The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2023

A Changing Landscape of Financing for Development and Gender Data
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Preface

Data and statistics are now regarded as the lifeblood of societies, and consequently the demand for more and better data is continually increasing. The last three editions of the PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics has been a clarion call for more and better funding for data and statistics. COVID-19, food and energy insecurity, hyperinflation, multiple wars and conflicts, and other policy crises around the world have put a huge strain on public finances in recent years. Many in our community feared that funding for data and statistics would be the first target of governments looking to cut spending, thus aggravating the already difficult situation for many national statistical systems and putting at risk countries’ ability to compile and assess the information required to design appropriate policies to tackle these crises.

The 2023 PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics, gives us cause for cautious optimism. After the worrisome downturn, overall funding for data and statistics has returned to its pre-pandemic level and could even increase given the announcements by the World Bank and other donors of significant funding to be disbursed in the coming years, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. These steps could lay the groundwork for further data-conscious financing in the future.

These positive signs reflect the work of the data and statistics community in advocating for trustworthy, reliable and comparable data and statistics. Since the signing of the 2030 Agenda, interest in data production, availability and use has steadily increased at the international, national and local levels. Discussions around the data revolution have helped draw new attention to the critical role of data, as did the first United Nations (UN) World Data Forum and the launch of the Cape Town Action Plan in 2017. The boundaries between national statistics offices, regional and international organisations, foundations, civil society, the private sector, academia, and more general data users have begun to disappear. While there are many mixed and somewhat disappointing trends to be observed with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is also much encouraging work being undertaken on the ground, in local communities, where better data drive positive change, For example, in the Dominican Republic disaggregated gender statistics enabled the development and implementation of a policy to prevent and care for adolescent pregnancies and early unions.

Such change would have not been possible without the mobilisation of a wide range of actors, for example through the Bern Network, a multistakeholder alliance established in 2019. Its work to promote better financing for development data led to the creation of the Clearinghouse on Financing for Development Data. Other champions such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data through its Data for Development Festivals have raised the visibility of both data and statistics as strategic assets for sustainable development and also highlighted the need for more and smarter financing.

Data and statistics are now an important topic at the highest levels of the global agenda, including at the G7, G20 and the UN General Assembly. At this year’s UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General called for urgent action to reap the data dividend by securing data for at least 90% of SDG targets by 2027 and increasing the share of official development assistance for data to at least 0.7% by 2030. Next year’s UN World Data Forum in Medellin, Colombia will be a great opportunity to unite around commitments and action points to ensure that we are moving in the right direction. After persistent calls for more and better
funding, the debate might eventually turn now to how to spend those resources effectively and turn them into long-lasting capacity development.

While this year’s report studies and considers trends and their implications for the future of financing for data and statistics, it is also a moment for all of us to celebrate and learn from our efforts and to redouble them in order to maintain momentum until we reach our common development goals.

Johannes Jütting

Executive Head, PARIS21

Yusuf Murangwa

Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
Foreword

The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) was founded in 1999 to strengthen the capacity of statistical systems in low and middle-income countries, advocate for more and better funding for data and statistics, and convene global discussions about the role of data in sustainable development. Since 2006, the annual PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics has presented trends related to data and statistics funding in order to provide the global community with reliable information upon which to make funding decisions.

Timely, reliable and disaggregated data and statistics are fundamental for guiding national policy making to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind. However data gaps persist and the ambitious goals that the international community set for itself in 2015 – to end poverty and protect the planet by 2030 – are at risk.

The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics uses the most recent data from the OECD Creditor Reporting System alongside a survey of multilateral donors to provide an up-to-date picture of financing flows for data and statistics to low- and middle-income countries. The report informs discussions around financing for data and statistics and advocates for more and better financing.

Using the latest data available on development financing at the global level, the 2023 edition of this report provides an incisive picture of the funding landscape for data and statistics during 2021, including a comprehensive review of the resources disbursed, pivotal changes in funding and the implications of these shifts. The report focuses in particular on gender data funding, which stagnated in this period, and explores the mainstreaming of gender data within development assistance. “Funding” as used in this report generally refers to development assistance from aid providers including bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic donors. Domestic financing flows, the main source of funding for national statistical systems, do not fall within the scope of this report. Findings are drawn from analysis of data from the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data which provides publicly available project-level data at https://smartdatafinance.org/.
Acknowledgements

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>CRVS</td>
<td>Civil registration and vital statistics</td>
</tr>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee (OECD)</td>
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<td>GDF</td>
<td>Global Data Facility</td>
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<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least developed country</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>NSDS</td>
<td>National strategy for the development of statistics</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
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Executive summary

Since 2020, funding for data and statistics has changed significantly

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing resource limitations have affected funding for data and statistics. Disruption to regular statistical collection activities and the rapid change in funding priorities caused unprecedented declines in support to data collection, analysis and dissemination. Even as funding shrank, the data and statistics community experienced a surge in demand for robust, diversified data (particularly in sectors such as health, gender, refugee affairs and climate change), which put enormous pressure on national statistics systems.

