



# Integrating a gender perspective into work statistics

United Nations Statistics Division



## A good basis for gender statistics on work in the ESCAP region

- High proportion of countries in the region producing gender statistics on labour force
  - On a regular basis 87 %
  - Irregularly 13 %
- High proportion of countries in the region using selected sources of data for gender statistics

	ESCAP	World
	(% countries)	
<b>Sources commonly used to obtain labour statistics</b>		
Population censuses	100	96
Labour force surveys	92	90
Labour administrative records	67	67
Establishment censuses or surveys	50	48
<b>Other sources that may generate statistics on work</b>		
Living standard/living conditions surveys	63	80
Time use surveys	50	48
Agricultural censuses	50	52



Focus of this presentation

## How to make work statistics more gender relevant

### A. Ensure comprehensive coverage of gender issues in work statistics

- Data collection and dissemination should not be limited to sex-disaggregated data on labour force participation, employment, and unemployment; but extended to detailed employment conditions, family-work balance, and time use.

### B. Improve the quality of work statistics from a gender perspective

- Prevent underreporting and misclassification of work activities and employment conditions, especially for those activities more often associated with one of the sexes

### C. Facilitate the understanding of gender differences in work

- Produce more disaggregated gender statistics, including by age, educational attainment, years of seniority in employment, family and household characteristics, and contextual variables.



## A. Comprehensive coverage of gender issues in work statistics

Labour statistics should relate to issues or areas that are relevant to enhancing the understanding of men's and women's positions and interrelations in the labour market.

(ILO, 2011, *International guidelines on gender mainstreaming in labour statistics*)



## Steps in ensuring comprehensive coverage of gender issues

Identify gender issues



Identify data needed to address gender issues



Assess your current sources of data



## Gender differences

Levels and patterns of labour force participation

Employment conditions in terms of

- type of work
- opportunities for career advancement
- earnings



Education

Family constraints and intrahousehold gender roles

Access to physical and financial assets

Discrimination on the job market and in the workplace.

## Data needed

Economic activity

Employment

Unemployment

Reasons for inactivity, for not seeking employment

Industry (branch) of activity

Occupation

Status in employment

Informal employment

Employment-related income

Hours of work, incl. time use on paid and unpaid work

Disaggregated by:

Personal characteristics: sex, age, education

Measures of family constraints (presence of young children; older or other household members in need for care; child care arrangements, etc)

Measures of ownership of assets (land, livestock, etc.) at individual level

Measures of seniority / work experience

\*Additional qualitative information



## Not all sources of data on labour force have the same capacity to generate adequate gender statistics

### • Population censuses

- ✓ Capacity to generate benchmark data on economic characteristics, including at most disaggregated geographical /administrative units and population groups;
  - ✓ Details for classifications obtained
  - ✓ Basic information on family and social context available
  - ✓ Measurement of economic characteristics can follow international standards
- Limited coverage of work-related topics. Less likely to be covered in the census: employment-related income; time-related underemployment; informal employment; time use for paid and unpaid work.
- Conducted only once every 10 years or so



- **Labour force surveys**

- ✓ Most flexible in terms of comprehensive coverage of work-related topics
- ✓ Measurement of economic characteristics according to international standards
- Limited details of some classifications obtained when using small samples (occupation, for example)

Two types of labour force surveys

Conducted on a recurrent basis, at short intervals (monthly, quarterly)

- Provide data for current purposes
- Focused on monitoring trends and seasonal variations in currently active population, employed and unemployed
- In developing countries, such surveys may be conducted less often within a year
  - > important to cover both agricultural peak and slack seasons: seasonal variations in labour force participation are different for women and men

More comprehensive information can be obtained, including from a gender perspective

Conducted at longer intervals (once every few years)

- Provide benchmark data and data necessary for structural in-depth analysis
  - > More work topics covered: economic activity, occupation, status in employment, work experience, multiple-job holding, education and training, hours worked.
  - > Possibility to attach topic-specific modules (on a rotating basis) such as: income from employment, informal employment, time use, family-work balance.





