

Moldova: Time Use Surveys and Policy Case Study



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Identify and Prioritize

The initial demand for a time use survey came from Moldova's Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family. Now called the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, the ministry is considered the most important user of the data.¹

The idea to conduct a time use survey (TUS) grew out of the joint United Nations project to strengthen the national statistical system and help Moldova's government advance its European integration agenda. Conducted between 2007 and 2017, the US\$1.7 million project aims to improve the collection, production, dissemination, and use of statistical information and to harmonize official statistics with international standards. The project identified conducting Moldova's first TUS as a priority.²

The purpose of the TUS was to show how people spend their time, where, when and with whom. As part of the National Program on Ensuring Gender Equality 2010–2015 coordinated by the former Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Children, the survey was conducted to illustrate the role and position of women and men in family and social life.³ The strategy notes the "double burden" of family and professional life that women carry. It also recognizes that opportunities for women to enter the work force are limited by a lack of services for women with small children.

The strategy highlights how the social assistance system is based on a patriarchal society in which "women are in charge of unpaid care of the elderly, children, and ill people." This model needs adjusting, the strategy notes, to align with employment and gender equality promotion policies. A specific objective of the strategy is to improve work-life balance. An expected result, presumably from the TUS, was to study the role of women and men in daily duties and to evaluate the cost of unpaid care work.⁴

Collect and Analyze

To date, Moldova has conducted one TUS, completed in 2011–12 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and funded by the joint United Nations project on Strengthening the National Statistical System. This case study explores how the data have been used to develop national policies and programs.

The National Bureau of Statistics determined how the survey would be conducted, following United Nations and Eurostat guidelines.⁵ The Romanian National Statistical Institute and the Swedish Public Employment Service provided technical

2002

Government Decision (No. 1478) provides a monthly allowance for families with children

2003

Updated Labor Code includes provisions on maternity and partially paid care leave

2004

Law enacted on "indemnities for temporary work disablement and other allowances of social insurances." Provides 126 calendar days of paid maternity leave, payment upon birth of the child, and a monthly allowance up to three years of age

2007

Joint United Nations Project to Strengthen the National Statistical System begins

2008

Eurostat revises guidelines on Harmonized European Time Use Survey

2009

National Program for Gender Equality 2010–2015 approved

2011–2012

National Bureau of Statistics conducts first time use survey (TUS). Field work conducted from June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012

1 Aurelia Spataru, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project officer, email to author, September 1, 2017

2 UNDP Moldova 2017

3 Vatcarau 2014

4 Republic of Moldova 2016a

5 United Nations Statistics Division 2005; Eurostat 2009

assistance under a European Union funded project (Strengthening Moldova's Capacity to Manage Labor and Return Migration).⁶

The definition used for unpaid care work is derived from the Eurostat 2008 HETUS classification grouping on household and family care. The childcare category covers (a) physical care of the child, (b) homework with the child, (c) reading, playing, speaking with the child and (d) accompanying the child. Providing care to adult members of the household is not listed as a subcategory in the data presented by NBS.

NBS followed the Eurostat 2008 Guidelines on Harmonized Time Use Surveys (HETUS) using a fixed 10-minute interval time diary that respondents completed on two randomly designated days – one weekend day (Saturday or Sunday) and one weekday (Monday to Friday).

A multistage sample design selected 15,600 private households representative of the country (excluding Transnistria and the municipality Bender) allowing disaggregation by region, area of residence, sex, age group, and working versus weekend days. All household members ages 10 years and older completed time use diaries covering 24 hours of the day in 10-minute intervals. Data collection took place between June 1, 2011 and May 31, 2012, using face-to-face interviews and then leaving diaries with respondents for completion. There were 10,642 households that agreed to participate in the survey—a 68.2 percent response rate.

The HETUS activity classification was used to group activities in 10 categories (personal care, employment, study, household and family care, voluntary work and meetings, social life and entertainment, sports and outdoor activities, hobbies and computing, mass media, and travel and unspecified time use). The diaries collect information on the main activity, parallel or simultaneous activities, the location or transport mode, and other persons present in the location.

Implementation of the 2011–2012 TUS and follow-up activities were supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Swedish Government within the framework of the UN joint project, “Strengthening the National Statistical System”.

