. A technical document will be sent to countries in this regard before the summer and will be put on the website.

3. The third issue highlighted were mode effects, still mostly work in progress. At this moment, there is no country with both web-based survey and face-to-face survey available. A memo is being prepared on how to deal with mode effects when analysing GGS and it is expected to be completed towards the end of 2022.

4. Presentation of the GGP Questionnaire Task Force

Monika Mynarska presented on the work of the GGP Questionnaire Task Force. Members of the Task Force include Detlev Lück, Zsuzsanna Makay, Monika Mynarska, Laurent Toulemon, Olga Grünwald, Kiersten Sietsma, and Marta Bryzek.

1. The key mandate of the GGP Questionnaire Task Force is to prepare the GGS wave 2 (follow-up) questionnaire. The main assumptions for the wave 2 questionnaire are: 1) Focus on the GGP core: families, generations and gender. This includes updates on partnership and fertility histories; information on children, fertility intention, and reproductive health; information on contacts between generations and division of household tasks; as well as information on the respondent's (and their partner's) activity in the labour market; 2) keeping the rest of the questionnaire as brief as possible; 3) simplifying the questionnaire (making it CAWI friendly); 4) allowing space for user-suggested modules and questions.
2. The GGP Questionnaire Task Force is currently finalizing the first complete draft of the core questionnaire for wave 2. It needs to be further consulted, coded and tested. The outcome of this work is to be presented at the GGP connect webinar in late November 2022. During November and December 2022, the GGP Questionnaire Task Force will issue a call for user-suggested modules, which should be short and self-contained, innovative and fitting well with the longitudinal design, and universal for all the GGP countries for wave 2.

5. Presentations by national teams

Part I. Focus on fieldwork and data: lessons learnt and emerging results from GGS-II

Sweden

Data collection took place between 16 March and 16 August 2021, with an overall response rate of 27%. In 2012, the previous GGS had over 50% response rate. The survey in 2021 was web-based and postal. Non-response rate patterns showed that people with higher education level were more likely to respond. There was no significant variation in response rates based on geography, however, there were considerable differences based on migration background, with people with migration background responding less. Older people were more likely to respond than younger people, and women were more likely to respond than men. Comparison between data collected through GGS and data available in registers showed good results.

Denmark

Denmark had similar results collecting GGS data as Sweden. The overall response rate was 24 %, with a total of 10268 responses. Complete response rate was 17%, with 7275 complete responses collected. The relatively low response rate was not only due to the online format of the survey but also as a result of many surveys being done in the same period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Population samples were based on prespecified demographic measures. The target population included 18 to 49-year-old legal residents of Denmark. The data was collected through an online survey. There were two separate subsamples, the first comprised 18060 individuals randomly drawn among all Danish legal residents aged 18 to 49, while the second subsample of 24056 individuals was stratified with 2/3 males and 1/3 females, to compensate for the higher response rate of women in subsample 1. The representativeness of responses showed the same patterns as in case of Sweden (overrepresentation of older age groups, women, people with non-migrant background, and people with higher education level, also slight underrepresentation of unmarried).

Estonia

The GGS main survey in Estonia was conducted from 25 October 2021 until 28 February 2022 based on a total sample of 32000 persons aged 18-59. Estonian and Russian language versions were available, data collection was web-based. The pilot survey had an 18% response rate, several changes were therefore made to the main survey. More information was shared through media, a stronger package of incentives was introduced (lottery, gift cards, joint NGO donations), and reminders to persons in lower response groups were sent not only by e-mail but also through phone. These helped to improve the response rate to 26%. The response patterns were similar to those outlined before.