## • Examples of modules attached to labour force surveys

### Income from employment

- Consists of payments in cash, in kind or in services
- Refers to current or former involvement in jobs
- Information can be collected in relation to the individual (when interested in women's and men's access to income and their well-being) / or in relation to the job (when interested in income-generating capacity of different economic activities)



- **Examples of modules attached to labour force surveys**

- **Informal employment**

- Refers to informal jobs whether carried out in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises or households – captured through:
      - A question on status in employment: contributing family workers = informal employment (no explicit contract; not subject to labour legislation, social security regulations, or collective agreements)
      - A set of questions on the characteristics of the enterprise where the person works, based on which the following types of informal employed:
        - Own account workers engaged in the production of goods for own final use
        - Members of informal producers' cooperatives
        - Own account workers and employers working in their own informal sector enterprises
      - A set of questions, addressed to employees, on social protection or other employment benefits -> employees holding informal jobs in the formal sector
    - From a gender perspective, important to identify / disseminate information for these distinct categories of informal employment



## • Examples of modules attached to labour force surveys

### Time use

–Either a separate instrument (a light time diary) /OR a set of questions on specific paid and unpaid activities integrated within the same questionnaire dedicated to labour force measurement

–Information on time use crucial for:

- Understanding gender roles in productive and non-productive activities and gender-specific work-family balance
- Measurement of unpaid work
- Capturing forms of work that are underreported



## • Examples of modules attached to labour force surveys

### Work-family balance

–Several types of information needed:

- Sex and age collected for all household members
- Basic economic characteristics for adults in the household
- Questions on household responsibilities in care activities and various types of housework
- Availability and quality of childcare services
- Individual reasons for choosing certain non-regular jobs on non-standard working arrangements (may show family/non-family factors)



## • Administrative registers

- ✓ When well maintained, reduced cost of producing statistics and greatest time coverage. Good source for wages in the public sector.
- Commonly, some quality of information issues
- Limited coverage of workers: only some groups of employed and unemployed are covered -> sex bias in the data obtained (women's work less covered)
- Limited coverage of topics -> difficult to explain gender inequalities

## • Establishment censuses and surveys

- ✓ Provide best data on wages, especially if the unit of observation is the worker and not the job.
- Limited coverage of workers (paid employment only, usually in the formal sector) -> sex bias in the data obtained
- Limited information on worker's characteristics; and no information on their family or social context -> difficult to explain gender inequalities



## B. Improve the quality of work statistics from a gender perspective

Definitions and measurement methods used in data collection and processing procedures should cover and adequately describe all workers and work situations in sufficient detail to allow relevant gender comparisons to be made.

(ILO, 2003, *Checklist of good practices for mainstreaming gender in labour statistics*)



## Participation of women in work activities and their contribution to the economy tends to be underestimated

Not all forms of work are covered by conventional labour force statistics.

- Conventional labour statistics are currently limited to activities which contribute to the production of goods and services as defined by the SNA (system of national accounts) and cover (a) remunerated activities and (b) unremunerated activities of production of goods for own consumption (such as the production and the processing of agricultural products, water collection, gathering of berries or other uncultivated crops etc.)
- Production of services by members of the household for own consumption, mostly carried out by women, are not covered. Examples of such activities: cleaning; small repairs; preparing and serving meals; caring for and instructing children; caring for other persons in the household; some types of volunteer services.

→ Additional statistics on time use needed to capture all forms of work.



## Women's participation in labour force and employment more often underreported

(i) Incomplete measurement of all forms of work implied by the definition of the labour force and SNA production boundary is not uncommon.

- *Production of goods by households for own final use* (included in the SNA production boundary) difficult to separate from *production of services for own final use* (not included in the SNA production boundary).

- Gender-based stereotypes of women regarded as a housewife in charge of domestic work also lead to underreporting

- Use probing questions referring to specific activities;

- Use lists of activities suspected to go underreported without probing // sketches

- Avoid words such as “economic activity”

- Make sure temporarily absents from work are included (reasons of absence)

- Clear explanations in the manual + during training of interviewers

(ii) Coverage of women's activities may depend on reference period, because women more often found than men in seasonal and intermittent economic activities

- Repeat the measure of labour force and employment in different seasons; or base your data collection on a longer reference period (for example, 12 months).

