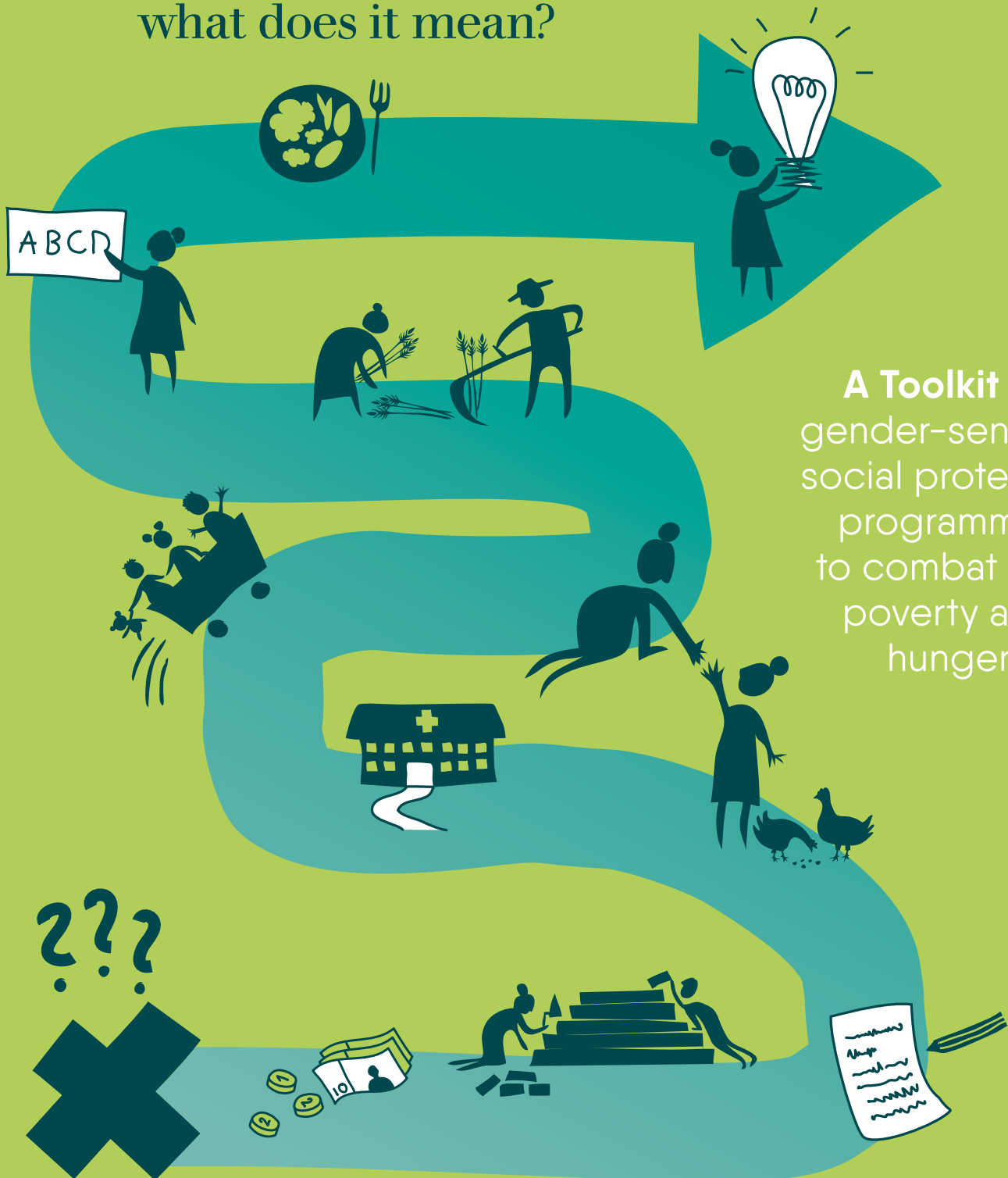




Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

## FAO Technical Guide 1

# Introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean?



**A Toolkit on**  
gender-sensitive  
social protection  
programmes  
to combat rural  
poverty and  
hunger



# **FAO Technical Guide 1**

**Introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean?**

**A Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger**

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>4Ps</b>	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (Philippines)
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>IDS</b>	Institute of Development Studies
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IPC-IG</b>	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>PSNP</b>	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
<b>PWP</b>	Public works programme
<b>SP</b>	Social protection
<b>VUP</b>	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (Rwanda)



