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## Good Practice Case Studies in the Development of Gender-Sensitive Indicators

### Overview and Lessons Learned from Case Studies

This chapter presents four case studies of good practice in the use of gender-sensitive indicators, in three Commonwealth countries (Canada, Ghana and India) and one non-Commonwealth country (the Philippines). The four case studies evidence a variety of experiences with the use, analysis and dissemination of gender-sensitive indicators. Lessons learned from these case studies are as follows:

#### Methodological lessons

Government agencies must devise a workable methodology for the use of gender-sensitive indicators, whether this involves the status of women as a whole or individual components of this. The discussion around and testing of questions related to unpaid work in the Canadian census is a good example of the way in which it can take several years for questions that are key to the status of women to be included in national data collection instruments.

A further methodological lesson provided by the case studies is that governments should collect gender-sensitive indicators from as wide a range of sources as possible, and in particular that censuses should be complemented by household surveys and smaller research projects focusing specifically on questions of women's status and gender equality.

#### Lessons related to focus

The case studies make it clear that while there is now considerable data available on the more traditional indicator areas, such as employment, health and education, most countries need to direct greater attention to the collection of gender-sensitive indicators on political participation, empowerment, violence against women and women's work.

#### Co-ordination lessons

The cases of the Philippines, Ghana and Canada show that intergovernmental co-ordination is vital for the development of a comprehensive database on the status of women. They also show that there remains an enormous amount of work to be done in promoting the use of gender-sensitive indicators.

#### Political lessons

The case studies show that political commitment to gender equality and the use of gender-sensitive indicators are closely connected. Use of gender-sensitive indicators may increase political commitment, but some prior political commitment is necessary for gender-sensitive indicators to be used productively.

## Targeting lessons

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Governments must be clear about why they are using gender-sensitive indicators. In other words, discussion about gender-sensitive indicators should make specific reference to their policy uses and the ways in which they will be used to work towards gender equity. In addition, governments must be clear about the resources devoted to the collection of gender-sensitive indicators and the practical outputs and impact involved in their use.

## Public participation

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Public participation is one key to developing gender-sensitive indicators that are relevant to gender concerns. Public participation here means consultation on the part of governments with the public, including agencies in the public domain which deal with gender issues, such as women's organisations.

## Case Study: Ghana

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### Availability of indicators in Ghana<sup>1</sup>

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Ghana has a long history of statistical data collection in censuses, sample surveys and administrative records. This dates back to the pre-colonial period when traditional rulers conducted periodic counts of the population on a sex-differentiated basis. The colonial period saw six population censuses between 1891 and 1948. Independent Ghana has witnessed three censuses, in 1960, 1970 and 1984. Sample surveys of the population, for example anthropological and sociological studies, have been carried out since the 1930s. Administrative records and vital registration were introduced in 1888. And various ministries such as the Ministries of Education, Health and Labour collect and compile records on a regular basis.

### Gender-sensitive indicators and the census in Ghana

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A National Committee of Users and Producers was established in 1988 to identify user needs and co-ordinate the production of statistics. This Committee has set up fourteen sectoral working groups, including a Gender-Specific Statistics Working Group. The Gender Working Group includes representatives from the National Council on Women and Development and other women's groups, and emphasises the importance of improving the production and dissemination of basic data on women's activities.

An effort was made to make the publications of the 1984 population census more gender-sensitive. Population data in the quarterly gazetteer produced by the Statistical Service was presented in sex-disaggregated form for the first time in 1987. A series of 11 volumes on the demographic and economic characteristics of the country was also published in 1987, and almost all the tables contained in these volumes are disaggregated by sex.