(iii) Underreporting of women in employment when using establishment-based surveys (tend to focus on regular employees; tend to exclude from the sample small enterprises where women may be more often found).





## Women's unemployment more often underreported

- Due to criteria used to identify unemployed (three simultaneous criteria in identifying unemployed: “without work”, “currently available for work” and “seeking work”).
  - Women are more likely to be “discouraged workers” or “seasonal workers”..
  - A relaxed criterion of “seeking work” may be used in the definition of unemployment (in countries with a labour market relatively unorganized or of limited scope). - > Discouraged workers or seasonal workers would be considered “unemployed”.
  - “Discouraged workers” and “seasonal workers” may be identified and analysed as separate categories among the population not active
  - Additional questions needed to properly identify the unemployed and gender-specific obstacles in labour force participation: main reasons for not seeking work; main reasons for not being available for work; steps taken to seek work.
- Due to sources of data used: administrative sources commonly cover only unemployed receiving benefits or registered in the office for job seeking
  - women more likely to be excluded.



## Occupation & status in employment often not recorded/disseminated with enough detail to capture all differences between women and men

- Differences in forms of work carried out by women and men can be assessed properly only when occupation is measured in detail.
  - Data on occupation should be obtained not only for major groups, but also for sub-major groups, minor and unit groups.
  - Those details should not be compacted into major occupations groups by coding or processing data.
- Data on status in employment should be collected and disseminated separately for employees and each of the four categories of self-employment: employers, own account workers, contributing family workers and members of producers' cooperatives, as these categories have different economic risks.
- Other sub-categories of status in employment, where women or men are overrepresented, may be considered for identification in some countries



## Women may be more often misclassified in status in employment categories

- Example: women who work in association and on an equal footing with their husbands in a family enterprise, should be classified in the same status in employment category as their husbands, either “own account workers” or “employers”. However, in practice, the woman often misclassified as “contributing family worker”.
- Caution when deciding the status in employment for a person with two or more jobs during the reference period which may be more relevant for one of the sexes. Status in employment can refer to only one job, either where she/he worked the longest hours, or provided the highest income from employment.



## Time use statistics should allow for measurement of unpaid housework for women and men, and distinguish between...

- Unpaid activities that are beyond the operational production boundary of the SNA and not covered by conventional labour force statistics
  - Unremunerated work activities within the operational production boundary of the SNA and normally covered by conventional labour force statistics
  - Paid work activities within the boundary of SNA
- The separation between these activities is possible only when additional contextual information is collected in the time use survey (whether the activities were paid/unpaid; and for whom the work was performed).
- Specific types of activities, often related to unpaid work and performed by women, can be identified only when simultaneous activities are all recorded.



Assessment of coverage of gender issues and gender-related conceptual and measurement issues used in data collection

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What gender statisticians can do?



## Suggested activities for gender units and gender focal points

- Review of questionnaires, manuals and training used in labour force surveys and population censuses:
  - ✓ Work topics covered (main topics + causal factors)
  - ✓ Use of additional questions on “WHY – not working, not seeking work etc.)
  - ✓ Use of probing questions, activity lists / sketches,
  - ✓ Examples given in the manuals (should be free of gender bias)
  - ✓ Degree of details used in classifications
  - ✓ Coverage of gender aspects in the training
- Discuss with colleagues from data collection programmes about the quality of data collected in previous rounds of the censuses/surveys, in particular sex-bias in underreporting, misreporting/misclassification.
- Get involved in data quality assessments at the end of data collection.
- Explore the possibility of adding rotating modules to the labour force survey or using additional data sources (time use surveys, surveys on informal employment and informal sector)
- Careful in showing trends based on labour statistics from different sources



## C. Facilitate the understanding of gender differences in work

The resulting statistics will always be presented as part of regular publications in a way that will clearly reveal differences and similarities between men and women in the labour market and the factors that may influence their situations.

