

**Work Session on Gender Statistics
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WORK TO IMPROVE GENDER STATISTICS IN SWEDEN

Paper submitted by Sweden¹

Demand for gender statistics

Gender statistics shall reflect problems and questions related to the situation of women and men over the life cycle in all spheres of society, social as well as economic. Such statistics are needed to:

- Raise consciousness, persuade policy makers and promote changes
- Provide ideas
- Provide an unbiased basis for policies and measures
- Monitor and evaluate policies and measures.

This implies that statistics are needed during the whole process of policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation of the work to reach gender equality.

The Swedish Parliament decided in spring 1994 on a new national action plan to implement equal policy. In order to achieve a society with equal opportunities, a gender perspective should be applied to all policy areas. This means that all proposals and decisions must be analysed from a gender perspective in order to map all possible consequences for women and men at central as well as regional and local levels.

For this to be possible, statistics must be disaggregated by sex. Sex should be the basis for an overall and thorough breakdown of all statistics relating to individuals. In addition, statistics should be presented in such a way that they are easily accessible to users.

¹ Statistics Sweden.

The ultimate goal for gender statistics work is that:

- All statistics on individuals should be collected by sex.
- All variables and characteristics should be analysed and presented with sex as a primary and overall classification. This, in turn, enables all analyses and presentations to be sex specific.
- All statistics should reflect gender issues.

The Swedish Parliament in 1994 decided that gender statistics are to be a part of official statistics. Also, on June 1994, Article 10 was added to the Ordinance on Official Statistics in the section on "Accessibility": "*Official statistics related to individuals should, unless special reasons exist, be disaggregated by sex*".

This article is in correspondence with paragraph 206 (a) in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action: "Ensure that statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age, and reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society".

Co-operation between users and producers of statistics

Co-operation between users and producers of statistics is crucial for a successful work to integrate a gender perspective in the development of the whole official statistical system. Paragraph 207 (b) in the 1995 Beijing document states: "Ensure that producers and users of statistics in each country regularly review the adequacy of the official statistical system and its coverage of gender issues, and prepare a plan for needed improvements, where necessary".

Statistics Sweden has over the years developed a wide network with users of various kinds, politicians, planners, researchers, teachers, the media and NGOs. Gender statisticians at Statistics Sweden act as lecturers at seminars and other types of training activities. This is a way both to reach out with gender statistical information and to discuss new needs for gender statistics.

A regular production of a user-friendly gender statistics publication

The presentation of statistics has to relate to various users' capability to read and understand statistics. It must be kept in mind that most users are not trained in statistics.

The regular production and dissemination of gender statistics is one of the demands for improved gender statistics in the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. Paragraph 207 (a) states: "Ensure the regular production of a statistical publication on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users".

Statistics Sweden has since 1984 produced and published such a booklet every third year, since 1996 every second year, with the title "På tal om kvinnor och män. Lathund om jämställdhet". From the beginning this booklet became the best-seller of Statistics Sweden. It has been published in English 1985, 1990, 1995, 1998 and 2000 (to be published in September) under the name "Women and Men in Sweden. Facts and Figures".

Organisation of gender statistics work

To reach the goal for gender statistics, permanent staff has to be appointed to co-ordinate gender statistics work within the government agencies and to have special tasks related to analysis and presentation of gender statistics covering several statistical subject matter fields. At Statistics Sweden, special staff has since 1983 had these tasks. The group has over the years been organised as a function, unit or programme.

This way of working is in accordance with paragraph 206 (d) in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action: “Design or appoint staff to strengthen gender statistics programmes and ensure co-ordination, monitoring and linkage to all fields of statistical work, and prepare output that integrates statistics from the various subject areas”.

The gender statistics production process

The production process of gender statistics can be described through a flowchart, showing the necessary steps to be taken, from identification of problems and questions related to gender to analysis, presentation and dissemination of available gender statistics.

This flowchart was developed as a result of work in Sweden and in consultations in other countries during late 1980's and early 1990's. It is also the basis for “Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change” by Birgitta Hedman, Francesca Perucci and Pehr Sundstrom and produced by Statistics Sweden 1996. This publication presents the fundamentals of this new area of work in statistics and provides an overview of the necessary steps for the production and dissemination of gender statistics. It emphasizes the important role of users in stimulating the production of adequate statistics and the need for their continuous dialogue with statisticians. This book is now available in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Japanese.