### Gender-sensitive indicators and sample surveys

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A good example of a gender-sensitive sample survey is the 1988 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS). The GDHS was carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service within a nationally representative sample of 4,488 women, aged 15-49. The core questionnaire collected data on family planning, fertility, maternal and child health. There was also a module on women's work, including details on time use, pay, and child-care arrangements. This module reveals some of the difficulties involved with the collection of detailed gender-sensitive indicators. As Blanc and Lloyd note:

*“An important decision made during the development of the employment module was to limit the type of productive work recorded to work for cash, other than on a family farm or in a family business ... [One reason for this was that] in many developing countries, particularly in rural areas, the distinction between housework and productive work may be unclear. To the extent that this is true, sample surveys are likely to under-remunerate women’s participation in productive roles ... unless these surveys collect detailed time-use data or spend considerable time educating respondents as to what to consider part of ‘housework’ and what part of ‘employment’. Neither of these alternatives seemed feasible in the GDHS since the employment module was a short supplement to the core questionnaire and not the main focus of the survey.”*

1994: 114

This survey was therefore likely to under-report women’s paid employment, partly through a lack of focus on this and partly because of the conceptual focus. There are parallels here with the Indian good practices case study where conceptual factors and lack of knowledge on the part of enumerators also led to an under-enumeration of women’s employment.

## Ghana and CEDAW

Ghana signed and ratified CEDAW in February 1986. In 1991 it provided its first periodic report to CEDAW. While the report notes the difficulties of obtaining some data, it provides a clear picture of the status of women in Ghana vis-à-vis the provisions of the Convention. Information for the report comes from various documents of the Ghana Statistical Service, the Ghana Living Standards Survey, and several other studies and surveys.

The first periodic report provides sex-disaggregated data on:

- ◆ age distribution of the population by locality and sex;
- ◆ percentage of women in the work-force;
- ◆ percentage of women in public bodies and trade unions;
- ◆ enrolment in primary, middle, secondary, teaching, commercial, technical schools and universities;
- ◆ literacy rate by age group, sex and locality;
- ◆ work-force participation by age, sex and region;
- ◆ percentage of females in selected occupations;
- ◆ distribution of active population by employment status and sex; day-care centres;
- ◆ prenatal care for mothers;
- ◆ infant and childhood mortality by sex and demographic characteristics;
- ◆ percentage distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method used; and
- ◆ married females by form of marriage.

As might be expected, particularly as the periodic report was made in 1991, most of the information in the periodic report refers to education, health and employment. There is little data on violence against women including female circumcision, women’s rights in practice, or women’s political participation (except at a very basic level). As these issues became increasingly prominent in the late 1980s and early 1990s it is presumed that they will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent periodic reports.

In sum, the census, sample surveys and CEDAW reporting provide a useful picture of the status of women in Ghana that can be used by policy-makers as both a base-line from which to measure progress and a tool to develop gender-sensitive planning. This case study shows that a wide range of sources are necessary for there to be comprehensive data on gender issues available within a country.

## Case Study: The Indian Census and Women's Work<sup>2</sup>

### Background

Censuses have been undertaken in India since 1881. Sex disaggregated data, for example on the sex ratio, has been available since 1901 and has been extensively used by planners and policy makers to investigate trends in gender discrimination over time.

With a population estimated at close to 850 million in 1991, 15 national and regional languages and a large rural population, the Indian census offers enormous challenges. For example, the total number of volumes published from the 1961 census was around 1,500; and for the 1991 census 1.7 million enumerators were appointed to conduct census activities throughout the country. However, partly as a result of the strong tradition in the social sciences in India, for several decades the Indian census has been innovative in its approach, and recently has attempted to take on a more gender-sensitive approach.

Since 1951, Indian censuses have provided detailed sex-disaggregated data on population make-up and employment. The 1961 census included a household schedule, which was a unique document at the time for any census in the world. This schedule was based on the assumption that enterprise in the subsistence sector, particularly in cultivation and household industry, is centred not on the individual but the household as a whole. Respondents were therefore requested to respond to questions related to the input of family labour in cultivation and in household industry, with a breakdown of household by sex. This was the first attempt in India at the national level to examine sex-disaggregated input to the subsistence sector.

The labour force questions in the 1961, 1971 and 1981 Indian censuses did ask questions about work and main activity, although not about unpaid work. However, because of biases in questionnaire content and organisation, "female labour force participation rates (for ages 5 or above) displayed abrupt and unlikely fluctuations – from 31% in 1961 to 16% in 1971 and to 24% in 1981. Most of these fluctuations were found to be concentrated among owner-cultivators, an activity category which is not always considered to be 'work' by respondents and even less likely to be the 'main activity' of Indian women who have the major responsibility for domestic activities" (Anker *et al.*, 1988: 139).