*(ILO, 2003, Checklist of good practices for mainstreaming gender in labour statistics)*



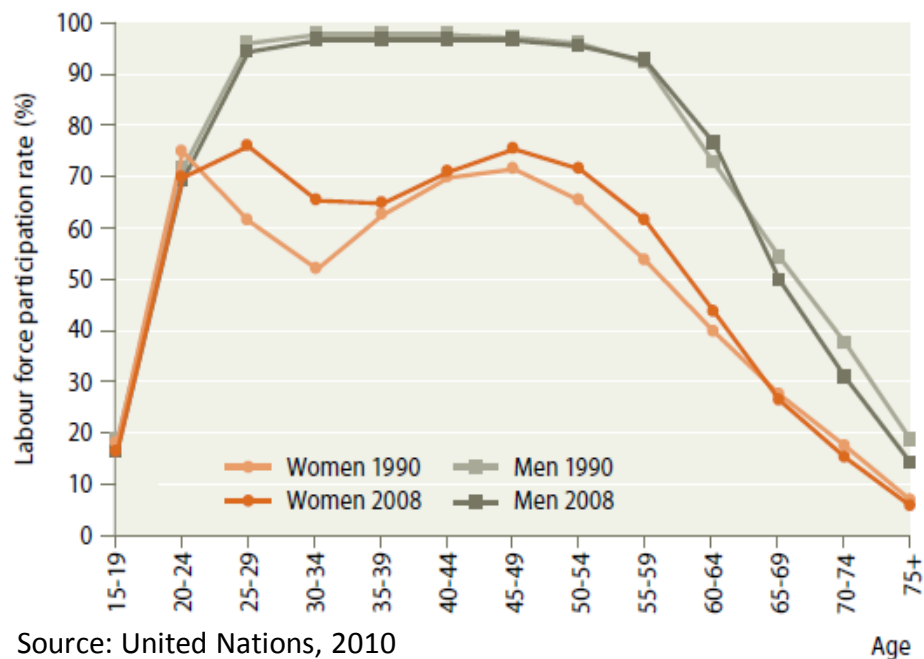
# Some examples of data analysis and presentation

## Labour force participation

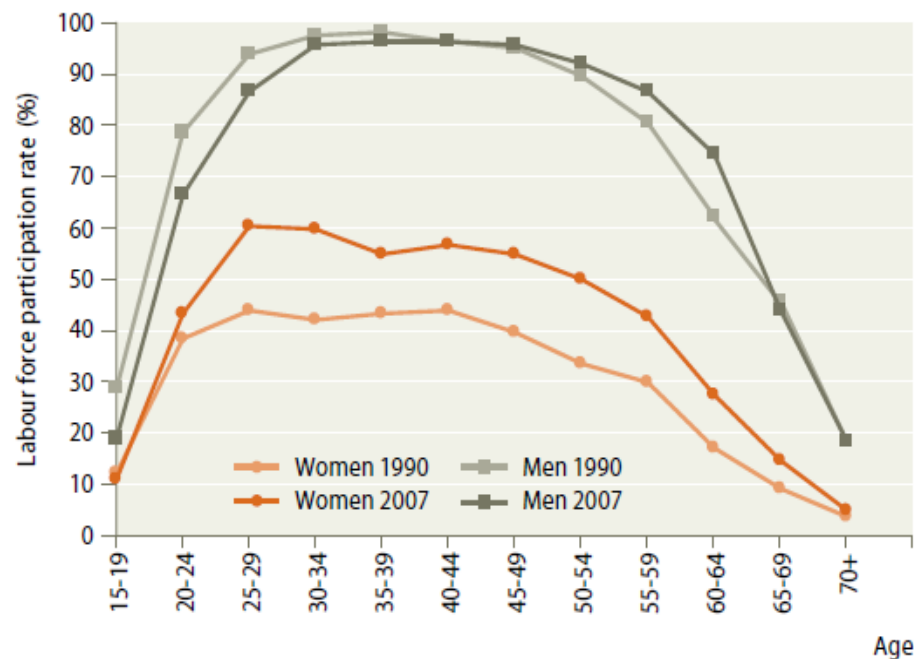
- Focus on comparative **levels** and **trends** of labour force participation, employment or unemployment for women and men, from a **life cycle perspective** (see example below)

