

Data Impact on Gender Equality in Work: Introducing the 19th ICLS Definitions of Work in **Côte d'Ivoire**

Summary

Côte d'Ivoire was an early adopter of the new labor force standards, yet the impact on gender policies has been limited. The national gender policy that ended in 2016 has not been updated and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reporting in 2019 confirmed slow progress in working towards national gender goals. While data quality has improved, it has not been matched by more effective use of labor statistics for evidence-based policymaking on women's empowerment and gender equality.

The use of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) framework for work statistics began in Côte d'Ivoire in 2014. Since then, labor force surveys have been conducted every one to two years, providing a rich amount of data on women's and men's engagement in paid work. As could be anticipated in a country with a high-level of own-use production, the shift to new measures led to a significant drop in the size of the labor force. Participation rates fell more than ten percentage points to 62 percent for men and 49 percent for women. The gender gap has increased and there are more women than men in time-related underemployment, even though women make up the majority of the potential labor force. This data suggests a strong need for gender-sensitive employment and work-related policies.

There are clear gaps between data producers and users in Côte d'Ivoire. This case study highlights the importance of increasing investment in the dissemination and communication of gender data to policy- and decision-makers. Awareness of new labor statistics was low, with only a few examples of their application in policy development, implementation, and monitoring. There are opportunities to address this gap through stronger dialogue and efforts to communicate and explain the data in a way that supports its interpretation and use.

About this case study

In 2013, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians agreed upon a new definition of work with subcategories relating to both paid and unpaid working activities.¹ The changes narrowed the definition of employment to work for pay or profit only. People who produce goods for subsistence, volunteer, or work for training are no longer classified as being employed, which in some countries was a significant part of the labor force.



As the table below shows, the changes to the definition of employment were significant.ⁱⁱ

Labor Force before the 19th ICLS		Labor Force after the 19th ICLS	
Employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All who work for pay ▪ All who work for profit ▪ All who work for training ▪ All who work to produce goods for own final use ▪ All who volunteer for organizations ▪ All who volunteer to produce goods for households 	Not employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone else whether or not they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provide services for own final use ♦ Volunteer providing services for households 	Employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All who work for pay ▪ All who work for profit (employers, own-account workers, contributing family workers, etc.) 	Not employed if they exclusively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide services for own final use ▪ Volunteer providing services for households ▪ Work unpaid for training ▪ Produce goods for own final use ▪ Volunteer through/for organizations ▪ Volunteer producing goods for households

The changes also introduced new measures of underutilization. They go beyond unemployment to measure how many people meet the new definition of employment but are not working for as many hours as they want to be (underemployed). Statistics are also produced on how many people are not employed or unemployed but are either actively seeking employment or are available to start (potential labor force).

Combined, the new definition and measures of work provide a different but more relevant picture of a country's labor force and the types of work people are engaged in. From a gender perspective, this was a landmark step towards making the work that women typically do visible. The 19th ICLS framework puts more emphasis on measuring all forms of work including:

- Crucial caring and domestic activities that women are overwhelmingly responsible for, that households and economies rely on to function (own-use production of services);
- Work women do to produce food and other goods which enable them and their families to survive (own-use production of goods);
- Work women do for pay or profit (formal and informal employment); and
- Volunteer work and work in exchange for training.

Widespread adoption of these new definitions has not yet been achieved and policy implications remain uncertain. Data2X has found case studies of first movers to be an effective tool to inspire similar data collection efforts in additional countries and to open dialogue on policy impact. The case studies seek to achieve these outcomes for the measurement of women's work.



Background

Côte d'Ivoire is in West Africa, bordered by Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, and the Atlantic Ocean. As of 2020, its population was 26 million people. The political and administrative capital is Yamoussoukro, although most institutions are in Abidjan, its main economic center. French is the official language, but there are more than 60 other languages and dialects spoken.