# Introduction

Welcome to **FAO Technical Guide 1** – Introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean? This is the first of three technical guides in the *Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger* (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Overview of technical guides and key issues covered

Overview	Themes covered
<b>Technical Guide 1:</b> Introduction to gender-sensitive SP programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why gender-sensitive approach to social protection matters?</li> <li>• How gender inequalities affect rural women's vulnerability to poverty and crises?</li> <li>• How social protection programmes impact gender equality and rural women's empowerment?</li> <li>• Key dimensions of gender-sensitive approach to social protection.</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Guide 2:</b> Gender-sensitive design of cash transfers and PWP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for undertaking a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis</li> <li>• How to integrate gender into core features of cash transfers?</li> <li>• How to integrate gender into core features of public works programmes</li> <li>• Linking social transfers with gender-sensitive complementary interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Guide 3:</b> Gender-sensitive programme implementation and M&E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why gender-sensitive implementation matters?</li> <li>• Key dimensions of gender-sensitive programme implementation</li> <li>• The role of gender-sensitive M&amp;E and learning systems</li> <li>• How to develop a gender-sensitive M&amp;E framework?</li> </ul>

## Background and rationale

Social protection (SP) has been broadly acknowledged as a critical strategy for reducing poverty, building resilience and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have acknowledged the importance of SP. SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), includes a target (1.3) that explicitly calls for countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all” as a strategy to eradicate poverty and hunger. SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) recognizes that SP has a role in making progress in this area. Target 4 of SDG 5 specifically calls for countries to “recognize and value unpaid and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies”<sup>1</sup>

1 The SDGs are available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

By making women the main recipients of transfers, SP programmes can directly reduce gender gaps in access to health, food and education, and enable women to accumulate productive resources and assets (Warring and de la O Campos, 2016). Transfers also increase the influence of rural women in household decision-making and their participation in social networks, which has positive effects on food production and family nutrition (FAO, 2015; Chant, ed., 2010).

The Toolkit focuses on the role of SP in reducing gendered social inequalities, and rural poverty and hunger.

To date, however, gender issues have received relatively little and inconsistent attention in SP programming (Holmes and Jones, 2013). This is partly due to the relatively weak understanding of gender inequality and its effects on rural poverty and vulnerability, and the limited investments that are being made to build government capacities to design gender-sensitive SP interventions. The Toolkit is designed to support SP and gender policy-makers and practitioners in their efforts to systematically apply a gender lens to SP programmes in ways that are in line with global agreements and FAO commitments to expand inclusive SP systems for rural populations.<sup>2</sup> The Toolkit focuses on the role of SP in reducing gendered social inequalities, and rural poverty and hunger.

### The purpose of the Toolkit

This *Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger* is designed for government staff involved in SP and gender programme development and implementation. It may also be of use to FAO gender and social protection focal points in regional and country offices, development partners and SP practitioners in general. The Toolkit is intended to deepen staff awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive SP and improve the technical skills they need to integrate gender issues effectively into the design, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation of cash transfers and public works programmes (PWP).