Labour force participation rates by age group, by sex, for two years

Japan



Chile



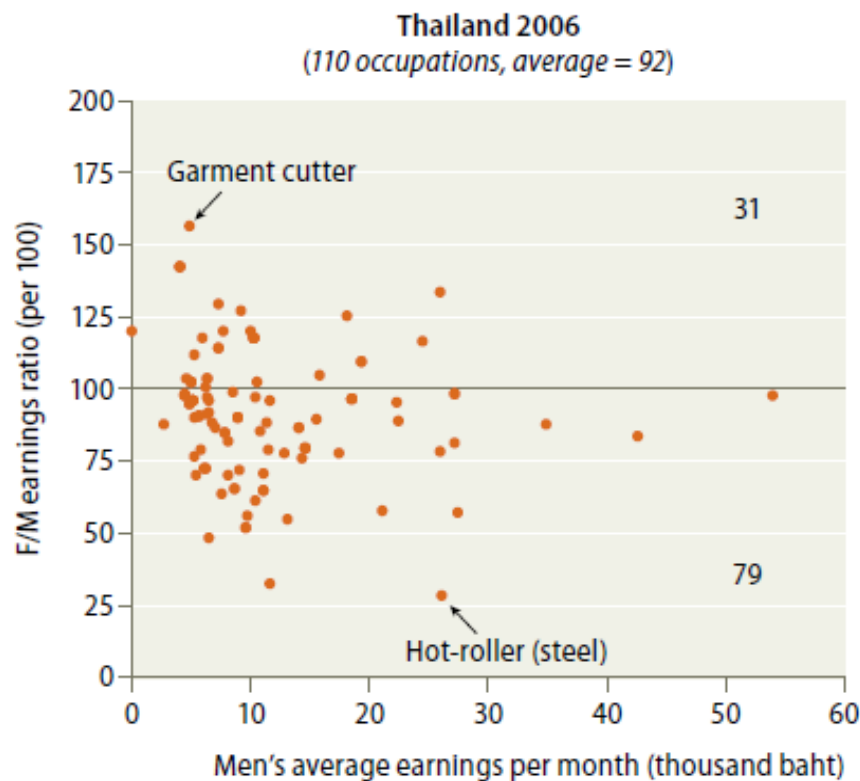
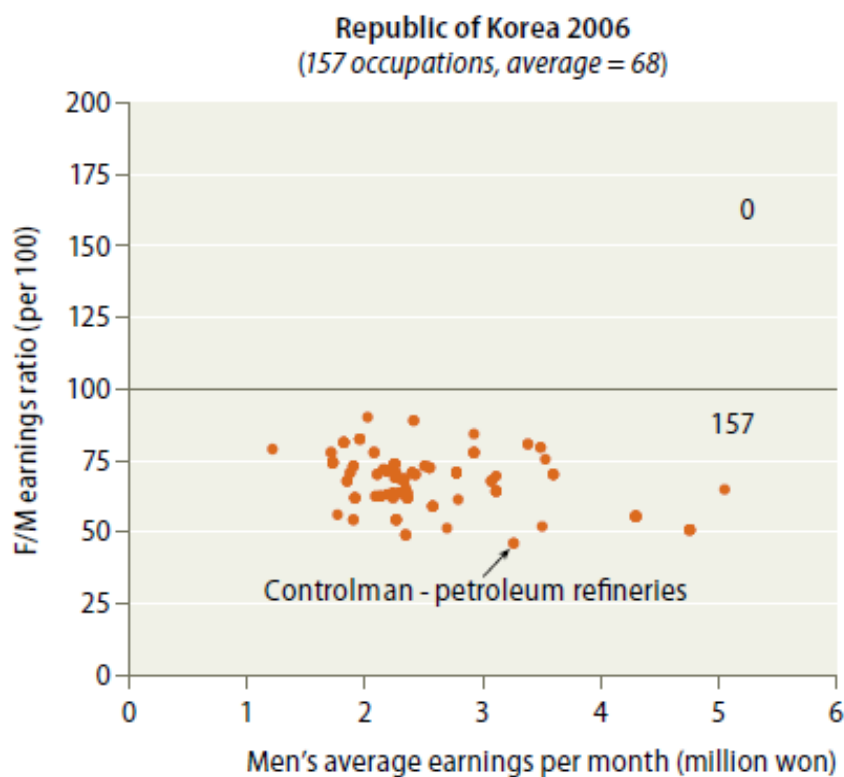




## Employment conditions

- Reveal gender differences in employment conditions such as gender segregation in occupation or gender pay gap. Ideally, further disaggregation by other characteristics needed.

