



Learn from Uganda

Citizen-Generated Data/ Citizen Contribution to Data



Developments and Key Success Factors

Status

Uganda adopted the UN Resolution on the need to advance the generation and use of alternative data sources, including citizen-generated data, as complementary data to inform policymaking and programming on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)¹.

Citizen-generated data (CGD) is data that people or organizations provide, produce, and use to monitor, demand directly, or drive change on issues that affect them². Now increasingly referred to as citizen contribution to data (CCD)³, this type of data is needed to monitor the much-sought GEWE aspirations, which are also articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995). These include gender balance and representation of marginalized groups on all constitutional and other bodies.

In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda principle of "Leave No One Behind (LNOB)", CCD helps to fill critical data gaps for groups suffering from data marginalization and increase the extent to which their experiences are reflected in statistics. In addition to filling data gaps, some CCD initiatives further advance important values such as fairness, inclusiveness, openness, and transparency in statistics.

1 *Experiences from developing the Citizen Generated Data Toolkit in Uganda* a presentation by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) https://paris21.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Uganda_UBOS_CGD%20in%20Uganda.pptx

2 Lämmerhirt 2018a

3 There is a global and regional move to adopt the phrase 'citizen contribution to data' rather than 'citizen-generated data' as the more accurate and all-encompassing nomenclature for this kind of data. The recently formed Collaborative on Citizen Contribution to Data (CCD) led by UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and UN Women defines this kind of data as "the engagement of citizens in multiple processes in the data value chain". The multi-member Collaborative is working to standardize these and other developments in this type of data across the board. UN Women's appointment to co-lead the Collaborative is a result of successes in Citizen Contribution to Data in East and Southern Africa, and country efforts in Uganda and Ethiopia. For the purposes of this brief and given the name of the toolkit on this area already produced and disseminated by Uganda, the term Citizen-Generated Data (CGD) will also be used where applicable for clarity.

Why citizen-generated data/ citizen contribution to data?

All countries are mandated to report on SDG progress using official statistics. With growing recognition of the need for and benefits of inclusivity and the identified dearth of gender data, it has become crucial to recognize the role of non-state actors (NSAs) including UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and others as data producers. Establishing standards and guidelines for citizen contribution to data (CCD) is therefore fundamental to supporting NSAs to make their data and reports contribute to official statistics.

Key actors

- Uganda Bureau of Statistics
- SDG Secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
- Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG)
- Non-State Actors including CSOs
- UN Women

Challenges

All member states are required to report using official statistics⁴ when reporting on SDGs, including those related to GEWE. In the case of Uganda, official data has traditionally comprised data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), which includes data submitted by government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). The Government of Uganda acknowledges

4 The GEWE Indicator Framework comprises 54 of the 201 relevant indicators for Uganda. The GEWE indicators were localized and domesticated in the National Priority Gender Equality Indicators (NPGElS) framework for Uganda and must be monitored and reported on based on reliable data and statistics.



that while many non-state actors (NSAs)⁵ contribute to the production of data, this data does not always align with government reporting and these data production efforts are not always recognized. Assurance of quality data, even for national reports from UN agencies, is often troublesome. Whereas the data presented in these reports is very important, it remains unofficial.

Applying data by NSAs to the national context has also been a challenge in the uptake of CGD. For example, where one NSA has only collected data from half the districts in one region and another NSA has only collected data in the remaining half, it has been difficult to extrapolate the findings to apply to the whole region as the data is not standard. Applying quality assurance and standardization measures provided in the CGD Toolkit is thus intended to ensure that the data compiled from different exercises in the region is reliable and credible enough to provide an accurate regional picture and can thus be considered as official data. In the absence of these standards, even when referenced by the Government, such data and statistics has been referred to as unofficial data.

Achievements

Uganda's efforts towards meeting national priorities outlined in the third National Development Plan (NDPIII) and the SDG targets in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and addressing the related gaps have significantly increased the demand for more timely, high quality and disaggregated data. In response, the national statistical system (NSS) has sought to respond effectively to reporting requirements by using existing legal infrastructure, coordination mechanisms, and statistical and data development strategies, one of which is the development of CGD/CCD. Several achievements have been realized in this regard:

1. **Development and dissemination of the Uganda CGD Toolkit as an important step towards making civil society and non-state actor data official.** At the end of 2021, Uganda finalized and published

a CGD Toolkit⁶ spearheaded by UBOS in collaboration with UN Women and partners in the data and statistics ecosystem. The Toolkit provides guidelines on the measures that NSAs, including CSOs can take to ensure that the data they produce is certified to contribute to the country's official statistics. The CGD Toolkit is a strategic step in: institutionalizing CSOs and NSAs in the NSS; enhancing skills and competencies of NSAs in CGD data compilation; increasing the availability of quality CGD; and raising the profile of CGD as a reliable form of data.