Findings

NBS disseminated the survey results in a range of formats including a summary report, series of analytical notes, infographics, and an online database. In 2013, NBS published a 43-page summary report of TUS results in Moldovan. It includes information on the concepts and methods used and 13 tables of data.⁷ As shown in Figure 1, the major difference in how women and men use their time is in unpaid household and care work. Men spend an average of 158 minutes per day on household and family care, compared to 280 minutes by women—almost double that of men.

About 40 percent of fathers engage daily in childcare activities, compared to two-thirds (64 percent) of mothers. Differences between the average amount of time allocated by mothers and fathers to childcare are shown in Figure 2. The greatest difference relates to physical care of the child. Mothers spend 1.7 hours per day on this activity compared to 0.9 hours spent by fathers.⁸ It would be useful if available analysis had also examined differences in childcare by parents with children under

2013

Basic report on survey results published (in Moldovan)

2014

Analytical notes based on Time Use Survey data published

2016

National Employment Strategy 2017–2021 approved

Legislation on paid paternity leave enacted

2017

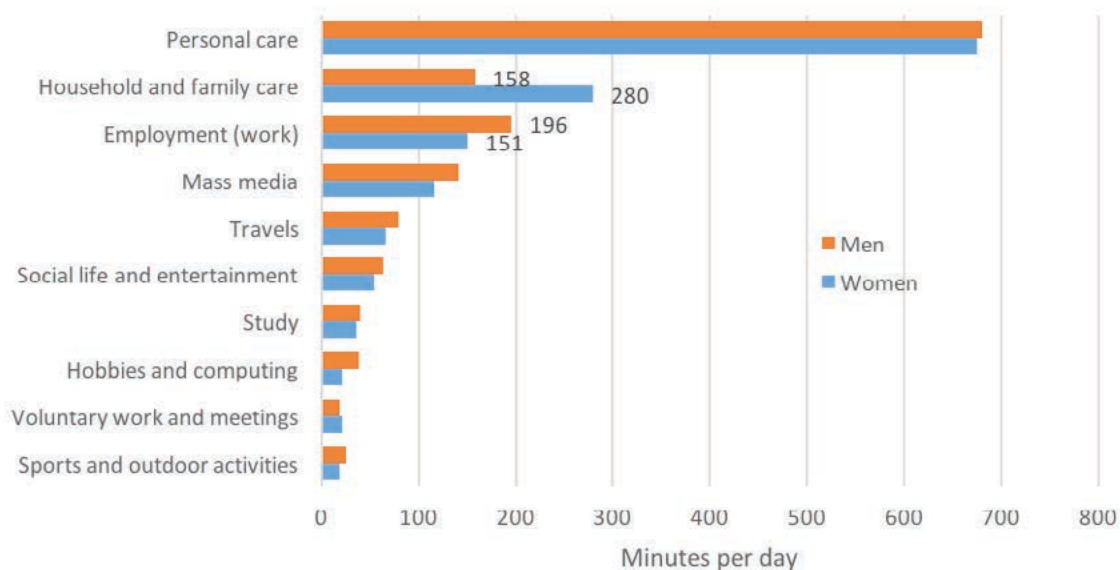
National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017–2021 approved

⁶ Vatcarau 2014

⁷ Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics 2013

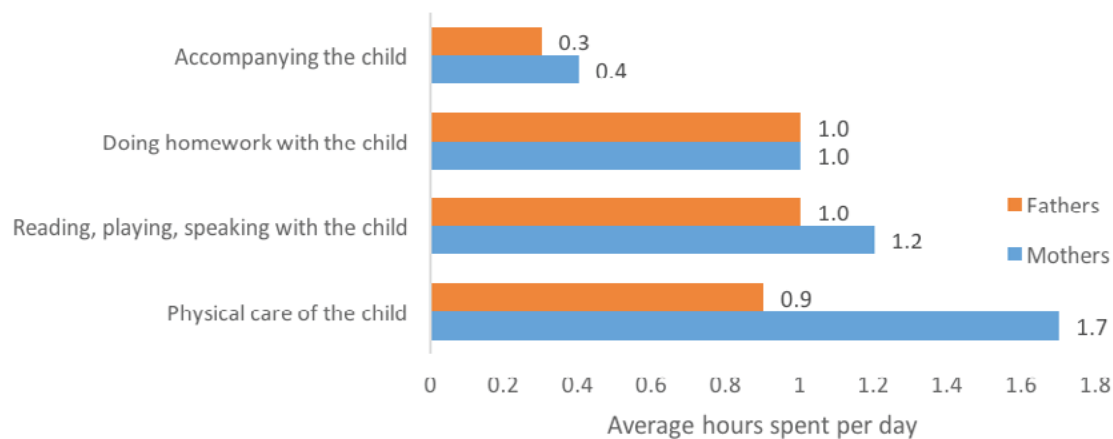
⁸ National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova. n.d.(b)