Funding flows appear to be recovering after their low point in 2020, as noted in this 2023 edition of the PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics. Yet, while financing levels resemble and have even surpassed the pre-pandemic level, the configuration of development partners has changed as have the modalities through which partners provide support to statistics.

Understanding this new landscape of actors is vital for the data and statistics community. The question of how data and statistics are funded is as important as how much funding is received. The data needs of countries of all income levels must be met with funding that is delivered through the most appropriate modality.

This report explores the present landscape as well as these new trends in funding for data and statistics in order to inform strategic decision making in data-driven initiatives in the development sector.

Three main emerging trends in financing for statistics

Funding for data and statistics has increased to USD 799 million after a challenging 2020

Following the disruption to financing in 2020, the downward trend appears to have been reversed, with funding for data rising by 14% to reach USD 799 million in 2021.

Multilateral channels have become the main source of funding to data and statistics for the first time

2021 marked a pivotal shift, with multilateral channels emerging as the predominant source of data and statistics funding for the first time. This evolution was showcased in an increase in resources for systemic overhauls that prioritise long-term development goals and in increased funding towards least developed countries. Loans for data and statistics also reached their highest level ever, USD 240 million, in 2021 while the volume of grants declined for the third consecutive year. Overall levels of disbursements were approaching the pre-pandemic peak.
Gender data financing has stagnated at a low level, but there are signs of successful gender data mainstreaming throughout development projects

Funding to gender data stagnated at a low of USD 65 million in 2021. However, indications are that data are being mainstreamed through ODA-funded projects for gender equality, which may provide opportunities for resource mobilisation.

Understanding these trends – the apparent recovery and overall increase of funding for statistics and data, a shift in the leading modalities for this funding, and signs of greater gender data mainstreaming – will enable informed, strategic decision making in future data-driven initiatives in the development sector. The insights presented in this report can therefore lay the foundation for more equitable, efficient and impactful development assistance.
Chapter 1. The state of funding for data and statistics

1.1. The resurgence of funding for data and statistics from its decline until 2020

In 2021, total disbursed funding for data and statistics rebounded to USD 799 million, a 14% increase over 2020\(^1\) (Figure 1.1). The development data community’s efforts helped halt the downward trend and avoid further pandemic-related negative impacts on national statistical systems.

The development data community’s efforts helped halt the downward trend and avoid further pandemic-related negative impacts on national statistical systems.

Figure 1.1. Funding for data and statistics by types of donors

Note: Data represent disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices). The World Bank is the main driver of the increased funding from multilateral donors, while other multilateral donors’ contributions increased by USD 6 million in 2021.
Source: Author’s calculation based on data from the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data (2023\(^1\)), Project-level Dataset on Support to Statistics (PRESS Dataset) 2023 (database), https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data (accessed on 15 September 2023).
At the outset of the pandemic in 2020, many countries paused their official statistics activities, considering them non-essential governmental functions. Even when operations gradually resumed, travel bans and restrictions on in-person training and data collection impeded support for these activities. The lack of infrastructure for remote work in many countries further compounded the challenges. Amid the crisis, partners also devoted fewer resources to statistical activities, with the result that funding for development data, long a relatively low priority, declined more sharply than funding for other non-pandemic-related activities (PARIS21, 2022[2]). Restrictions and travel bans continued into 2021, making it difficult to increase funding.

To navigate these challenges, the development data community implemented several strategies:

- **Adapting implementation modalities.** The Asian Development Bank leveraged earlier investment in new methods and technology to deliver support during the pandemic to partner countries. One-to-many training replaced bilateral training, the dominant mechanism before the pandemic.

- **Mobilising support for data in pandemic assistance.** The Food and Agriculture Organization leveraged innovative data sources to monitor the impact of the pandemic while continuing technical assistance on agricultural surveys (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2020[3]).

- **Advocacy for funding.** The Bern Network worked through the pandemic to help bring countries and partners together to build stronger statistical capacity during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. To improve transparency and support the alignment of donors’ and countries’ objectives, the Bern Network developed and launched the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data, a platform with comprehensive data and insights on funding to data. The 2020 and 2021 editions of the *PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics* deployed nowcasting methods and alternative data sources to highlight the alarmingly low level of funding and its potential outcomes.