2. **Adoption of the CGD Toolkit by non-state actors and breaking silos in the national statistical system.** Some CSOs are already implementing the measures outlined in the CGD Toolkit to produce and compile their data. The application of the guidelines is helping to break silos in how NSAs produce and share gender data and statistics thus enhancing cohesion and fostering unity of purpose in the NSS for improved production, access to, and uptake and use of high-quality and reliable data.
3. **Improved reporting including meaningful contributions to annual SDG and Voluntary National Review reporting processes.** The development and dissemination of the CGD Toolkit took place in the context of Uganda ramping up the generation of data, including gender data, for reporting on the SDGs. Examples of these steps towards increased production of data include participation in the annual SDG and Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting process, establishing a national SDG Secretariat, and developing the UNSDCF and the UN Joint Programme on Data and Statistics (UNJPD&S). Since its second VNR Report in 2020, Uganda has mobilized stakeholders in SDG implementation and monitoring to contribute to the VNR process and is now one of Africa's VNR champions. Among the first four countries⁷ to pilot the VNRs process targeting local governments

⁵ Non-State Actors (NSAs) include civil society or civil society organizations including non-government organizations, business associations (excluding for-profit enterprises), parliamentarians, academia, and media. NSAs can be international, regional, national, or sub-national.

⁶ The need to address the Leave No One Behind aspiration of Agenda 2030 makes it incumbent for potential data producers to ensure that the voices of citizens, especially the marginalized, are embraced and elaborated. The Uganda CGD Toolkit provides a standard approach and methodologies that current and potential CGD producers should adopt to compile reliable, usable, and accessible data. All non-traditional producers should comply for their data to be considered official.

⁷ Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon



in monitoring and reporting on SDGs, Uganda is the only country that has scaled up local government reporting approach to 12 local governments (more than twice the required five local governments).

- 4. Shifting mindsets demonstrated through high acceptance of citizen-generated data/citizen contribution to data to complement traditional data sources.** The national statistics office (NSO) has embraced and is in fact spearheading the use of non-traditional data sources to complement traditional sources to the extent that CGD/CCD is being used to enrich regular progress reports to the UBOS Director General. CGD/CCD is therefore now considered credible data to supplement traditional data sources.
- 5. Increased collaboration through leveraging innovative civil society coordinating mechanisms.** Uganda is successfully leveraging the networks of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Bag (CSBAG)⁸ to facilitate the dissemination and implementation of the CGD Toolkit. CSBAG has been instrumental in coordinating CSOs for gender-responsive-budgeting (GRB). Tapping into this rich and well-established network has played a significant role in supporting CSOs to rope in other CSOs to harmonize the production of and boost CGD/CCD. UN Women, in collaboration with CSBAG, is supporting the development of the Gender and Research Data Hub (GERDH) in partnership with the Gender and Research Data Hub Initiative (GERDHI) for CGD. The GERDH will serve as a readily available and usable data hub in line with national, regional, and global frameworks and ongoing quality frames and standards of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).
- 6. Increased capacity of civil society organizations and other non-state actors in producing data for use in official statistics.** UN Women, the SDG Secretariat, and partners are working closely with UBOS to support and follow up on CSOs that are successfully applying guidelines from the Toolkit to produce high-quality, standardized data that

can be used in official statistics. Some CSOs and NSAs are already providing this data and are being supported and encouraged to align with and apply the guidelines provided in the CGD Toolkit.

Lessons

Ongoing measures to standardize, streamline, and harmonize CGD/CCD are creating a valuable opportunity for the uptake and use of rich qualitative data from NSAs. These efforts are also instrumental in enhancing the intersection of qualitative data with quantitative data from the NSO and MDAs. This data increases evidence building for progressive SDG and national reporting, advocacy, and informed decision-making. The steps to include CGD/CCD in official statistics are further providing a window to enrich official statistics with information that provides a better understanding of the root causes of observed phenomenon and to capture the views of communities on the issues being studied as an inherent strength of data typically collected by CSOs.

The Uganda experience in developing CGD/CCD for use in official statistics provides important lessons:

- 1. Highly participatory national statistics office and government-led processes are critical in the development of citizen's contribution to data.** Uganda applied an inclusive approach in developing the CGD Toolkit first mobilizing NSAs in a participatory process and giving guidance on the Toolkit based on these actors' respective experiences and interests. This contributed significantly to the richness, relevance and comprehensiveness of the Toolkit and has likely played an important role in ensuring ownership and promoting adoption of the Toolkit. It is also important for sustainability of the process.
- 2. Alignment to national development plans and priorities is important to ensure relevance and unity of purpose in the development of CCD.** Uganda's CGD Toolkit was aligned to the third Plan for National Statistical Development III (PNSD III) and the third National Development Plan (NDP III) through a consultative and participatory process that included a cross-section of partners across the NSS. These included academia, and other key partners in implementation such as CSOs, MDAs,

⁸ Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) is a coalition formed in 2004 to bring together CSOs at national and district levels to influence Government decisions on resource mobilization and utilization for equitable and sustainable development. CSBAG was created out of a desire to collectively influence government and effectively participate in setting national budget priorities.



and UBOS⁹. This has been important for relevance and to avoid wastage and duplication of efforts. CGD has also been integrated in the UN Women Country Strategic Note and work plan, as well as in thematic programmes of Ending Violence against Women (EVAW), Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) and in the UNSDCF, and UNJP-D&S. Progress on CGD is now reported accordingly in UN and Government reporting frameworks.