Figure 1. Time use by persons ages 10 and above in minutes per day, by activity type and sex, Republic of Moldova, 2011–2012.



Source: Data are from a table in Vatcarau (2014).

Figure 2. Time Moldovan parents spent caring for their children, 2011–2012.



Note: “Child” refers to all children less than 18 years old.
 Source: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova. (n.d.)(b).

the age of three and/or age seven as compared to parents with children under age 18.

As this was the first TUS conducted in Moldova, dissemination was given high priority. NBS and UN Moldova produced a series of 10 analytical briefs. To appeal to policymakers and other stakeholders, the briefs explored policy issues with clear explanations of the findings, comparisons to other European countries, and recommendations. The briefs covered the following topics:

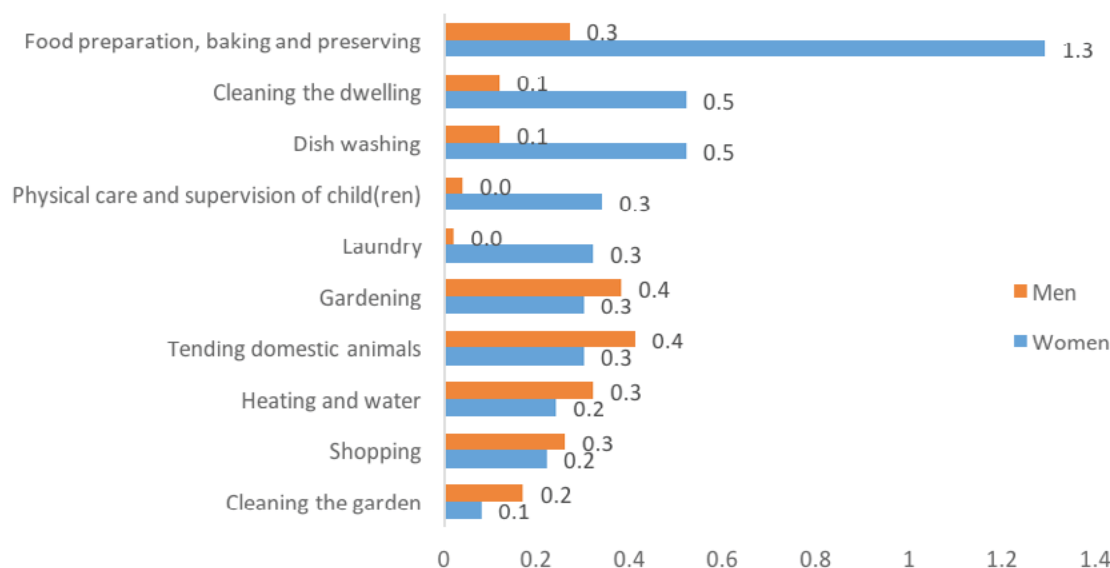
- Time use by Moldovan parents for taking care of their children
- Time spent by young Moldovans for school studies
- How much time do Moldovans spend on various types of transport?

- Time use by people with disabilities
- What is the link between the health condition and lifestyle of Moldovans
- How popular are volunteering and participatory activities among Moldovans?⁹
- Importance of unpaid work in Moldova
- Social life and entertainment in Moldova
- How fond are Moldovans of reading?
- How much time do Moldovans spend traveling?

The survey found that women spend 4.9 hours per day on unpaid work, almost twice the amount of time spent by men (2.8 hours per day).¹⁰ As shown in Figure 3, the main forms

⁹ Participatory activities include meetings, religious activities, and other activities.
¹⁰ National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova. 2014c.

Figure 3. Time spent on main forms of unpaid work, by sex (hours per day), Moldova, 2011–2012.