Germany

The GGS in Germany was part of the larger Family Research and Demographic Analysis (FReDA) data collection. Data collection was foreseen to be conducted in mixed-mode, combining face to face and online surveys, however, due to the pandemic it was shifted to CAWI and PAPI. Three types of designs were used:

- Concurrent design - PAPI questionnaire sent with invitation letter (25% of sample)
- Push-to-Web Design: PAPI questionnaire sent with 2nd reminder letter (50% of sample)
- Strong Push-to-Web Design: PAPI questionnaire sent with 3rd reminder letter (25% of sample)

Data were collected from 7 April until 29 June 2021 on a sample of 37417 persons aged 18 to 49, derived from registration offices. The questionnaire was available in multiple languages including Turkish, Arabic and Russian. Response rates showed similar patterns as in previous cases (overrepresentation of women, married, higher educated, higher income, non-migration background). The underrepresentation of migrants may be due to language barriers, high mobility, correlation with lower education, distrust in institutions, and lack of understanding of the relevance of the survey. Face-to face interviews with native speakers as interviewers are an efficient measure for this problem, but too expensive and was out of budget. More realistic measures are therefore being considered in FReDA (simple language in all communication,

shortened texts, more visual elements, more communication in foreign languages apart from the questionnaire, ambassadors from low educated and migrant subpopulations).

Hong Kong (China)

The GGS pilot in Hong Kong took place as a push-to-web survey between 17 May and 18 July 2022. An incentive experiment was conducted as part of the pilot survey with 9 incentive groups and 1 control group. Sampling was based on addresses; the invitation and reminders were sent via post. Data quality was studied and there seemed to be low item-non-response as well as low straight lining. Response rates showed an overrepresentation of more educated, employed, and partnered individuals.

Uruguay

A mixed-mode approach for data collection is applied in Uruguay, with household sampling and with respondent selection within the household using the last birthday celebration method. Interview mode is 90% face-to-face and 10% push-to-web, based on random selection. The survey sample consists of 8000 individuals aged 18-79 living in cities with a population over 5000. 2987 interviews were completed as of 16 June 2022, with a response rate of 24.6% in push-to-web mode and 31.2% in face-to-face mode. Data quality has been similar so far, with some problems in the push-to-web mode (incomplete interviews) mostly solved by insisting through the phone.

France

The GGS pilot took place from November 2021 to February 2022 to test modes and incentives, as well as response rates, quality of answers and drop-offs. The results of the pilot were the following: 1) data quality is adequate in CAWI, 2) switching to CATI is useful to finish questionnaires and even more to conduct new interviews, 3) CAWI-CATI with pre- and post-incentives gives as good results as CATI-CAWI without incentives, and the former is at much lower cost, 4) response rates for CAWI ranged from 10% to 30% across living standard deciles, after switching to CATI increased to 20% to 50%.

Based on the test result, the GGS wave 1 in France in 2023 will be conducted in a sequential multi-mode: CAWI plus partial switch to CATI. 8000 interviews are planned in CAWI and another 2000 with a switch to CATI. The sample will over-represent individuals with a low standard of living, in order to compensate for lower response rates. Individuals living in same-sex couples will be over-represented in the sample as well, to have representative results for analysis for this subpopulation. Administrative data are available in France and will be used for the sampling of individuals, as well as the enrichment of data (including follow-up). The provisional agenda of GGS in France is presentation to the Statistical Council and to privacy authorities in 2022, and fieldwork from late 2023 to summer 2024.

Czechia

In Czechia, the recruitment phase was conducted by interviewers in person, as well as by telephone. In the first case, a list of addresses was randomly selected, and interviewers made personal contact to recruit respondents in the household. Most interviewers were trained to contact households but not to interview. Respondents were able to choose the mode of interview. Most chose CAWI (1774 completed questionnaires), CAPI was carried out in 151 cases (7.8% of the sample recruited by interviewers and 3.3% of the total sample). The telephone recruitment was based on random mobile phone numbers. An e-mail was sent if the person agreed to participate in the survey. CAPI was offered as a “rescue” option in one last reminder. No respondent in the sample recruited by telephone changed from CAWI to CAPI.