- **New funding instruments.** In 2021, the World Bank launched the Global Data Facility (GDF), an innovative global funding instrument that enables long-term support and durable transformation of data systems and data capital in low and middle-income countries. Established through a unique partnership between the World Bank, United Nations and development partners to mobilise at least USD 500 million and co-ordinate support for the global data agenda by 2030, the GDF showcased the global commitment for more and better financing to development data. By April 2022, the GDF had secured inaugural funds from the European Commission, Japan and the International Monetary Fund (World Bank, 2023[4]).

1.2. The changing landscape of development data funding and modalities

The resurgence of funding for data parallels a shift in the modalities of funding for statistics and data, with multilateral donors now contributing the biggest share of total funding, outpacing bilateral donors (Figure 1.1), alongside a substantial increase in loans for development data (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.2. Funding for development data by types of flows**

![Bar chart showing funding for development data by types of flows: Grants and Loans over the years 2010 to 2021.](image)

Note: Data represent disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices). The World Bank is the main driver of the increase in loans. The Inter-American Development Bank also provided over USD 10 million of loans in 2021 and none of the other donors disbursed over USD 5 million of loans.

Source: Author’s calculation based on data from the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data (2023[1]), Project-level Dataset on Support to Statistics (PRESS Dataset) 2023 (database), [https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data](https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data) (accessed on 15 September 2023).

The transition towards multilateral channels

In 2021, multilateral channels accounted for the biggest contribution for development data, disbursing USD 438 million – a 77% increase over 2018 and a faster-paced increase than in multilateral channels’ overall ODA. Funding from bilateral channels decreased for a third consecutive year in 2021 to USD 295 million.

It is important to acknowledge that without bilateral donors’ endorsements of programmes of work and unearmarked financial contributions to core budgets, the increase in multilateral channels would not be possible.

Without strategic endorsements and unearmarked financial contributions from bilateral donors, the increase in funding via multilateral channels would not be possible.

Funding data through multilateral channels has two key advantages: It promotes data as a global public good and ensures consistent, long-term funding for national statistical strategies and systems.
**Multilaterals can help make data a global public good**

The trend towards increased funding from multilateral channels can serve to enhance the process of transforming data to a global digital public good (Ritchie and Welpton, 2011[5]; UN, 2020[6]). Studies have shown that multilateral channels are better suppliers of global public goods as they spur the provision of shared global norms, information and products whose benefits are dispersed across geographies (Gulrajani, 2016[7]). As the custodians of many statistical standards and tools for the production, dissemination and use of data, multilateral organisations can further ensure the quality of development data and maintain their non-exclusive and non-rival characteristics as a global public good.

**Multilaterals can help keep funding for national statistical strategies consistent**

A national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS) allow countries to plan their data activities across government functions to meet data needs for policy making. Countries often lack a framework for negotiating a committed and fully funded NSDS that spans several years. A sustained funding flow requires an agreement between the government and its partners, as a group, on the objectives and broad modalities to achieve these goals and that is consistent with their respective development objectives (Kibuka, 2007[8]). Bilateral donors have funded long-standing programmes that proved to be effective in continuously producing important statistics for the public, among them the Demographic Health Survey funded by the United States. However, it can be challenging and indeed rare to reach such an alignment of objectives for the improvement of an entire national statistical system. As of 2023, only 25% of NSDSs in sub-Saharan African countries are fully funded (UN, 2023[9]). With multilateral donors taking on a growing role, there is hope for more committed and sustained funding for multi-year plans in countries. Stable resources for implementing statistical plans over multiple years can help countries make a good business case for proposed plans and thereby unlock additional technical assistance resources. More action from multilateral donors is still needed. As of 2021, most programmes from multilateral channels lacked clear references to an NSDS, national data needs and national data programmes.
Box 1.2. The difference between bilateral and multilateral funding

Analysis on development financing presented in this report uses source data from the OECD’s official development assistance database. According to the OECD, bilateral aid represents flows from official (government) sources directly to the recipient country and multilateral aid represents core contributions from official (government) sources to multilateral agencies which use them to fund their own developmental programmes. A donor country can also provide funding to a multilateral agency to deliver a programme or project on its behalf in a specific country, region, sector or theme. These contributions are typically counted as bilateral flows.

Figure 1.3. Differences between bilateral and multilateral development assistance

Where assistance for data is going

The rise in regional and non-specific funding

Both bilateral and multilateral donors have amplified their support for regional projects and for projects with unspecified recipients over the past decade (Figure 1.4, right panel).

Development data require better usability and interpretability across countries, regions and sectors to effectively tackle issues in trade, health, migrations, environment and climate change. Regional and global projects can co-ordinate countries’ efforts more efficiently and ensure that data are produced to a consistent standard. Implementing projects at the regional level may also reduce the risk of free-rider problems in public goods.