Notes: Activity descriptions have been adjusted to be consistent with the English terms used in the Harmonized European Time Use Survey (HETUS) activity classification.¹² Hours per day are estimated and rounded to the nearest decimal point to reflect the amounts as shown in the source document.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova (2014c).

of unpaid work are food preparation, baking and preserving, dish washing, cleaning the dwelling, physical care and supervision of children, gardening, tending domestic animals, heating and water, laundry, shopping, and cleaning the garden. In terms of division of labor, women are far more likely to take care of children, cook, clean, wash dishes, and do the laundry. Men are more likely to garden, arrange heating and water supply for the house, and tend to animals.

The brief highlights that Moldovans spend more time on unpaid work and less on paid work than Western European countries. People living in rural areas do more unpaid work (4.9 hours per day) than those in urban areas (3.8 hours per day) or the capital (3.6 hours per day).¹¹

Another brief analyzes the time parents spent caring for their children. It found that mothers spend 2.1 hours per day and fathers 1.3 hours per day on childcare. This includes physical care of the child, reading, playing, speaking with the child, doing homework and accompanying the child.¹³

NBS and UN Moldova developed a series of infographics to disseminate the main findings from the TUS (Figure 4). Themes include differences in how men and women use their time, time use on unpaid work, and childcare by parents.

The NBS online database includes a section on gender statistics and a table on time use. The database allows

data users to produce tables on any or all of the activities measured in the survey and to segment the information by sex and/or age group. Average time spent can be calculated for all persons as well as for only participants in an activity.¹⁴ The national statistical office can provide microdata to researchers when an official request is considered justified. There are plans to introduce procedures and tools to provide more systematic access to microdata for research purposes.

Although the report is available only in Moldovan, the structure and brevity of the report published by NBS suggests it does not make any link to policy nor provide recommendations on the use of the information. However, the analytical notes and infographics illustrate a clear link to policy by focusing on policy related issues and including recommendations that are relevant to policymaking. For example, given the imbalance in time spent on childcare, the report recommends that policies on family, child protection and women’s employment focus on helping women to balance professional and family life. It also recommends public awareness campaigns to encourage men to be more involved in childcare. In relation to unpaid work overall, the note recommends it be integrated in the national accounts system, so that the economic value of this work is recognized.

11 National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova. 2014c.

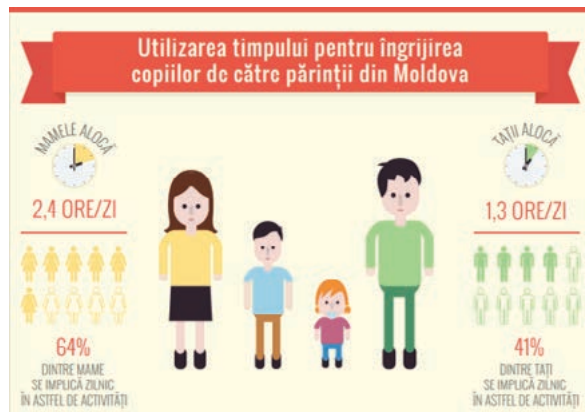
12 Eurostat 2009

13 National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova 2014c

14 National Bureau of Statistics. n.d.

Figure 4. Selected infographics published by the National Bureau of Statistics on time use in Moldova (with unofficial English translation of headings).

Time use for childcare by parents in Moldova



Time use for unpaid work in Moldova



Source: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Moldova (<http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=350&id=4448>).

A regional policy brief published by UN Women and UNDP in 2017 provides an example of the link between time use data in Moldova and investment in social care infrastructure.¹⁵ It combines TUS data with labor force participation and unemployment rates, use of childcare services and enrollment in preschool education, to illustrate the impact that unpaid care work has on women’s participation in the workforce and the resulting impact on gross domestic product (GDP). The brief recommends periodically conducting time use surveys to collect data on all forms of work to monitor Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 5.4.1 (Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location) and to undertake gendered analysis of TUS and other data.