### Average female/earnings ratios in various occupations





## Reconciliation of work and family life (1)

### Time spent on paid and unpaid work by region and sex, 1999–2008 (latest available)

Time spent on work (hours/ day)



- Show gender differences in the distribution of time use by type of activities.



## Reconciliation of work and family life (2)

Some data can be presented at couple/family level, by some indicators of family constraints, such as presence of young children

**Percentage distribution of couples aged 25–49 years  
with children less than 6 years old, by activity status, 2006**

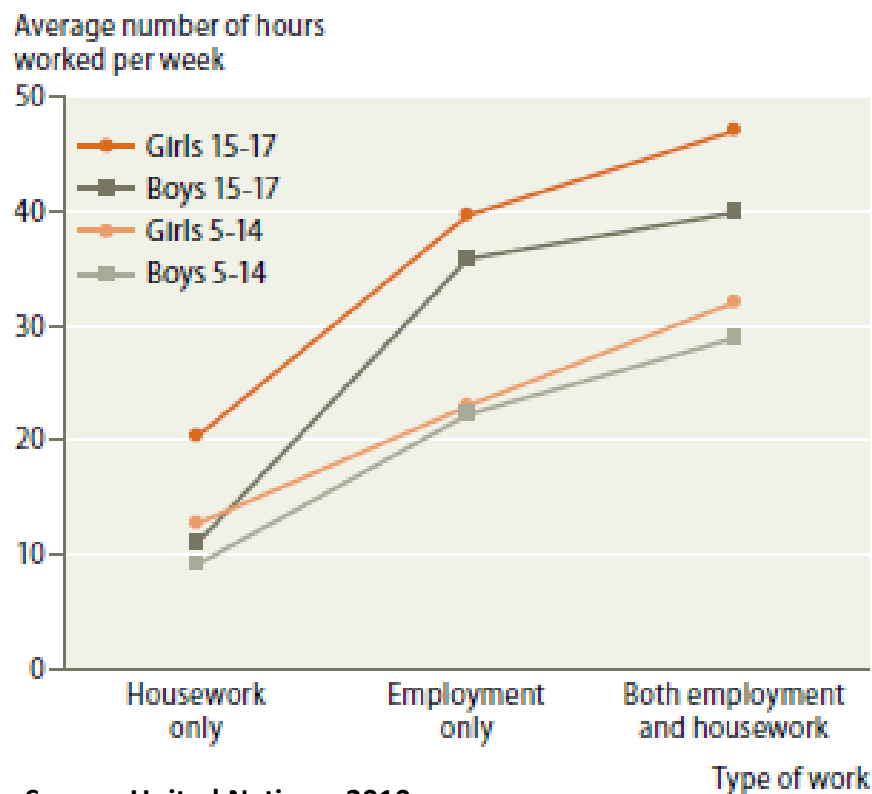
	Both woman and man working full-time	Woman working part-time, man working full-time	Woman not working, man working full-time	Other combinations of activity status
Netherlands	7	49	31	13
Switzerland	8	45	38	10
Germany	13	31	43	14
Austria	19	38	32	11
Italy	31	20	42	8
Hungary	32	3	52	13