### The 1991 Indian census

It was not until the 1991 census that a more detailed examination of female employment was considered. It was recognised that:

*"in the 1981 and 1971 censuses, only a few selected tables were prepared for 'marginal' workers [i.e., people who were economically active for less than six months in the reference year] ... This has one undesirable consequence. Most of the marginal workers were females. In view of this the census could not bring out a complete picture of the total workforce in general and female workforce in particular ... With the modifications proposed in the 1991 census relating to tabulation of marginal workers on a 100 per cent basis, a number of tables would be generated for marginal workers also. This, it is felt, would enhance the utility of 1991 census data on workforce."*

Nanda, 1995: 3229

In order to capture women's work more fully, the census organisers took the following steps:

- ◆ Enumerators were educated to the fact that many activities carried out by women form part of general economic activities.

- ◆ In the instructions to the enumerators special emphasis was laid on what constitutes work. A list of activities in which women are normally engaged was included in the instruction booklet for enumerators (see the Annex for details).
- ◆ Suggestions made by women's organisations were taken into consideration when drafting the instructions to enumerators and designing the training modules for them.
- ◆ The instructions to enumerators laid emphasis, with reference to women's activities, on the need to ask probing questions regarding the work done at any time during the last year or any seasons in the reference period.
- ◆ The question in the census 'Worked any time last year?' was supplemented by the phrase 'including unpaid work in farm or family enterprise'. The inclusion of this clause was the first such occurrence in Asia, and was considered a model to be followed by UNIFEM.
- ◆ There was extensive publicity about the different types of activities carried out by women; this included 1.6 million posters and a documentary prepared by UNIFEM which was shown on the national TV network.

### Problems with the 1991 census

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Despite this attempt to capture the extent of women's unpaid work, it has been recognised that women's work was not fully represented in the 1991 census. A survey of enumerators found that the most problematic area for them related to economic activity, and particularly justifying the inclusion of unpaid work. Although there were 26 pages of instruction as to what constitutes economic activity in the manual for enumerators, women's work appears to have been systematically excluded from the 1991 census.

A further gender-related problem with the 1991 Indian census concerned the possible under-enumeration of women. This census reported a decline in population growth, and an increase in population masculinity, between 1981 and 1991. Demographers, however, have suggested that there appears to have been a general under-enumeration of the population and particularly of females. It is unlikely that population growth has declined, or that there has been a deterioration in the relative mortality experienced by females (Srinivasan, 1994; Dyson, 1994).

While Indian censuses have been innovative and progressive as far as attention to questions of gender are concerned, there is still extensive work to be done to ensure that sex-disaggregated data is collected in a systematic fashion at the national level. Part of this work, and a challenge for the 2001 census, has to be relevant and intensive training and education of enumerators as to the importance of unpaid work.

## Case Study: Canada<sup>3</sup>

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### Gender planning by the Federal Government

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In 1995 the Canadian Government published *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality*. This document, produced by Status of Women Canada, was adopted in response to the request from the UN to formulate a national plan to advance the situation of women, both within its own borders and globally. The Federal Plan centres on government commitments to eight objectives:

- ◆ implementing gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies;
- ◆ improving women's economic autonomy and well-being;
- ◆ improving women's physical and psychological well-being;
- ◆ reducing violence in society, particularly violence against women and children;

- ◆ promoting gender equality in all aspects of Canada's cultural life;
- ◆ incorporating women's perspectives in governance;
- ◆ promoting and supporting global gender equity; and
- ◆ advancing gender equality for employees of federal departments and agencies.

Overall the *Federal Plan* amounts to a comprehensive platform for improving the status of women in Canada, and as such will be of interest to Commonwealth governments which are formulating or updating similar plans.

### **Gender-sensitive indicators at the country level**

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As part of its programme to implement gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies, the government is committed to: "the development of indicators to assess progress made toward gender equality" and "the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data as appropriate" (1995a: 17).