One reason for the increase in unspecified funding is that technical support to development data is particularly scalable – from statistical methodologies to new solutions for modernising statistical systems. Several new tools have been developed in recent years for countries to develop strategic plans, exchange and disseminate data, and produce data for emerging needs in climate and environment. The lump sum costs of developing the solutions are marked as unspecified assistance, and county implementation requires only a marginal cost.
**Bilateral donors’ funding to country-specific projects has declined as multilateral support surged**

The trajectories of bilateral and multilateral funding have sharply diverged in recent years. Less funding was disbursed for country-specific projects through bilateral channels in 2019-21 than in 2010-12, while funding through multilateral channels nearly doubled (Figure 1.4, left panel). Almost all of the increased funding from multilateral channels was directed towards least developed countries (LDCs), indicating an efficient allocation of resources to countries that needed support the most (Figure 1.5).

**Figure 1.4. Country-specific funding from bilateral donors decreased drastically since 2010**

![Figure 1.4](image)

Note: Data reflect disbursements (two-year total) in constant USD million (2021 prices).
Source: Author’s calculation based on data from the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data (2023[1]), Project-level Dataset on Support to Statistics (PRESS Dataset) 2023 (database), [https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data](https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data) (accessed on 15 September 2023).

Considering the high cost of bilateral transfers, especially relative to the small amounts of funding involved for development data (OECD, 2017[10]), it is logical to channel more funding to data and statistics through multilateral channels. The pooling of resources among various donors, for instance, is one method to reduce transaction costs and enable greater effectiveness and efficiency. Many studies have found that multilateral agencies also are particularly effective as neutral providers of information to and between recipient countries (de Hoop et al., 2023[12]), thus facilitating the sharing of lessons learned while scaling up successful projects.

The increased contribution from multilateral donors in 2021 made up for decreases from other sources and maintained total funding for development data at 2019 levels. However, bilateral donors’ country-specific support to LDCs decreased in 2020-21 to the lowest level in a decade (Figure 1.5).
Funding for data as loans versus grants

Against the increase in overall disbursed funding for data in 2021, grants for data decreased for the third consecutive year.

Grants and loans tend to fund different types of data activities. Grants are generally smaller in size than loans and are better suited for project-type interventions. In recent years, grants have been vital to financing capacity-building activities, sharing success stories, and providing added value to loans. Grants also can provide agile responses and can address urgent needs in countries, while loans are less suited for these activities due to their lengthy approval process.

The larger funding envelope typically allocated as loans allows such funding to cover many statistical domains as well as total overhauls of national statistical systems, which may make loans more suitable for statistical programmes and systemic interventions. Loans used in sectoral budgetary support may also be channelled to data and statistics, although sufficient evidence for this has not yet been found.

When used in countries not in debt distress, loans have been critical in supporting large projects for digital infrastructure and modernisation of statistical systems. For instance, the World Bank has disbursed over USD 250 million in loans to support the modernisation of statistical systems through projects in Angola, Türkiye and Viet Nam and a regional project in West Africa in 2019-21.

Loan recipients also have incentive to more closely scrutinise the costs and benefits of a proposed project and take greater ownership to ensure that it delivers real economic benefits. By accepting a loan, the government demonstrates its willingness to invest in data and to dedicate future revenue streams to finance data. Loans are also more predictable than grants (Calleja and Rogerson, 2019[12]), allowing the implementation of multi-year plans.

While loans offer some advantages in the context of funding for data, they also have drawbacks. For example, loans for development data tend to go to upper middle-income countries while countries in debt distress, many of which many are fragile and conflict affected, have difficulty obtaining loans for development data. The larger average volume of loans for data and statistics also means that such loans would likely cover fewer countries than would be covered by grants with same amount disbursed. Due to the low interest rates in the 2010s and fiscal constraints in recent years, concessional loans have made

Note: Data represent changes of total funding (two-year average) from the baseline period of 2010-2021.
up an increasing share of funding for data, though recent rate hikes may slow down this trend in total ODA and in funding for data and statistics. As of 2023, loans reported to the OECD Creditor Reporting System by non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members, including multilateral organisations, are not calculated for the grant equivalent value (Box 1.3). Caution is therefore advised when interpreting the amount of total funding disbursed for data and statistics in recent years.

Box 1.3. ODA loans from Development Assistance Committee members

Most DAC members increased the volume of their ODA loan commitments between 2009 and 2021, with the total volume more than doubling over the period from USD 15.89 billion to USD 34.96 billion. The share of loans in DAC members’ total ODA remained quite stable at about 15% overall.