Co-operation with other countries

Since 1984 a continuous co-operation in gender statistics has taken place between the five Nordic countries. This has included exchange of experiences and ideas for improvements of gender statistics, development of joint sets of gender statistics and indicators, production of gender statistics booklets and books and reports on the need to improve the national statistical systems to better reflect gender concerns and enable comparisons between the Nordic countries.

In its co-operation with other countries Statistics Sweden has supported gender statistics projects in countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The outputs have been both booklets and reports on needs to improve the whole statistical system to better reflect gender issues. Training in the gender statistics process has been part of the projects. “Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change” has been used in these training activities. Countries who have participated in such projects are presented in annex 1.

Annex 1

Gender Statistics Development Projects executed by Statistics Sweden with support from Sida 1985–2000

The popular statistical booklet “Women and Men in Sweden. Facts and Figures 1985”, produced by Statistics Sweden, was presented at the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi 1985 at seminars organised by the Council on Women, KIB, at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. The booklet became recognised world-wide and contributed to increased interest in presentation and use of statistics on the situation of women and men which was easy accessible and easy to understand for non-statisticians.

Since 1985, Sida has actively supported activities to develop gender statistics in various countries. Statistics Sweden has acted as gender statistics consultants in this work. Until today, projects have been undertaken in the following countries:

Africa

Botswana¹
 Ethiopia¹
 Kenya¹
 Lesotho¹
 Malawi
 Mozambique^{1,5}
 Namibia¹
 Swaziland
 South Africa
 Tanzania¹
 Uganda¹
 Zambia¹
 Zimbabwe¹

Asia

The Philippines¹
 India¹
 Pakistan¹
 Sri Lanka¹
 Thailand¹
 Vietnam¹
 Laos³
 China^{1,3}

Latin America

Chile¹
 Nicaragua⁴
 Guatemala⁴
 Bolivia⁶

Europe
 Russia²
 Estonia⁴
 Lithuania⁴
 Ukraine⁴
 Armenia^{1,3}
 Georgia^{1,3}
 Azerbaijan^{1,3}

¹ Has published a booklet, “*Women and Men in X-country. Facts and figures 19..*”

² Has published booklets for all Russia, for Moscow City, Moscow Region, St. Petersburg City, Leningrad Region and for the Regions of Arkhangelsk, Kaliningrad, Karelia, Komi, Murmansk, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov and Vologda. Also, fact sheets named “*Women and Men in St. Petersburg*” and corresponding for *Kaliningrad Region* and *Murmansk Region* have been produced. Further, the project “Improving Gender Statistics in Russia” includes reports from all regions involved and for all Russia on needs to improve the official statistical system to better reflect gender concerns.

³ The project also includes a report on needs to improve the official statistical system to better reflect gender concerns.

⁴ Started in the autumn 1997.

⁵ Phase 2 started in February 1999.

⁶ Started in October 1999

12 countries in Africa (all listed except South Africa) and in Asia (all listed except Laos and China) have, in addition to national work, participated in regional projects with the objective to strengthen the national development of gender statistics and improve comparisons between countries. The Asian project was half funded by UNIFEM and half by Sida. ESCAP's Statistical Division was executing agency. Included in the projects were production of national booklets, regional publications with comparable statistics on the situation of women and men in various spheres of society within the respective region and reports on how to improve national official statistics to better reflect gender concerns.

The African project, which ended in 1996, included a regional publication, "*Women and Men in East, Central and Southern Africa. Facts and Figures 1995*", a report on "*Needs to improve gender statistics in East, Central and Southern Africa and plan for future action 1997-1999*", a regional Newsletter and a larger publication from Tanzania, "*Analysis of African Women and Men. The Tanzanian Case*". This publication is a country specific version of the UN publication "*The World's Women*".

All country specific and regional statistical projects have included training activities (courses, workshops, seminars). Material developed for this training, together with experiences from practical work in various countries, is the basis for a publication/ training manual. The book "*Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change*" was published by Statistics Sweden in December 1996 and is now sold world-wide. The book was published in Japanese at the end of 1997, in Spanish in February 1999, in Chinese in September 1999 and in Russian in December 1999. The books are among other things used in training activities in various Sida-projects.

At the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in August/September 1995 workshops and seminars for users and producers of gender statistics took place. Organisers were the UN Statistical Division and INSTRAW in co-operation with Statistics Sweden and Statistics Finland. Results and experiences from Sida's projects and suggestions for further activities were presented by statisticians from some of Sida's project countries and by Statistics Sweden.