Without sex-disaggregated statistics and gender-sensitive indicators, we are unable to measure progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment. And though statistics are not necessary to establish priorities and determine development agendas, they are increasingly required to identify the weaknesses and blind-spots within development programs that seek to promote equality and women’s empowerment. Sex-disaggregated statistics and gender-sensitive indicators are also crucial for holding institutions and decision-makers accountable for their policy commitments.

What do we mean by “sex-disaggregated data”?
Sex-disaggregated data is quantitative or qualitative data collected and presented on both women and men. In order to conduct a thorough gender analysis of a given issue or context, baseline data must be sex-disaggregated.

What are gender-sensitive indicators?
Gender-sensitive indicators are parameters of change that take into account women’s and men’s relative position in society. They illustrate in very concrete terms what gender equality and women’s empowerment mean for individuals, societies and institutions. Within the realm of development work, they provide a basis for measuring performance and monitoring and evaluating projects. For example, “the percentage of women in elected parliaments” is one possible indicator of women’s political empowerment.

Why do we need indicators on gender equality
For example, the problems of girls and women’s low participation in science and technology throughout the education system are known, but evidence is scarce, since there is little gender aggregated data on female participation in science. Also, the way in which data in science and technology are predominantly collected renders women and their concerns, issues and responsibilities relatively invisible. A multitude of factors combine to discourage girls from engaging with science and technology and many of these are bound up with cultural and societal influences. Some of the reasons are related to differences in ways boys and girls learn and the content of STE reflected in gender-biased curricula, textbooks, which are not related to women’s and girls’ concerns and interests. While substantial research in these areas has been undertaken in developed countries, hardly any data exists for developing countries. This has a direct impact on policy planning on the issue of girls participation in STE since effective policies have to be based in reliable data.

Gender indicators in schoolbooks
One effort to support the gender inclusive education with data is the quantitative analysis of gender biases in school
Gender Parity Index:
The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is commonly used to assess gender differences. It is the value of an indicator for girls divided by that for boys. A value of less than one indicates differences in favor of boys, whereas a value near one indicates that parity has been more or less achieved.

The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were the first global instruments to demonstrate that the level of gender equality in a country is not solely dependent upon a country's economic performance. The GDI uses the same variables as the HDI. The difference is that the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in life expectancy, literacy and gross enrolment, and income in accordance with the disparity in achievement between men and women. The GEM – gender empowerment measure – is a composite indicator that captures gender inequality in three key areas: 1) Political participation and decision-making, 2) Economic participation and decision-making power, 3) Power over economic resources.

African Gender and Development Index (AGDI)
The AGDI is a composite index consisting of two parts, a Gender Status Index (GSI) and the African Women’s Progress Scoreboard (AWPS), rather than a collection of individual indicators in science, engineering, and technology

Gender indicators in science, engineering, and technology

The UNESCO toolkit on Gender Indicators in Science, Engineering and Technology provides tools and indicators to measure and explain the decline of interest and participation of women in science and technology. The toolkit tries to achieve a better understanding of the numbers and needs at stake in these fields, including quantitative and qualitative indicators for the participation of women and under-represented groups, especially in developing countries. It reviews the main theoretical and methodological approaches to data collection internationally and presents case studies, guidelines and new approaches related to the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data. In so doing, it establishes a new basis for evidence-based analysis enabling planners and policy-makers to address these issues with greater effectiveness.

To find out more

Gender-Sensitive Education Statistics and Indicators: A practical guide; UIS;
http://www.uis.unesco.org/even.php?ID=5017_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

Bibliography:

- UNDP Human Development Report 2003
- UNESCO toolkit on Gender Indicators in Science, Engineering and Technology, 2007

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