The *Federal Plan* contains a number of specific proposals on the future use of gender-sensitive indicators, by sector. The section on the economy notes:

"The federal government, through consultations with women's organisations where appropriate, will continue to improve its development, collection and analysis of data (including gender-disaggregated data) to enhance the understanding of issues of concern to women and to provide better information for socio-economic legislation, policy and program development and innovation. The federal government is committed to:

- ◆ enhancing production of the statistical compendium *Women in Canada*, to provide a wide array of data on demographic and socioeconomic indicators;
- ◆ enhancing and undertaking new development of data collection, analysis and publications on women's paid and unpaid contributions to society and the national economy and on more general activity patterns including leisure, family and community activities" (1995a: 31).

Alongside these activities the Canadian government is also committed to more extensive examination of the relation between women's work force participation and women's long-term welfare, women and housing, and gender, immigration and integration. All of these areas will require detailed research carried out by government funding agencies, with a specific focus on gender. Similar commitments are also made in the areas of women's health and violence against women. However, it would have been useful for the *Federal Plan* to be more specific about outputs to be achieved in terms of use of gender-sensitive indicators as well as resources to be devoted towards this area.

### **The Canadian census and unpaid work**

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#### *Background*

Statistics Canada has been working on the measurement of unpaid work since the early 1970s. In 1978 Statistics Canada published a discussion paper which covered several of the main methodological questions around women's work as well as actual empirical estimates for 1971. Several other publications appeared during the 1970s and 1980s on the value of household production, volunteerism, time-use and the nature of social support. In December 1995 Statistics Canada published a comprehensive report and state of the art literature review entitled *Households' Unpaid Work: Measurement and Valuation*. The ongoing and in-depth discussion of unpaid work over more than two decades was a major contributing factor to the increased recognition of its importance.

### Testing of questions

Prior to the 1981 and 1991 censuses, questions were tested relating to unpaid work. However, these questions were not included in the census prior to 1996 for several reasons, which highlight some of the main methodological difficulties relating to the measurement of unpaid work:

- ◆ the questions were considered too complex;
- ◆ there was a concern about respondent burden, that is asking too many questions;
- ◆ more than one question was required. There is an upper limit to the numbers of questions that can be asked in the census, and if questions on unpaid work were included other questions would have to be dropped;
- ◆ respondents had difficulty responding because of the lack of a uniform understanding of what should be included as unpaid work; and
- ◆ respondents had difficulty calculating the number of hours spent on unpaid work.

Questions on unpaid work were further tested in 1993. In this case questions on unpaid work were asked before other employment questions and three simply worded questions were included.

### Public consultations

Public consultations were held concerning the inclusion of unpaid work in census questions prior to 1991 and in 1994. The relevant Statistics Canada document (1995b: 43) notes: "Generally, the consultation process revealed considerable confusion regarding the census's role in the measurement and evaluation of unpaid work. As noted, other sources, such as time-use surveys, are already providing estimates of the volume of unpaid work." This document goes on to discuss the public consultation process and notes: "advocates for inclusion were in agreement that trying to collect such data would be a difficult task; some suggested a series of seven questions would be a minimum necessary for even rudimentary data, and there was considerable disagreement on the appropriate terminology to use" (1995b: 44).

At the same time an interdepartmental committee with representation from several government department such as Status of Women Canada, Labour Canada and Agriculture Canada was set up to consider this and other gender-related matters.

Out of these consultations, Statistics Canada included questions on unpaid work in the National Census Test of 1993: "in response to the requests made by users during the consultations and incorporates the experience gained in previous rounds of testing ... the discussion at the International Conference on the Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Work and 11 focus group sessions on various question formats" (1995, 46).

### Questions in the 1996 census

Despite the methodological difficulties involved, Statistics Canada decided to include the following questions in the 1996 census:

Last week, how many hours did this person spend doing the following activities:

- ◆ doing unpaid housework, yard work or home maintenance for members of this household, or others;
- ◆ looking after one or more of this person's own children, or the children of others, without pay;
- ◆ providing unpaid care or assistance to one or more seniors.

While other areas, for example concerning voluntary work, still need to be included, the inclusion of these questions involves a major step forward for the Canadian census and could have an important policy impact related to the status of women.