The Toolkit is composed of three technical guides:

- ▶ **Technical Guide 1:** Introduction to gender-sensitive SP programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean?
- ▶ **Technical Guide 2:** Integrating gender into the design of cash transfer and public works programmes
- ▶ **Technical Guide 3:** A guide to integrating gender into implementation and monitoring and evaluation of cash transfer and public work programmes

The Toolkit draws on literature and practical experiences from the field, and builds on the previous research and advisory work undertaken by FAO and partners, including the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UNICEF, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the World Bank. The technical guides complement other related resources and knowledge products published on this topic. Reference to these resources can be found in Annex 6.

<sup>2</sup> Consult the *FAO Social Protection Framework* (FAO, 2017) for the Organization's corporate approach and programmatic work in SP.

## Scope of the Toolkit

The Toolkit focuses on:

- ▶ Poor rural women and girls, as they are more likely than men and boys to be vulnerable to multidimensional forms of poverty and food insecurity (UN Women, 2015; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2017). Adult women are also disproportionately represented among the beneficiaries and/or recipients of social transfers (FAO, 2015). The Toolkit, however, acknowledges that gender norms and gender relations can also increase the vulnerability of men and boys to poverty and risk. It underscores the importance of engaging with men and boys in SP strategies that are designed to empower rural women and girls and bridge gender gaps.
- ▶ Lessons and experiences from Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, as these regions have a high prevalence of rural poverty and agriculture-based livelihoods<sup>3</sup> among rural households and women in particular.
- ▶ Social assistance programmes, such as cash transfers and PWP.<sup>4</sup> The focus on these programmes is due to their importance for the most impoverished and vulnerable rural populations, which are typically more likely to be covered by social assistance rather than contributory social security measures (see Tirivayi, Knowles and Davis, 2013; UN Women, 2015; Ulrichs, 2016). Also, as these schemes are often studied from a gender perspective, there is a relatively solid evidence base on their strengths and limitations regarding the integration of gender-sensitive features.

It is expected that the Toolkit will contribute to the development of (i) SP programmes that are non-discriminatory and provide equal access to benefits for both rural women and men; and (ii) more effective SP programmes that address the gender-based vulnerabilities and risks that prevent rural populations, and rural women in particular, from accessing and benefiting from economic and social opportunities, and claiming their rights and entitlements. Improved programmes should ultimately lead to outcomes that improve livelihoods, reduce rural poverty and build resilience.

Improved programmes should ultimately lead to outcomes that improve livelihoods, reduce rural poverty and build resilience.

## The overview of Technical Guide 1

Technical Guide 1 presents an overview of the links between gender, poverty and SP in rural areas. It provides key information, arguments and learning tools to readers to prepare them to advocate for, and undertake practical work on, the integration of gender issues into SP at the programme level.

Technical Guide 1 is composed of seven parts:

- ▶ **Part 1:** An introduction to key gender terms and concepts
- ▶ **Part 2:** What is social protection? A brief overview
- ▶ **Part 3:** Why does gender matter for SP programming?
- ▶ **Part 4:** Understanding the links between gender inequality and women's vulnerability to rural poverty and risks

3 In the Toolkit, 'agriculture-based livelihoods' refer to production, processing and marketing activities in crop and livestock production, fisheries and aquaculture, and forestry.

4 In this document, cash transfers and PWPs are sometimes referred to as social transfers.

- ▶ **Part 5:** Gender gaps in access to, and uptake of, SP in rural areas
- ▶ **Part 6:** How can SP address different aspects of poverty and vulnerability that rural women face?
- ▶ **Part 7:** What is a gender-sensitive approach to SP in rural context? An overview

Technical Guide 1 combines conceptual and empirical insights, specific programme examples, and practical tools, such as checklists and exercises. It is intended for beginners, and men and women with an intermediate level of experience in working in SP and gender policy and programming.

### How should the technical guides be used?

The technical guides in the Toolkit follow a logical programming sequence: from planning and design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Each technical guide can be used as a stand-alone resource or in combination with the other technical guides. Figure 1 indicates the key issues and topics covered in the technical guides. Users can work at their own pace and according to their personal interests and learning objectives, without direct guidance or facilitation.