The DAC agreed in 2014 to introduce the measurement of donor effort in ODA on a grant equivalent basis, and this became the standard in 2019 reporting on 2018 ODA. The grant equivalent system will, by construction, increase ODA figures in the long term in comparison with a cash-flow system as reflows on loans are no longer deducted. In the shorter term and for specific years and countries, the ODA figure based on the grant equivalent system can be lower ODA figure based on net flows.

In the grant equivalent system, a loan to a riskier beneficiary conveys a higher grant element and records a higher ODA amount than a loan with the same terms and conditions to a less risky beneficiary such as a multilateral institution.

As of 2021, the bulk of ODA was still provided in the form of grants, and the introduction of the grant equivalent system seems to have not changed these trends. When measured based on grant equivalents, the volume of ODA loans has increased (by 48% from 2015 to 2021). But the grant equivalent of ODA loans as a share of total ODA decreased slightly over this period from 8.3% in 2015 to 7.7% in 2021.

A notable shift during this period was the increase in the share of loans in funding for data and statistics, which increased from 20% in 2015 to 26% by 2021. It is worth highlighting that, while multilateral donors are not included in the OECD’s calculation and subsequent reporting of grant equivalents, they provided the majority share of these loans. A consistent methodology on grant equivalents for all donors is needed to compare funding for data and statistics across different time frames.


References


Notes

1 The term “funding” as used in this report generally refers to development assistance from donors.
Chapter 2. Trends in funding for gender data

Insufficient data and evidence to monitor advances and incentivise policy actions are important impediments to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The launch of the SDG indicator framework in 2016 revealed a glaring data gap, notably with respect to SDGs 5, 13 and 16. This was particularly striking for SDG 5, for which only one indicator had data available for more than half of countries.\(^1\) The absence of sex-disaggregated indicators within other SDGs means that the experiences and realities of countless women and girls are disregarded, which effectively marginalises them from statistical visibility.

Investing in national statistical capabilities is essential to enhance the coverage, accuracy and immediacy of data pertinent to gender equality and the SDGs. Between 2016 and 2020, gender data received over USD 350 million in development financing (PARIS21, 2022\(^{14}\)). These investments ensured that all indicators under SDG 5 became measurable by 2020, with data availability surpassing 50% in 2022. A recent review of gender equality progress across the SDGs by UN Women calls for greater investment to refine gender statistics production and usage, particularly emphasising the need to harvest data related to gender and various intersecting inequalities to ensure no woman or girl is left behind (UN Women, 2023\(^{15}\)).

2.1. Total grants for gender data stagnated in 2021

In 2021, funding for gender data recovered from its 2020 low point, rising to USD 120 million in total disbursements. However, the increase hides a disconcerting pattern of stagnating grants\(^2\) (Figure 2.1). While loans for gender data surged in 2021 (Box 2.1), total grants for gender data provided by bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic donors remained at their previously low levels, continuing the troubling trend of stagnation observed in previous editions of the PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PARIS21, 2021\(^{2}\)). Commitments of grants to gender data in 2021, which could indicate disbursement over the following years, do not signal a notable uptick, foreshadowing a long-term trend of stagnation.
Figure 2.1. Total volume of grants disbursed for gender data, 2012-21

Note: The figure includes only grants (and excludes loans) from bilateral, multilateral and private donors. Data refer to disbursements in constant USD million (2021 prices).

2.2. Why the stagnation in gender data grants requires more attention

The diversity of donors for gender data has not increased

A few top donors continue to provide a large share of funding to gender data, accounting for almost 70% of the total funding in 2019-21 (Figure 2.2). Though gender data availability has improved, especially in SDG 5, the pool of donors for gender data did not expand over this three-year period.

Figure 2.2. Top donors for gender data, 2019-21

Note: Data represent disbursements in constant USD million (2021 prices). FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization; UNICEF = United Nations Children’s Fund; EU = European Union.
Grants for gender data have proven to be effective in enabling expansive and equitable coverage even in a context of constrained resources

Over half the grants during 2019-21 were utilised in regional projects or unspecified recipient groups covering an extensive array of countries. The residual country-specific grants were also evenly distributed, with more than 28 countries each receiving more than USD 1 million for gender data during this period (Figure 2.3).

Grants are indispensable in financing capacity-building activities

Grants help national statistical systems tackle intrinsic biases in concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies, thereby facilitating the representation of women and girls’ diverse experiences and reality. Although the mainstreaming of data activities within gender equality projects might channel additional funding towards data production, this still will not fill the vacuum created by the decline in grants aimed explicitly at system capacity building.