Since independence on August 7, 1960, Côte d'Ivoire has experienced periods of flourishing economic development as well as collapse from external shocks to its relatively narrow economic base of coffee and cacao production. With a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.538 in 2019, human development is just below the average for sub-Saharan African countries (0.547). The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is 0.638 (ranked 153 of 162 countries), suggesting inequality is higher in Côte d'Ivoire compared to the Sub-Saharan regional average (0.570). Women hold 9.2 percent of parliamentary seats and 17.8 percent of adult women have at least a high school education, compared to 34.1 percent of men. 645 women die from pregnancy-related causes for every 100,000 live births, while adolescent births are high—with 117.6 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. There are considerable gender gaps in the labor force with 49 percent of women participating, compared to 62 percent of men.

Supporting gender equality in Côte d'Ivoire

Enabling environment

The 2016 Constitution of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire is explicit about eliminating gender-based discrimination. The nation ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995, committing to equal pay for equal work for women, social protection, and balancing women's productive and reproductive roles through maternity leave, family-friendly work environments, and child-care facilities. Since then, Côte d'Ivoire has been gradually establishing an enabling environment for gender equality in paid and unpaid work through national strategies and mechanisms that support women's economic empowerment (Table 1). The national gender policy has not been updated since 2016, a major barrier to progress.



Table 1: Enabling environment for gender equality in paid and unpaid work

Strategy or mechanism	Description
National Policy on Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender (2014–2016)	<p>The National Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender Policy aims to ensure fair and equitable development that allows women and men to participate equally in development and decision-making processes. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting the participation of people without discrimination in Côte d'Ivoire's equitable and sustainable development; ▪ Increase resources for the implementation of the National Equal Opportunity, Equity and Gender Policy; ▪ Reducing or eliminating gender disparities in all development sectors in terms of access and control of resources; ▪ Improve institutionalized systems for collecting and using gender-disaggregated data in statistical analyses; ▪ To ensure the institutionalization of gender cells responsible for reducing social, economic and political disparities in their respective sectors.
Directorate for Gender and Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family and the Protection of Children.^{iv} ▪ Replaced the former Directorate dissolved in 2014.
Directorate for Skills Development of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family and the Protection of Children. ▪ 116 Women's Education and Training Institutes in 2016.
National Observatory of Equality and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established in 2014 by Decree No. 2014-842 and in 2019 by Decree No. 2019-592.^v ▪ Monitors gender concerns.
Employment Observatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under the General Employment Directorate. ▪ Began operations in 1995. ▪ Began conducting national Labour Force Surveys in 2012. ▪ Draft decree prepared to transform to an Employment and Training Observatory.
Youth Observatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under the Youth Employment Agency. ▪ Involved in conducting national Labour Force Surveys with the National Statistics Institute and the Employment Observatory.
National Council of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created in 2007, by Decree No. 2007-569 of August 10, 2007.^{vi} ▪ Serves as an advisory body on all strategic issues related to gender equality, the protection and promotion of women's rights as enshrined in many international instruments ratified by Côte d'Ivoire. ▪ Under the Ministry of Family, Women and Social Affairs.
Support Fund for the Women of Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up by the First Lady in 2012. ▪ Initial grant of 1 billion CFA francs increased to 8 billion in 2016. ▪ Provides women with easy access to low-cost financial resources to create or strengthen income-generating activities. ▪ Provides training and education in business management. ▪ Funds around 7,000 women per year in the first and second years of operation.
Côte d'Ivoire Compendium of Women's Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established in 2011. ▪ Up-to-date database on women and their skills.



Activities to boost women’s access to resources and employment opportunities have included capacity development through cooperatives and groups, and awards recognizing women entrepreneurs. The Support Fund for the Women of Côte d’Ivoire has provided access to credit and training and education for women to support their participation in paid work.

The 2019 CEDAW Committee’s concluding observations highlighted the slow progress and significant challenges Côte d’Ivoire still faces in establishing mechanisms for gender equality. Resources allocated to the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Family and Protection of Children were insufficient, and coordination between the various parts of the national women’s machinery was weak.