### *Lessons learned regarding the Canadian census and unpaid work*

- 1 The first lesson of this case study is the attention which should be paid to the methodological approach. For example, sequencing and phrasing of questions must be clearly thought out. Careful testing of questions prior to the census required.
- 2 The second lesson relates to public participation. There was considerable public interest related to the subject of unpaid work, and there were inputs from within and outside government that contributed to the debate around this issue.
- 3 The third lesson relates to the wider issue of social and cultural change in society. Changing ideas about women's roles, the increased participation of women in the workforce and of men in child-care, meant that there is now an increased social understanding of the extent, nature and importance of unpaid work.

## **Case Study: The Philippines<sup>4</sup>**

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### **Background**

The Philippines is a good example of a developing country that has made serious attempts to improve its collection, dissemination and use of gender-sensitive indicators, and from which Commonwealth governments can take guidance. The process through which the Philippines established systems for the generation of gender-sensitive indicators is of particular interest.

### **Statistics in the Philippines**

Statistics in the Philippines are collected in the standard fashion, that is through population and housing censuses, household surveys and administrative reporting systems. The demand for gender-related statistics increased after the UN Decade for Women (1975-85). The National Commission on the Role of the Filipino Women (NCRFW) was created in 1975 to give impetus to women's concerns. The need for gender-sensitive indicators increased with the preparation of the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW)(1989-92) and the enactment of the "Women and Development and Nation Building Act" in 1992, which provides women equal rights and opportunities under the law. One of the provisions of this law is the collection of sex-disaggregated data.

Unusually for a Filipino organisation, there is a disproportionate representation of women in key positions in the major statistical agencies of the Philippine Statistical Service. Of the key positions, 34 are held by women and 33 by men. This is not reflective of the national executive government service, where men outnumber women in managerial positions with a ratio of 233 men for every 100 women. This probably had a significant impact on the ability of the NCRFW to carry out its mandate.

### **The process of identification and collection of gender-sensitive indicators**

As a part of the PDPW, the NCRFW created an Interagency Committee on Women and Statistics with membership from relevant executive departments and statistical agencies. A series of briefing sessions was held where each agency representative made a presentation on the kinds of data being generated regularly as well as data which was collected but not processed. These briefings were followed by a workshop, attended by representatives from government agencies, NGOs and academia, which aimed to identify the most appropriate indicators to collect as far as the PDPW was concerned.

NCRFW then initiated a project entitled "Development of Gender-Based Indicator System. Data Assessment and Improvement Plan". This project was carried out by the

Statistical Research and Training Centre of the Philippine Statistical System and had widespread government participation from all major government departments as well as the National Police Commission and the Civil Service Commission. Such widespread participation was seen as crucial in allowing a broad focus on women's status and integrating gender concerns more fully into various departments. This project has established a database at the NCRFW, with relevant information provided by government agencies. The main outputs of this plan were:

- ◆ a listing of gender-sensitive indicators;
- ◆ assessment of gender-specific data requirements and availability; and
- ◆ a data improvement plan.

This has led to the publication of a document entitled *Statistics on the Filipino Woman*, which synthesises available data from different government offices. This document covers the following areas: demography; education, health and housing; labour force and unemployment; government service; politics and public order, safety and justice. It is a comprehensive and well produced document that provides an extensive overview of the status of women in the Philippines.

The NCRFW has also produced a document entitled *Gender-Based Indicators: A Preliminary List* which prioritises a wide range of gender-sensitive indicators that should be collected and analysed relating to demography, economic participation, education and health, community participation and leadership, and crime and violence, including potential sources for this data.

Through these and other related projects the NCRFW has been able to isolate key priority areas where there is insufficient data available on the status of women, for example data on unpaid work, participation in community organisations, violence against women and prostitution and sex trafficking. It is recognised that although the NCRFW has made some advances, a considerable amount of advocacy work still needs to be carried out so that other government departments continue their focus on gender-sensitive indicators.

The effort of the Philippine government is notable in this field because:

- ◆ it has included widespread government participation;
- ◆ it developed a coherent working plan; and
- ◆ it has focused on a wide range of indicators of not only of employment and health and education, but also of empowerment, including political participation.

## Notes

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