- 3. Continuous involvement of key players including civil society organizations in high-level technical meetings is crucial for a 360-degree effective statistical system.** CSOs are important members of NSSs. As part of efforts to capture data and information from CSOs systematically and adequately, the third Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD III)¹⁰ included CSOs in quarterly inter-agency technical working group meetings. The need to provide a foundation and framework to help CSOs generate high-quality data to complement official data was identified through their involvement in the meetings and CSOs subsequently requested capacity building in this area. Rollout of the CGD Toolkit has been based on demand from institutions and while there is commendable support towards cleanup of data to make it useful for reporting, updating data and metadata for various data sets is a challenge that is still being addressed. The need for dedicated statistics dissemination and communications personnel has also been identified as part of developing CGD/CCD, especially from an uptake and use perspective.
- 4. Deepening partner support by integrating the development of CGD/CCD in established programmes and initiatives where possible provides a significant boost to these efforts.** Phase II of the Uganda [Women Count](#) programme, part of UN Women's global gender data and statistics flagship initiative, includes rollout of the CGD guidelines and CGD development as a standalone activity. Embedding CGD development in [Women Count in Uganda](#) has contributed to making additional technical and other resources available to national efforts.

- 5. Tailored capacity-building measures that match the varied data production capacities of actors in the national statistical system to bring them up to speed at their pace.** Tailored capacity-building measures for different users of the CGD Toolkit include systematic training on the contents and requirements of the Toolkit and the requirements for the effective production of quality statistics and the use of such data. Already, thirty CSOs have been identified for an inception training on the CGD compilation framework. This capacity building will involve exposure to concepts and definitions and terminology as used by CSOs, indicators inventory, metadata development, and data management under the Gender and Research Data Hub (GERDH).
- 6. Strong political will, support, and participation is critical to ensuring the effective development of citizen contribution to data.** Uganda has established a formidable SDG Secretariat housed in the Office of the President (OPM). This has made available the political and other resources needed to drive the CGD agenda and to build and maintain the momentum required to include NSAs and standardize the data produced for use in official statistics.

Next steps and prospects

- 1. Popularization of the CGD Toolkit to engage even more stakeholders** including through the NGO Forum. The guidelines will also be popularized as one of the core activities of the upcoming UN Joint Program on Data and Statistics, (discussed in more detail below) with the vision that every UN agency works with every responsible partner (RP) and implementing partner (IP) to adopt the CGD Toolkit to ensure that the data they produce can be included in official statistics.
- 2. UN Joint Program on Data and Statistics for aligned interventions including on CGD/CCD.** The UN has been supporting the Government of Uganda in the production of data and statistics for specific indicators most relevant to the respective agencies. The UN is now poised to step up coordination for improved effectiveness, for example, in supporting UBOS to produce and make data on these indicators more accessible. Under

⁹ Uganda is implementing NDP III (FY2020/2021 to FY2024/2025) with the 17 SDGs and their targets fully integrated.

¹⁰ PNSD III (FY2020/21 - FY2024/2025) is being implemented under the theme Agenda for Innovation, Modernisation and Transformation of the National Statistical System.



the program, with the SDGs as an entry point, UN agencies will continue to provide demand-driven capacity building support with unified systems and leveraged resources and without duplication. The UN will continue to amplify and increase the visibility of the country's development achievements through evidence-based reporting on country commitments using quality data including CGD.

- 3. Continue to organize and cluster civil society organizations that are applying guidelines from the CGD Toolkit.** This will be instrumental to systematically identify CSOs that are frontrunners in meeting the threshold for producing data that can be used as official statistics and those that need more time and support. This calibration will help to ensure that more CSOs and other NSAs graduate to effectively producing credible and reliable data that can be incorporated as official statistics

at a pace that suits their needs and status rather than a turnkey approach. This clustering will also continue along UN Women thematic programme areas and the national priorities defined in the NDP, PNSD, UNJPD&S and UNSDCF.

- 4. Leverage the newly established Uganda Annual SDGs Conference as a platform to review progress on the SDGs.** Held for the first time in 2022, the Annual SDG Conference is an important domestic review platform for key stakeholders to review progress on the SDGs. The forum is approved by Cabinet—further demonstrating the high political towards reporting on the SDGs—and its outcome informs the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Efforts are underway to popularize the Conference and contribute to similar regional and global forums.



UN Women Uganda

Lugogo Lane
Plot 2 Naguru
Kampala, Uganda
 [@unwomenuganda](https://twitter.com/unwomenuganda)

**UN Women East and Southern
Africa Regional Office**

UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;
Block M, Ground Floor
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

africa.unwomen.org

Email: esaro.publications@unwomen.org

unwomen.org

[unwomenafrica](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenafrica)

[unwomenafrica](https://twitter.com/unwomenafrica)

[unwomen](https://www.youtube.com/unwomen)

[unwomenafrica](https://www.instagram.com/unwomenafrica)