

What's new in the GGS 2020 Questionnaire?

“Something old, something new”¹ – The new GGS Baseline Questionnaire embraces both comparability and continuity with the previous round of the GGS, while implementing several new questions and innovations. It was also restructured and re-designed to work better online. This new version covers a number of topics which are of increasing concern to policy makers: economic uncertainty, digitalization of the life course, mobility and migration, the Sustainable Development Goals and many more. In this research brief, we are highlighting the new questions added to the GGS 2020. We do so for each section of the questionnaire.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This first section of the questionnaire captures the basic characteristics of the respondent, such as age, gender, education, employment and partnership status.

In the new GGS, questions on general **internet usage** and the amount of time spent using the internet are asked. This helps to understand the importance of access to technology on modern day life.

Also new in this section is a question on how partners have met. This includes **online dating** – a venue dedicated specifically to finding a partner. It will be interesting to see how prevalent this form of dating is or whether it influences the duration of an union.

The new GGS has also been expanded to better capture **Mobility and integration**, including:

- Intention to move or migrate
- Where a respondent lived three years ago
- Reasons for moving
- Language most frequently spoken at home

LIFE HISTORIES

The section on life histories continues to be at the core of the GGS. In the new version, questions have been added to better capture the complex reality of **shared custody in case of separation or divorce**. Respondents are asked whether their children are living in the same household with them. If not, or only sometimes, they are asked further questions on where the child stays the rest of the time,

the frequency of looking after the child, and the nights per week spent with the parent.

In addition to asking about the frequency of contact in person, **digital contact** (by phone, E-mail, etc.) is now also captured. This gives a more complete picture of social contacts.

To add more information on **children's health**, parents are asked about the *general health of their child*². Children's health may lead to challenges for the parents, i.e. influencing their ability to participate in the labour market.

FERTILITY



The GGS now includes questions on sexual-, contraceptive- and health care autonomy to measure SDG indicator 5.6.1. (SDG Logo by UN)

The fertility section of the GGS has been revised and includes a few new questions. The question on **fertility intention** remains central to this section, but its cross-national implementation has been standardized.³ A new answer category “unsure” was also added to better capture the reality of intention formation⁴.

Importantly, the new GGS provides the data to measure two SDG indicators. By combining information on sexual activity, contraceptive use and intention to have a child, **unmet family planning needs** (SDG Indicator 3.7.1⁵) among single and partnered women can be estimated. New questions on **sexual and contraceptive autonomy** measure the SDG 5.6.1 indicator⁶.

In addition, the new questionnaire better captures whether the respondents encountered problems conceiving in the last 12 months⁷, reasons for **infertility**, and their **fertility window**⁸. This information is especially interesting against the background of postponed parenthood.

Respondents are also asked about **general and personal ideal family size**, allowing to collect information on social norms and personal opinions of the respondent.

GENERATIONS

This section continues to aim at capturing inter-generational relationship. New questions in this section include if and when the respondents' parents married and divorced. By knowing if parents were married when the respondent was born and comparing it to the respondent's behavior, data on the **intergenerational transmission of demographic behavior** is captured.

A new question asks whether the respondent lived abroad for more than three months during childhood. This will be especially useful to **mobility** researchers, since it may predict future moves.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In this section, respondents are asked about their physical and mental health. Another question measuring SDG 5.6.1 is added asking if the respondent makes healthcare decisions for himself (**health care autonomy**).

To measure psychological wellbeing our survey now asks respondents to rate their **happiness** on a 10-

point scale⁹. The items on **loneliness** have been better aligned with the 6-item loneliness scale developed by de Jong-Gierveld and van Tilburg¹⁰.

WORK

This section includes questions such as the respondents field of employment, work satisfaction and working hours. A new question on **commute time** adds to the information on work-life balance.

As employment is connected to financial stability it can be a source of **uncertainty**¹¹. In order to study uncertainty and its effect on several demographical behaviours, such as the decision to become parents, we have included the following questions:

- The respondent is asked about whether he is in a permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contract to assess **stability of employment**.
- We ask how likely it is for a **job loss** to occur in the next 12 months – for the respondent as well as their partner.



Financial or job insecurity can lead to uncertainty likely influencing demographic behaviour such as fertility and mobility. (Picture by Jon Tyson on [Unsplash](#))

INCOME

In the income section, the financial situation of the respondent is assessed. To further study the issue of uncertainty, a new question has been added here too: Respondents are asked whether they think their **financial situation** will get better or worse in three years from now.

To better capture **material and social deprivation**, the GGS 2020 has adopted the new indicators of deprivation implemented by the EU in 2014¹². The new index provides a much more reliable comparative

tool and more robust measures of deprivation across member states.

ATTITUDES

This last section of the questionnaire continues to be focused on capturing respondents' attitudes towards gender roles and diversity in family forms. Some of the content has been updated. The new GGS includes measurements of **general trust** and the extent to which respondents plan their future in contrast to taking each day as it comes (**planning scale**). The latter might explain differences in how committed individuals are to their fertility intentions.

The questionnaire also includes a new five-item scale on **gender values**, replacing more outdated questions of the previous GGS rounds. To account for attitudes towards **gendered divisions of paid work**, respondents are also asked how many hours per week parents of a 2-year old child should work.

The GGS now accounts for **religiosity** measured on a 10-point scale, which is considered a better indicator than solely asking about religious attendance.

COUNTRY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Countries are permitted to add a small set of preferred questions to their survey. It is recommended that these questions are included in a single (short) module as opposed to being spread throughout the questionnaire in order to minimize country deviations and post-harmonization.



*GGs Data collection in Moldova
(Picture by UNFPA Moldova)*

COVID-19 RELATED QUESTIONS

The possibility for national teams to include country-specific questions has allowed countries to add Covid-19 related questions.