The stagnation of funding for gender data is premature given the persistent data gaps

As of 2023, only 25% of SDG 5 indicators are accessible for over half of countries. Just 42% of countries with recent official statistics on monetary poverty have gender-disaggregated data, and a mere 20% of countries produce multidimensional poverty indicators that provide disaggregation by sex or household head’s sex (UN Women, 2023[15]). The challenge of resource availability remains a significant barrier that national statistical offices encounter in delivering enhanced and augmented gender data (PARIS21, 2023[17]).

Figure 2.3. Distribution of funding for gender data by recipients

Note: Data represent disbursements in constant USD million (2021 prices).
Box 2.1. Mobilising loans to unblock gender data bottlenecks

Over 2019-21, the World Bank disbursed a total of USD 72 million to Nepal for the Strengthening Systems for Social Protection and Civil Registration Project. Under this project, the World Bank committed a total of USD 150 million of loans to co-finance this project with the Nepal government, which committed to contribute USD 173 million (World Bank Group, 2016[18]). In addition, USD 87 million was budgeted for components highly relevant to civil registration.

Building robust civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems and digitalising administrative records can be especially beneficial to both women and girls as both provide sex-disaggregated demographic data on key issues such as population distribution and maternal mortality and because civil registration makes it easier to access crucial services such as health, education and political representation. At the same time, CRVS also involves a high cost for a comprehensive assessment or needs revisions at an average cost of USD 100,000, an investment to establish the system, a high per unit cost for data, and an incremental cost to maintain the growing system (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2015[19]; Open Data Watch and Data2X, 2021[20]). Given that funding for data and other competing items remains insufficient, funding for CRVS systems through grants has been stagnant for over a decade (PARIS21, 2021[3]). As of 2019, there was still a shortfall of more than 85% in the funding needed for CRVS investments (Espey, 2019[21]). Establishing CRVS systems through loans can help countries finally overcome the resource bottleneck and start harvesting data dividends.


2.3. Beyond gender data financing: Opportunities offered by gender data consciousness

The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2022 report indicated a divergence between support for gender data and ODA for gender equality (PARIS21, 2022, pp. 13-14[14]). Building on this finding, this report takes a nuanced look at this divergence, exploring both the higher levels of funding for gender equality and potential opportunities for gender data financing.

One possible explanation for the observed stagnation of gender data-related funding is that data activities are increasingly being mainstreamed into projects targeting gender equality, meaning that these projects allocate a specific budget for gender data. This mainstreaming of data in ODA for gender equality could be an effective method to mobilise more funding for gender data from existing resources. Further exploration is needed of the data components within ODA for gender equality when these are not specifically or separately reported.

Detailed budget information for development assistance activities is usually not directly measurable. This section explores how gender data have been referenced in development assistance projects that were not specifically set up for gender data.
The good news: ODA for gender equality is increasingly data conscious

Since 2010, ODA projects with gender equality as a primary objective have increasingly also included data-related keywords in their descriptions, with the share of those that mention data increasing more than tenfold from less than 0.6% to 6.5% (Figure 2.4). This increase in references to data was greater than that in ODA projects without a primary objective in gender data as well as those projects with other primary policy objectives such as environment or development trade initiatives.

Figure 2.4. Share of ODA projects with mentions to data, by policy objectives in gender equality

![Graph showing the increase in data mentions in ODA projects with gender equality as a primary objective from 2010 to 2020.](https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data)

Note: Values refer to the share of USD constant amounts disbursed by projects in which data-related terms were mentioned in the project descriptions.

Source: Author’s calculation based on data from the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data (2023), Project-level Dataset on Support to Statistics (PRESS Dataset) 2023 (database), [https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data](https://smartdatafinance.org/download-data) (accessed on 15 September 2023).

Project descriptions integrate data-related keywords within a variety of contexts including in reference to setting up data production activities, utilising existing data or stating data paucity (Table 2.1). Further analysis is needed to determine the extent to which such mentions of gender equality are converted into action. However, considering that ODA for projects with a principal focus on gender equality amounts to USD 5.7 billion annually (OECD, 2023), even a 0.7% allocation for data corresponds to 65% of the current annual grants directed towards gender data. After all, approximately 2-3% of ODA was already deployed for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), which generates data in the process (KPMG, 2014).

Financing is increasingly data conscious, which is good news but also carries risks. For example, even when data activities are woven into funding for gender equality, there need to be comprehensive guidelines and standards in place to ensure that the data produced are accessible and comparable and to prevent duplication of effort. The challenge of balancing M&E and development data is not new. But the tenfold increase over the past decade in references to data in ODA projects for gender equality – if these mentions are translated even partially into tangible funding – offers a fresh opportunity for donors to depend more comprehensively on partner countries’ statistical M&E systems. This, in turn, will help strengthen national statistical capacities and information systems while at the same time meeting M&E needs.