The technical guides can be adapted for, and used in face-to-face training workshops with a dedicated facilitator to respond to specific country demands and contexts. The combination of techniques used throughout the technical guides is designed to build on the participants' existing knowledge and experience.

### How were the technical guides prepared?

The technical guides are based on:

- ▶ a comprehensive literature review on gender, rural poverty and vulnerability, SP, and gender-sensitive SP programming. The review combined theoretical and conceptual readings with empirical and practitioner-based literature, including impact evaluations and case studies;
- ▶ expert consultations with key partners within and outside FAO;<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ policy and operational insights into gender-sensitive SP, collected during a series of webinar events on gender and SP organized by FAO and IPC-IG;<sup>6</sup> and
- ▶ a peer review by external experts and academics and senior FAO staff.

5 The list of experts interviewed can be found in Annex 4.

6 Information on the webinar series is available at: <http://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/gender-sensitive-social-protection>.

# PART 1

## An introduction to key gender terms and concepts



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To understand essential gender concepts and their relevance to analyses of rural poverty and vulnerability; and explore strategies for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of rural women.



### IMPORTANT NOTE:

For some readers, this introductory section will address familiar concepts. For others, much of this material may be new. The gender concepts discussed in this section will appear throughout the technical guides. For this reason, these concepts require some preliminary clarification.

## 1.1 What is 'gender'?

'**Sex**' refers to the biological characteristics of women and men, which are manifest in their different roles in reproduction (FAO, 2013). '**Gender**' refers to the socially constructed roles, attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female.

Examples of a gender norm can be the common social beliefs that "women and girls should do the majority of domestic work" or that "only men can drive tractors".

'**Gender norms**' refer to the informal rules and shared social expectations that define socially acceptable roles and responsibilities of men and women, their expected behaviour and the power relations between them. Examples of a gender norm can be the common social beliefs that "women and girls should do the majority of domestic work" or that "only men can drive tractors". These norms are not universal and can vary both within and between cultures (FAO, 2013). Traditional gender norms are often deeply rooted but can also change over time. In many societies characterized by a patriarchal social order, gender norms are generally skewed in favour of men and disproportionately disadvantageous to women (World Bank, 2012).

## 1.2 What do we mean by 'gender relations'?

'**Gender relations**' refer to the ways in which society defines the rights, identities, and roles and responsibilities of women and men in relation to one another (FAO, 2013). Gender relations are informed by socio-cultural norms and they determine how power is distributed between the sexes. These relations may create and reflect systemic differences in men's and women's positions and life chances in a given society across three domains:

1. gender entitlement systems, which influence access to health and education, and access to, and control over productive resources and income;
2. gendered division of labour across productive and reproductive work; and
3. social status, bargaining power and agency to influence decision-making processes at the household and community level.

Social relationships among women and men are influenced by other socio-economic variables, such as age, class, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

## 1.3 What do we mean by 'gender roles' and 'gender division of labour'?

The concept of '**gender roles**' refers to activities ascribed to women and men in a given society according to their sex. In the rural context, both women and men perform multiple roles (often referred to as 'triple roles'). In the productive domain, these roles relate to food production and income-generation. Men and women also have roles in the reproductive domain. These roles are related to the care of the family and household. Men and women also have roles in community management. Activities associated with community management are usually carried out by women as an extension of their reproductive role. These activities can benefit the community in a number of ways (e.g. the provision and maintenance of scarce resources, such as water, health care and education, for collective consumption).

7 This section draws on and adapts material used in the FAO Training Course for Gender Focal Points (FAO, 2013).



In many societies, work can be rigidly divided between men and women according to their gender roles. This is generally referred to as the ‘**gender division of labour**’. This division is affected by, and in turn shapes, power relations between women and men. When considering gender roles and the gender division of labour, there are three important aspects to keep in mind.