Inform and Influence

The TUS results and analytical notes were launched at an event, jointly organized by NBS, UNDP, and UN Women, on June 24, 2014. Press releases outlining the main findings in each of the 10 analytical notes were prepared by NBS and UNDP.¹⁶ The launch was followed by an interview with Radio Free Europe by Vlad Ganta, head of the Labor Statistics Division within NBS.¹⁷

The NBS website features products from the TUS. Some are also published on the websites of UNDP and other stakeholders such as Expert-Grup, mentioned below. Time use data are also featured in GenderPulse, an interactive data visualization tool released in 2016.¹⁸

The media played an important role in disseminating the TUS results to the general public. Articles were published by online media sources such as Diez.md¹⁹ and Realitatea.md. Civil society organizations such as Tinerii pentru dreptul la viață” (TDV) (roughly translated as Youth for the Right to Life) and Terre des hommes have also included TUS results on their websites for advocacy purposes.²⁰

NBS played the lead role in presenting and disseminating the TUS results. Another group, Expert-Grup, contributed to the series of analytical notes and played an important role in helping disseminate the survey findings. It is an independent organization that operates as an analytical center or thinktank on economic and public policy issues.²¹ Civil society organizations specialized in gender equality and lobbying for gender sensitive policies are using the TUS results as well. For example, the Academy of Economic Studies in Moldova (ASEM) uses the TUS results within two Master’s degree programs: Public Finance and Taxation; and Accounting and Auditing in Public Institutions.

Policy

Findings from the TUS have influenced policy, providing evidence that is used to shape strategies related to women’s economic empowerment and increasing the role of men in family life. One direct impact is the fact that data are quoted in government strategies and plans that provide the basis for policy interventions related to employment, for example, as outlined below.

15 Çağatay, Ilkcaracan, and Sadasivam 2017

16 National Bureau of Statistics 2014; UNDP Moldova 2014a; UNDP Moldova 2014d

17 National Bureau of Statistics 2013

18 GenderPulse. n.d.

19 Diez 2014; Realitatea 2014

20 Tinerii pentru dreptul la viață” 2017; Terre des Hommes 2014

21 Expert-Grup 2017

According to the combined second and third CEDAW report prepared in 2004, the new Labor Code adopted in 2003 introduced a range of provisions related to maternity leave and care of children up to age three.²² In 2002, the government introduced regulations on social protection for families with children, with multiple amendments since.²³ The government provides allowances at birth, and then monthly until the child reaches age three, to assist families with the costs of raising children.

Fathers of newborn children can now take 14 days paternity leave paid by the state due to amendments to the Labor Code. The amendments are part of the Law (No. 71) on amending and supplementing specific legal acts in the area of gender equality, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on April 14, 2016 and entered into force on May 27, 2016.

Under the national strategy on gender equality (for 2017–2021) the Government committed to take action to generate employment for women with small children, to develop a policy paper on establishing childcare centers in the workplace, to enhance early childhood education, and to introduce new legislation on equal pay for equal work and equal value.

In December 2016, Moldova approved a new National Employment Strategy for 2017–2021. The strategy is strongly based on evidence, quoting a wide range of statistics on labor market demand and supply, and used data on women’s and men’s unpaid and paid work to justify the need for innovative and flexible forms of employment. The strategy and action plan include a range of interventions related to increasing the participation of women in the labor market, such as developing new tools to support women in business and improving gender analysis of labor market information. There is no explicit detail on how the strategy will consider and address the impact of unpaid care work on labor market participation.

TUS results are used by international organizations for planning and programming. United Nations system support to the Moldovan government is guided by the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022. The framework draws on TUS results in identifying unpaid care work as a priority and designing responses to address imbalances in women’s and men’s involvement in this type of work. Strategies include increasing access to childcare

services and the promoting innovative approaches of self-employment and entrepreneurship.

In addition to policies and programs related to unpaid care work, the TUS has provided data on people with disabilities, school studies, volunteering, health, and transportation and likely affected policymaking in those sectors as well.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection is the main organization charged with developing and implementing government policy on gender equality. It oversees the national program on gender equality and social welfare policies including provision of social support to families with children.

The National Employment Policy 2017–2021 is implemented by a multi-stakeholder approach involving government ministries, civil society, the private sector, and research institutions, as set out in the attached action plan (available in Moldovan only). These include the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Economy, Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, National Agency for Employment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, and the Organization for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises.

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UN 2004

Republic of Moldova 2002

Republic of Moldova 2017

Republic of Moldova 2016b

Aurelia Spataru, UNDP project manager, email to author, September 1, 2017

Republic of Moldova and United Nations Moldova 2017

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