A crucial next step is for the gender data community to deepen its understanding of this trend in order to convert consciousness to actions. The Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data and its Gender Data Channel can provide extensive curated data and analysis on development financing to identify donors and funding mechanisms behind this increasing consciousness. The community should also reach out to
identified partners and initiate dialogues as soon as possible. By aligning missions and visions with the correct partners, the gender data community may tap into a new source of funding for better gender data.

Table 2.1. Examples of ODA projects for gender equality with mentions of data-related concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Amount disbursed (USD millions)</th>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Nature of mentions</th>
<th>Mentions of data in project descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER)</td>
<td>Data production activities</td>
<td>LASER will leverage and support international university networks: Co-creation and implementation of research activities, research design, primary data collection and analysis, and technical reports with potential for US Agency for International Development co-authorship…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>UK Support for Health in Nigeria – Lafiya programme</td>
<td>Data use activities</td>
<td>To save lives, reduce suffering, and improve economic prospects for the poorest and most vulnerable in Nigeria through encouraging the government of Nigeria to increase resources invested in health (through advocacy, community accountability and data to inform government prioritisation using a delivery approach, as used successfully in Pakistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Accountability for Every Woman (to assess progress on the global strategy for women, children and adolescents’ health)</td>
<td>Data production and dissemination activities</td>
<td>The programme will result in clearer, coherent and comprehensive reporting at global level, a system to monitor and report on sexual and reproductive health and related responses, and a one-stop shop website and platform for data and relevant reports on the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Alliance for Financial inclusion (AFI) 2018-21</td>
<td>Data production activities</td>
<td>Sex-disaggregated data, consumer protection, and financial education and entrepreneurship are among the AFI deliverables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Moving the Needle: Gender Transformative SRHR Systems in Africa – implemented by the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Africa Trust (SAT)</td>
<td>Data use activities and statement on lack of data</td>
<td>The following outcomes have been identified as key for the attainment of this overall objective: increased utilisation of gender-focused data. … These include the lack of gender-sensitive SRHR data, which contributes to inappropriate responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Delivering for Girls and Women: Better Health, Rights and Data for Equality</td>
<td>Data production activities</td>
<td>… The project also seeks to identify the gaps in gender-disaggregated data and disseminate existing evidence to influence decision makers to integrate the gender aspect in programmes and services. Project activities include ... filling data gaps on the health, rights and well-being of women and girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Health support for women, children and youth in Zambia 2018/09-2020</td>
<td>Refer to data as evidence</td>
<td>Three out of a total of ten provinces (central, eastern and southern) have been chosen following analysis of health indicators, socioeconomic data and a mapping of partner organisations’ work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Projects listed in Table 2.1 are not captured in this report under gender data financing because data are not identified as the main component of the project through the PRESS methodology and the detailed budget allocations for data were not available.

Box 2.2. Gender mainstreaming in funding for data

In addition to mainstreaming data components in ODA for gender equality, the mainstreaming of gender in data activities is also important. While 14 of the gender-specific indicators are found in SDG 5, another 40 are for under other goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda (UN Women, 2018[24]). But gender data scarcity and gaps will persist without mainstreaming gender across statistics. When gender is not mainstreamed into national statistical strategies and prioritised in data collection at the country level, surveys produce insufficient and inconsistent disaggregation, leaving gender data gaps. As a consequence, countries and partners are unable to identify and track progress for demographic groups that face multifaceted inequalities and deprivation.

Since adoption of 2030 Agenda, there have been a number of collaborative efforts to provide countries with adequate guidance and tools to facilitate the mainstreaming and prioritisation of gender in data planning, collection and dissemination (Table 2.2). These initiatives have provided critical technical support to help countries progress towards gender mainstreaming.

To facilitate gender mainstreaming in countries, it is critical that decision makers, including development assistance providers, agree to embed gender components within the programming of statistical activities. Gender can often be incorporated with minimal additional expenditure into technical and financial resources that have already been earmarked for data and statistics. In certain statistical areas, gender mainstreaming incurs no supplementary costs, as is the case for the Financial Access Survey funded by the Data for Decisions Fund of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In many instances, countries can close gender data gaps by reporting on extant data rather than producing absent data (Beegle et al., 2023[25]).