The technical paper by A. Rijken, T. Emery and A. Gauthier (2020)¹³ highlights the general importance of the GGS in understanding the implications of the pandemic. It suggests an optional, multi-item question on Covid-19. The respondents are asked whether the pandemic has improved, worsened or did not affect several aspects of their life. These include the quality of life, relationships with partner or family, work and financial situation as well as physical and mental health. This specific set of questions has already been added in the Moldovan GGS.

IMPROVED USABILITY

Besides implementing new questions which are interesting to both researchers and policy makers, the usability of the new GGS questionnaire has been improved greatly by the following changes:

- Wording, prompts and categories redesigned for better performance online
- Variable labelling restructured to improve navigability
- Inclusion of ISCO and ISO automated coder
- Simplified structure to reduce miscounting, of children

QUESTIONNAIRE & OVERVIEW

More information on the data collection and the questionnaire can be found in the [GGs Questionnaire 3.0.7](#). It includes all questions, response categories and filters of the GGS 2020.

In case of further questions please contact the GGP team via ggp@nidi.nl.

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OVERVIEW

Section	New in the GGS 2020
<i>Characteristics of the respondent (DEM)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility (Intentions / reasons for moving or migrating) • Integration (Language at home) • Question on how couples met (including online dating) • Internet use
<i>Life histories (LIH)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential arrangement of non-resident children • Contact to social network via digital means • Children's health
<i>Fertility (FER)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred timing of pregnancy • Infertility or difficulty in becoming pregnant • Sexual and contraceptive autonomy (in accordance with SDG 5.6.1) • Physiological markers (age of first menstruation/voice breaking/menopause) • Individual and general ideal number of children • Unmet family planning needs (SDG Indicator 3.7.1)
<i>Household (HLD)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions on household - previously spread over the questionnaire - are now grouped in a unique module to increase the questionnaire flow.
<i>Generations (GEN)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational transmission of demographic behavior (date parents married/divorced/had first child) • Living abroad during childhood for min. of 3 month
<i>Health and wellbeing (WEL)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care autonomy (in accordance with SDG 5.6.1) • Happiness • Loneliness
<i>Work (WRK)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commute time • Type of contract (permanent, fixed-period, temporary) • Expectation of job loss in next 12 months
<i>Income (INC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of financial situation three years from now • Material and social deprivation (in accordance with EU-SILC questionnaire)
<i>Attitudes (ATT)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General trust • Planning Scale • Religiosity • Attitudes towards gender norms • Attitudes towards gender division of paid work

¹ This expression is part of a traditional rhyme that details what a bride should wear at her wedding for good luck- Source: Wikipedia. Accessed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Something_old

² Children's health is measured like in the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) 2016, United States Census Bureau. Accessed at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nsch.html

³ This was to address the inconsistencies observed in the first round including in the filters used for the fertility intention questions. For an assessment of the comparability of fertility intentions in the previous GGS see: Brzozowska, Z., & Beaujouan, E. (2020). Assessing Short-Term Fertility Intentions and Their Realisation Using the Generations and Gender Survey: Pitfalls and Challenges. *European Journal of Population*, 1-12.

⁴ The inclusion of the category "unsure" aims at adding a further valid response option to fertility intentions and allowing for higher predictability of the intentions. For an analysis of uncertainty in fertility intentions see for example: Bhrolcháin, M. N., & Beaujouan, É. (2011). Uncertainty in fertility intentions in Britain, 1979-2007. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 99-129.

⁵ The SDG Indicator 3.7.1 is defined as the proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who desire either to have no (additional) children or to postpone the next child and who are currently using a modern method of contraception. Source: World Health Organization (WHO). Accessed at <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/4988>

⁶ UNFPA (2020). Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights: Measuring SDG Target 5.6. Accessed at www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-SDG561562Combined-v4.15.pdf

⁷ Failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse captures infertility by the medical definition. Source: World Health Organization (WHO). Accessed at https://www.who.int/health-topics/infertility#tab=tab_1

⁸ Standard markers of the fertile period - start of the period, menopause and voice deepening - are essential for any survey dealing with fertility issues. Information on the causes of infertility will further improve the usability of fertility data.

⁹ Happiness might influence the relation between uncertainty and fertility intentions. According to Vignoli et al. (2020), the effect of jobs with uncertain conditions on fertility intentions depends on the level of subjective well-being: the negative effect is found *only* when subjective well-being is relatively low. Source: Vignoli, D., Mencarini, L., & Alderotti, G. (2020). Is the effect of job uncertainty on fertility intentions channeled by subjective well-being?. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 46, 100343.

¹⁰ Gierveld, J. D. J., & Tilburg, T. V. (2006). A 6-item scale for overall, emotional, and social loneliness: Confirmatory tests on survey data. *Research on aging*, 28(5), 582-598.

¹¹ Andersson, G., Dahlberg, J., Neyer, G. (2020). New sub-module on Uncertainties and resilience in the Swedish GGS2020. *Technical working paper*. The Hague, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute. Accessed at https://www.ggp-i.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GunnarAndersson_new-GGS-items-on-uncertainty.pdf

¹² This new index, developed by LISER, and now included in the core questionnaire of the EU-SILC, provides a much more reliable comparative tool and more robust measure of material deprivation across member states. Source: Guio, A.-C., Gordon, D. & Marlier, E. (2012). Measuring Material Deprivation in the EU: Indicators for the Whole Population and Child-Specific Indicators. *Eurostat Methodologies and Working Papers*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

¹³ Rijken, A., Emery, T., & Gauthier, A. (2020). New sub-module on Uncertainties and resilience in the Swedish GGS2020. *Technical working paper*. The Hague, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute. Accessed at <https://www.ggp-i.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/GGP-COVID-Memo.pdf>