Part II. Strategies for funding, using data for policy making, and new participating countries

Republic of Moldova

With the data collection and analysis phase concluded, the GGS in the Republic of Moldova is currently focused on data dissemination and data use. During the fieldwork phase, 20000 households were visited, over 10000 persons were interviewed for around 10000 interview hours, and 500 questions on demographic changes were asked. Data collection continued for 200 days with 150 field operators. Based on the GGS results, four policy documents on family friendly policies were developed cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Center “Partnership for Development:

1. Expanding the work arrangements for families with children.
2. Fostering equitable engagement of parents in upbringing and care of children
3. Creating the National Crèche Fund
4. Expanding alternative individual childcare services.

GGs data was also used for the development of a theory of change for demographic resilience, for a country gender assessment, the 2020 Active Ageing Index, the National Program on Healthy and Active Ageing, for monitoring SDG indicators 3.7.1, 5.6.1, and 17.8.1, and for the estimation of more than 100 demographic indicators. GGS data has been disseminated by signing MoUs with academia to facilitate using GGS data for academic theses and research. A fellowship research programme based the GGS data was launched as well, a research community was established to explore GGS for innovation and research. A series of public debates will also be conducted on the results.

Lithuania

In 2019, the Lithuanian Research Council approved including GGP in the National Roadmap, however, the Roadmap has not been accepted yet. For the time being, contacts have been made and discussions were held with the Office of the Prime Minister, which expressed interest and acknowledged the relevance of GGP. Meetings are being arranged with multiple government departments. In parallel, the National Research Infrastructure is working on increasing the visibility of research infrastructure in Lithuania.

Croatia

In Croatia, searching for funding for GGS has been ongoing for 10 years, since it first approached NIDI in 2012. The Croatian Bureau of Statistics did not show interest in participating, and GGS was twice rejected by the Croatian Science Foundation. Finally, GGP has received support from the State Office for Demography and Youth which acknowledged its importance. The negotiation and contracting process lasted for almost two years. GGP has not been included in the National Roadmap so far, but with the new roadmap under preparation, chances of including it are high. Lessons learned from this experience include the importance of incorporating GGP in the ESFRI Roadmap to mobilise national funding, and the significance of finding a relevant governmental body in charge of demographic issues to which one can demonstrate the significance of GGS in helping to tackle demographic challenges.

Poland

The search for funding for GGS-II in Poland has also been ongoing for around 10 years. GGS-I waves 1 and 2 took place in 2009 and 2013, and the application for a grant for wave 3 was rejected in 2017. It became clear that EU Structural funds need to be used. In 2018, after joining forces with SHARE, the Polish Research Infrastructure for Life Course Studies (PRILS) was established, and it was included on the National Roadmap in 2020. Political support was granted to GGP for ESFRI application, and GGP is now eligible to apply for structural funds for research infrastructures. Lessons learned on successful application to the national roadmap include the importance of collaboration with other research infrastructures and between different institutions. Socio-economic impact is also important.

Austria

In Austria, a GGP consortium (GGP.at) was founded in 2019, and in 2019/2020, GGP was included on the ESFRI roadmap. Funding was explored between 2019 and 2021, first CAWI-CAPI was foreseen, but due to COVID-19, CAPI had to be withdrawn. To stress the importance of GGP for scientific research, all GGP.at waves have been deposited in the National Social Science Data Archive (AUSSDA – CESSDA) by June 2022. In 2021/2022, a Call for Tender was issued and the fielding agency should soon be contracted. The preparation of the fieldwork will be carried out over the summer of 2022, consisting of drawing a gross sample, finishing and testing the additional items on the impact of inflation, COVID-19, and global developments, as well as implementing landing pages at the start and end of the survey. The following fielding procedure is foreseen: invitation letter for CAWI, 2 reminders after 7 days each time, in the second reminder possibility to participate in CATI. Incentives will be made up of an unconditional pre-incentive (2 euro coin attached to the first letter) and a conditional post-incentive (20 euro voucher). Contacting the gross sample will happen in four waves. During the first wave, more than 50% of the gross sample will be contacted based on a random draw. In waves 2 and 3, the draws from the gross sample will have some stratification based on the compositions of completed interviews in the previous wave. There will be around 4-6 weeks between each wave. For wave 4, the assumption is that certain parts of the population will remain difficult to involve, therefore, some respondents may have to be drawn from the panel sample of the fielding agency.