The CEDAW Committee had concerns about employment work for women including sexual harassment in the workplace and violations of the principle of equal work for equal pay. The concentration of women in the informal sector and their subsequent lack of labor protections, as well as the heavy burden of unpaid work on women, are also barriers to decent work.^{viii}

Data sources for labor statistics in Côte d’Ivoire

The National Statistics Institute (NSI) leads the production of official statistics, but the production of labor statistics is the responsibility of the line Ministry for employment and labor. Labour Force Surveys were conducted in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2019 by the NSI together with the Youth Observatory and the Employment Observatory. Prior to this, the NSI produced labor statistics based on data collected through an employment module in the household standard of living surveys.

The new conceptual framework for measuring work was introduced in Côte d’Ivoire in 2014, shortly after its adoption by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2013. The process began in November 2013 with data collection beginning in February 2014. The questionnaire was designed to produce data using both the new and old definitions of employment to support transition and explain the break in series. Côte d’Ivoire benefited from the technical support of the ILO in the development of the questionnaire as well as the processing and analysis of the data and the redaction of the reports.

Figure 1. Timeline of milestones relevant to gender, development and measuring women’s work

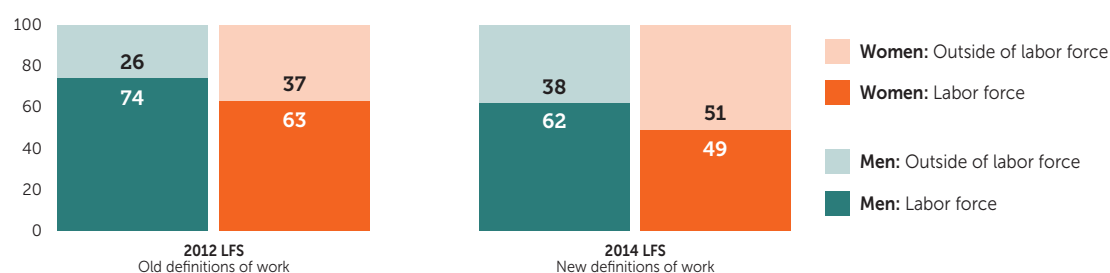


Impact of the new definitions on statistics

The new definitions resulted in a fall in both women's and men's labor force participation rate and a widening of the gender gap. As shown in Figure 2, under the old definitions, 63 percent of women and 74 percent of men were in the labor force (a gender gap of 11 percentage points). When the new measures were introduced in 2014, those rates fell to 49 percent of women and 62 percent of men (a gender gap of 13 percentage points). Most of the change was due to reclassification of employed people outside the labor force. The unemployment rate remained unchanged for women (6.6 percent in both 2012 and 2014) and fell slightly for men (5.3 percent in 2012 and 4.3 percent in 2014).

According to the statisticians involved, the questions used to test if respondents were "unemployed" did not work well in the 2014 LFS. The questionnaire has been gradually improved over recent years, benefitting from the ILO's technical support and knowledge sharing with other countries in the region. In 2019, women's unemployment rate was 3.7 percent and for men it was 2.4 percent.

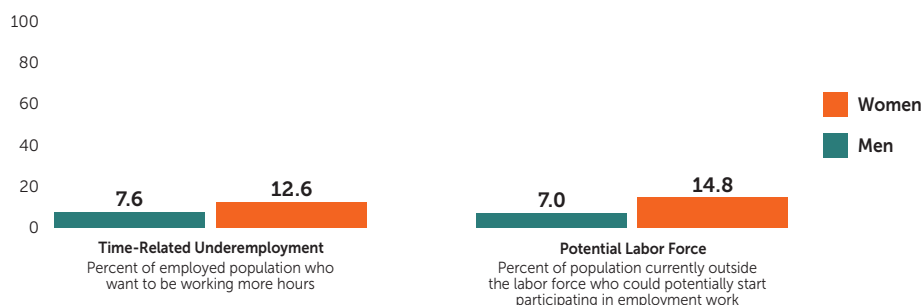
Figure 2. Distribution of population in the labor force and outside the labor force before and after the new definitions of employment were introduced in Côte d'Ivoire



The new statistical standards support countries in measuring labor underutilization, which combines unemployment (seeking and available for employment work) with time-related underemployment (not working as many hours in paid work as desired) and measures of the potential labor force (actively seeking or available for employment work but not both). In Côte d'Ivoire, these indicators reveal large gender gaps in women's employment potential compared to men.