Source: United Nations, 2010



# Child work (1)

## Time spent by children on work, by type of work engaged in, by sex and age group, 1999–2006 (latest available)



Source: United Nations, 2010

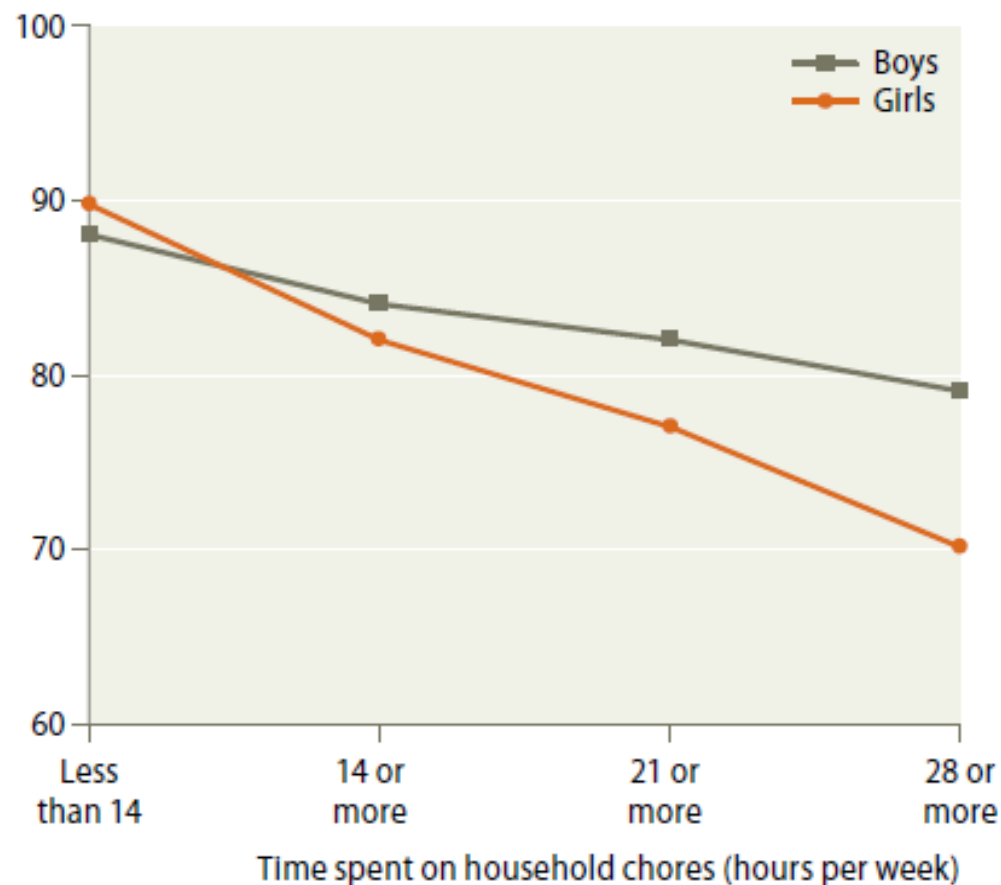
- At minimum, data on child work should be disaggregated by sex, age, and type of work.
- Furthermore, data disaggregation, analysis and presentation should focus on causes and consequences of child work. For example:
  - disaggregate and analyze gender statistics on child work by poverty status or wealth categories;
  - disaggregate and analyze school attendance by labour force participation status or number of hours worked.



## Child work (2)

School attendance rate of children aged 5–14 by amount of time spent on household chores, by sex, 1999–2006

School attendance rate (%)



Source: United Nations, 2010



# Assessment of coverage of gender issues in dissemination products

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What gender statisticians can do?



## Suggested activities for gender units and gender focal points

- Review of regular work-related publications / databases for coverage of gender
  - ✓ Data disaggregated by sex AND additional characteristics
  - ✓ Data analysed and discussed from a gender perspective
  - ✓ Clear messages answering policy-relevant questions on gender issues are highlighted
- Review of gender-focused publications
  - ✓ Big picture of all aspects related to work provided
  - ✓ Clear messages answering policy-relevant questions are highlighted
  - ✓ Limitations related to data quality, construction of indicators and analysis are acknowledged



## Summary: Gender relevant work statistics

- Comprehensive coverage of gender issues
- Data quality – reduced sex-bias in data collection & detailed enough classifications and categories of answers.
- Data disaggregated by sex AND other characteristics





## Exercise 1

### Gender statistics

You are meeting colleague statisticians from other divisions/departments of the NSO/NSS to discuss current status and next steps in developing gender statistics in your organization. One of your colleagues mentions that data are already collected and disseminated disaggregated by sex and a focus on gender statistics is therefore a waste of resources.

Prepare a brief argument with 3-5 points.

## Exercise 2

### Health risk factors related to life style and gender

Identify gender issues related to **health risk factors related to life-style** such as drinking or physical exercise with impact on health and prepare a summary table on gender issues, data needed and sources of data.

## Exercise 3

### Child work and gender

Identify gender issues related to **child work** and prepare a summary table on gender issues, data needed and sources of data.