Switzerland

Switzerland did not participate in GGP-I but had prior experience with the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) in 1994/1995 and families and generations surveys in 2013 and 2018 conducted by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. There is large consensus and strong interest in implementing the GGS in Switzerland from academia. In December 2021, the University of Lausanne (UNIL) and the Swiss Center of Expertise in Social Sciences (FORS) made an official demand to the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation for durably implementing the GGP in Switzerland by including it on the national roadmap for 2025-2029. The evaluation is in progress and the decision should be made in the first semester of 2023. The participation of Switzerland in GGP is expected as of 2025.

United Kingdom

Conducting the GGS in the UK is foreseen in two phases. The first phase is to further develop the existing Blaise questionnaire to improve data collection, which includes 1) a workshop to discuss online collection of life histories on smartphones, 2) simple redesign for smartphones using online first design, 3) testing multiple types of data entry including soft and hard range checks, 4) generating table summaries to help highlight inconsistent data and allow the entry of revised data, 5) user testing. The second phase is data collection, using push-to-web. The aim of the data collection is to produce 7000 online interviews of UK adults aged 18-59. The sample will be drawn from the postcode address file. An invitation letter and two reminder letters will be sent to respondents. An incentive experiment will be conducted on half of the sample with vouchers of 10 pounds, 15 pounds, and 30 pounds. The first half of the data collection will be conducted in August and September, the second half in October 2022. Data with weights should be delivered in January 2023.

Ireland

Ireland has never participated in the Family and Fertility Survey nor in the GGS, despite interest in demographic changes in the country. There are many difficulties for GGS in Ireland including the lack of a population register, problem with getting an agency to collect data from a large random sample due to the loss of interviewers during the COVID-19 pandemic, increased costs, and little engagement on the ground (low response rates). Hence, the GGS in Ireland is moving to online panels or Reddit Forum to recruit participants. Online mode (CAWI) is foreseen. In terms of the funding of GGS in Ireland, a detailed proposal was submitted to the Irish Research Council in 2021, suggesting a push-to-web design. The sample should cover population aged 18-59. The GGS in Ireland currently has seed funding from the University of Limerick and is continuing to apply for funding.

Argentina

The pilot GGS in Buenos Aires (Argentina) took place in 2019, and fieldwork is expected to start in August 2022. The sampling framework consists of two stages. In the first stage, primary sampling units (PSU) are “census radios” with 350 houses each. PSUs are stratified into five socioeconomic strata. 310 PSUs were selected (Sampford Method), and the size measures used

to assign probability was the total dwellings of each PSU. In the second stage, 20 houses will be selected in each of the PSUs, totalling 6200 dwellings. The expected effectiveness is 40%, and the target population is inhabitants aged 18 to 79 years old. An awareness/communication strategy was developed as well, consisting of an official letter explaining the purpose of the survey and reasons for selection. Interviews will be conducted in CAPI mode with the interviewer going to the household and leaving a notice of their visit if nobody is at home, asking to settle a date for the interview.

6. Conclusions

In his concluding remarks, Francesco Billari highlighted the consistent response and non-response patterns across countries, which is something that GGP, as a community, could look into more closely. He also underlined that while in each country there is a specific national strategy of data collection that fits the national context, GGP as a community needs to be consistent. National presentations also demonstrated the policy relevance of GGP for countries.

Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich informed all participants that the minutes and slides of this meeting will be posted on the UNECE website.²

Zsolt Spéder reminded the group of the historical involvement of UNECE in GGP, and noting the upcoming retirement of Vitalija, he thanked her on behalf of the Council of Partners for her deep commitment to the GGP.

² <https://unece.org/info/events/event/367075>