In 2019, time-related underemployment was high, particularly for women. One in five women (12.6 percent) were not working as many hours of paid work as they wanted to (time-related underemployment). The proportion was much lower among men at 7.6 percent of the working age population (Figure 3). Data also shows the proportion of people in the potential labor force. In 2019, around 14.8 percent of working age women were in the potential labor force compared to 7.0 percent of men.

Figure 3. Measures of labor underutilization, Côte d'Ivoire, 2019



The old statistical standards were unfamiliar to most beyond those involved in producing labor market statistics. Few publications of data were released prior to the introduction of the new standards. The new measures therefore provided an opportunity to build understanding and effective use of labor statistics.

When new survey data is released, a workshop is held with key stakeholders, including government actors, workers, employers, and the press. The information is also communicated to the Council of Ministers after review, validation, and adoption by technical teams. While the workshops allow for a wide audience with the possibility of exchanges to answer questions, direct communication with the Council of Ministers is closed.

Workshops are organized to share labor market information with different audiences, such as journalists and researchers. They allow for discussion about how relevant the different concepts are to the realities of the Ivorian labor market. Thanks to these workshops, more people in the media and research are becoming familiar with labor market statistics.

Impacts of new data on advocacy, policies, and decisions

New data has highlighted the precarious nature of jobs available in the Ivorian labor market and provide more meaningful measures beyond the unemployment rate. Those involved in the formulation of employment policies now have new indicators that reflect the challenges of gaining employment and the major gaps that exist for women. This combined with data showing a labor market characterized by a high level of informal employment led to the development of an action plan in 2020 to transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Consultations for this case study found few discernible changes in policy since the implementation of the new work statistics standards. Better gender data has supported the implementation and monitoring of the national gender policy during 2014–2016, the national community development program for the period 2013–2017, and work to empower women in rural areas, but the extent of its impact is unclear.

This is likely due to the relative newness of the measures combined with a limited culture of evidence-based policy making in Côte d'Ivoire. It is expected that with more dissemination and communication of labor market indicators, increasing examples of employment and work-related policies that use of the data will emerge.

Clear understanding of the data is essential for use to occur. Explaining the concepts and methods for measuring the labor market is essential. Lead analysts and managers of the labor market information system are aware of this need and are working toward improving the accessibility and use of labor statistics. Frequent Labour Force Surveys provide a large amount of data ready for analysis with a gender lens. If more resources could be directed towards communication and dissemination, work-related policies could capitalize on the growing data availability and use it to improve outcomes for women and the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

Key Highlights and Lessons Learned

1. Making progress in gender data uptake takes time

Developing a strong system of gender data and statistics is a long-term goal. It requires sustained investment and multifaceted approaches that support the collaboration of producers and users of statistics.

This is especially the case for labor statistics, an area where the data is complex and standards change as the world of work evolves. Introducing new standards, as was done in Côte d'Ivoire in 2014, can provide new opportunities to build understanding and encourage data use.

2. Continue to invest in the dissemination, communication, and use of gender data

This case study has shown that there is strong investment in the production of labor statistics that has yet to be matched by use of that data in policymaking. Gender statistics require efforts to build an enabling environment, produce the data, and ensure it is readily accessible for use. With greater investments in the dissemination and communication of gender data, and sustained work with policymakers to ensure they know how to find, interpret, and use the data, there should be stronger evidence of data-driven policies and decisions to support achieving gender equality.



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- ⁱⁱ Adapted from ILO presentation by Monica Castillo entitled The Decent Work Measurement Framework and the 19th ICLS Resolution Concerning Statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization given in Baku, Azerbaijan on 23 October 2014. https://www.ilo.org/stat/WCMS_323478/lang--en/index.htm
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