A preliminary analysis on data projects that did not target gender data (i.e. projects not included in Figure 2.1) found an increase in references to gender component in 2020-21 than in 2018-19.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results</td>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>This handbook identifies the key concepts, principles and approaches underlying gender mainstreaming; outlines opportunities to apply gender analyses across different contexts and to manage for gender equality results; and illustrates how to identify opportunities for organisational change, enhance financing for gender equality, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation for the oversight of the results of gender mainstreaming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSDS Guidelines</td>
<td>PARIS21</td>
<td>Mainstreaming gender in statistical planning can provide a roadmap to address gaps in production and funding requirements. The gender module of the NSDS guidelines complements the NSDS lifecycle and seeks to help its readers understand the importance of addressing challenges related to gender data during statistical planning processes and throughout their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 2.3. Monitoring the impact of global gender data financing

The primary objective of this report is to assess global funding flows to data, with a specific focus on gender-related data. Gauging the impact of such investments and making sure they match gender data capacity levels is beyond the scope of this report. But other partners and initiatives are actively working to fill these knowledge gaps at the global and national level.

Open Data Watch's Gender Data Compass uses the lens of open data to contextualise availability of gender data within the institutional ecosystem and technical capacity of a country. In many countries, better gender data could be promoted through closer collaboration with national gender-relevant ministries and greater transparency around funding for statistics. The forthcoming Gender Data Outlook by PARIS21 and UN Women will provide a comprehensive overview of countries’ present capacity to translate gender data investments into policy change.

The domain of measuring and monitoring the impact and outcomes of investments in gender data is still evolving and requires further innovation. In this regard, the Gender Data Channel of the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data is expanding to include a results analysis framework to show how investments translate into activities and into more and better gender data. These tools will eventually be combined into this results dashboard to monitor the results and impact of financing for gender data. These tools collectively provide a global perspective and overview, ensuring a better understanding of a more complete picture of gender data financing.

References


Notes

1. This is the author’s calculation based on data from the UN SDG Indicators Database, available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database (accessed on 15 September 2023).

2. In previous editions of the PRESS, funding for gender data is monitored by combining the disbursements of grants and loans. This report generally does not discuss loans for gender data.
3 The estimated external financing resources needed to meet the cost of supporting statistical production to measure the SDGs is around 0.7% of ODA (Calleja and Rogerson, 2019[13]).

4 According to UN Women, gender-specific indicators include indicators that explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and/or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. See https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018.
Chapter 3. Distribution of data and statistics funding across countries and country groups

The five top recipients of country-specific grants for data and statistics in 2021 received USD 75 million, representing their lowest share of the total (approximately 60%) in four years. Of these, Tanzania and Nigeria have been in the top five and received consistently large amounts of such funding every year since 2018 (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Top recipients of funding for data and statistics in 2010-21

Note: Data represent disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices). Only disbursements of grants are considered. When calculating the share of total funding received by the top 25 recipients, only country-specific funding was considered.

Grants represented a much larger share of the funding to fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS). Less than 9% of disbursements to FCS were loans in 2019-21; globally, the share of grants averaged 18%. It is reasonable for donors to be more cautious in lending to debt-distressed countries, many of which are FCS. The leading donors of both grants and loans to FCS is the World Bank (Figure 3.3).
Figure 3.2. Top recipients of funding for data in fragile and conflict-affected situations in 2019-21

Note: Data refer to disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices). Unless specifically called loans, data for each country and context refer to the amount of grants received.


Figure 3.3. Top donors of funding for data for fragile and conflict-affected situations in 2019-21

Note: Data refer to disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices). Unless specifically called loans, data for each donor refer to the amount of grants provided.


Funding for data in small island developing states (SIDS) has become more important amid rising demand for climate data, especially considering SIDS’ limited capacities and disproportionate exposure to the impacts of climate change. However, SIDS received only USD 101 million in such funding in the three-year period of 2019-21, similar to the annual average in previous years of USD 35 million. The commitments made in recent years do not indicate there will be an increase in the immediate future.
Figure 3.4. Top SIDS recipients of funding for data and statistics in 2019-21

Note: Data refer to disbursements in constant USD millions (2021 prices).

References


Notes

1 Based on the World Bank’s Classification of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations, see: http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations
The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2023

A Changing Landscape of Financing for Development and Gender Data

The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics, PARIS21’s flagship report, is the most comprehensive annual analysis of donor financial flows to data and statistics. Since 2007, the report has provided an annual analysis of trends in financing for data and statistics allowing the international data and statistics community the information it needs to effectively support better statistical systems across the world.

The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2023 provides a picture of how the landscape of funding to data and statistics has shifted in recent years. As the data and statistics community recovers from three years of heavy disruption to its activities and unprecedented decreases in funding, this year’s report indicates a brighter horizon, with funding levels increasing. However, underneath an overall increase, funding for data and statistics has changed significantly. This year’s report seeks to understand how sources and modalities are shifting, as well as the implications for countries and the international community as they amplify efforts to achieve development goals.

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