First, depending on the cultural context, social norms tend to define women’s primary role as that of key household care providers responsible for family welfare, while men are designated as primary economic providers. In reality, rural women must juggle multiple roles. Domestic tasks and caring responsibilities, including the care of children and sick and elderly family members, fall almost entirely to women. These tasks when combined with women’s income-generation and community activities, lead to disproportionate work burdens for women (see Part 4).

Second, different values may be ascribed to men’s and women’s tasks. For example, while both sexes perform productive work in agriculture, these efforts are not all equally valued or rewarded by society. Care work and domestic work performed by rural women is typically unpaid and undervalued by the family and society in general (FAO, 2013; Grassi, Landberg and Huyer, 2015).

Third, gender norms around ‘suitable’ jobs for women and men may lead to occupational gender segregation in agriculture and the non-farm labour market (see Box 1). Gender segregation results in a disproportionate concentration of women and men in particular occupations and industries, which can be enforced by rules, laws and policies (UN Women, 2015). This assumed rigid gender division of roles and responsibilities can lead to gender inequalities in economic opportunities and livelihood options, and differences between men and women in terms of their vulnerability to risks and coping capabilities (see Part 4).

Care work and domestic work performed by rural women is typically unpaid and undervalued by the family and society in general.

### Box 1: Gendered work norms in farming

Women and men may farm different crops. In some cultures, social norms and household responsibilities dictate the types of crops women can cultivate. For example, in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, wives bear primary responsibility for household food security. As a result, these women may prioritize crops for home consumption. Men bear primary responsibility for cash income and tend to choose to grow cash or export crops for market sale. The cultivation of cash crops is culturally viewed as a male activity, and women are less likely to cultivate these crops. While farmers may be responsible for gender-specific tasks, their labour may still be ‘shared’. Often men assist with certain tasks related to the kitchen garden and subsistence farming (e.g. yam mound preparation, high-labour clearing, cutting tree stumps), and women may provide support in the cultivation of the principle market crop.

Source: Adapted from Pavanello *et al.*, 2016; FAO, 2013.

## 1.4 Gender discrimination and gender inequality

‘**Gender discrimination**’ is any exclusion or restriction to entitlements and opportunities based on gender roles and relations that prevents a person from enjoying full human rights (FAO, 2013). ‘**Gender inequality**’ refers to unequal treatment and/or perceptions of individuals and groups based on their gender. Discriminatory gender norms are the core means by which gender inequalities are

created and maintained in a society. They are exercised through informal customs and practices, formal rules, laws and policies, and social institutions, such as labour markets, education and marriage. Discrimination relates to both differences in treatment between men and women, and the different outcomes certain practices may have that contribute to disproportionate deprivation and social limitations for a particular gender.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In this technical guide, we explore how gender norms, roles and relations in rural contexts create gender-based discrimination and inequality, and how this situation hinders women's (and men's) capacity to construct sustainable rural livelihoods and manage risks effectively (see Parts 3 and 4). Because of gender-based discrimination and inequality, women may be denied adequate access to SP, which has implications for SP programme outcomes related to poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability (see Part 5).

## 1.5 Strategies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

In this technical guide, we consider the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment both as underlying principles and the goals of SP programming. This section then looks at the main strategies for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in SP programmes.

### Defining gender equality and women's empowerment and the interdependence of these two concepts

'Gender equality' denotes the equal participation of women and men in decision-making; equal ability to exercise their rights; equal access to, and control of, resources and development-related benefits; and equal opportunity to obtain decent employment and improve other aspects of their livelihoods.

'Women's empowerment' has a number of definitions. It is usually framed in terms of economic advancement and enhanced power and agency, which can enable women (and men) to have increased control over their lives. In this technical guide, the term 'empowerment' includes social, economic and political dimensions. According to the definition proposed by Kabeer (2005), the concept of empowerment can be

explored through three closely interrelated dimensions: agency, resources and achievements. Agency represents the processes by which choices are made and put into effect; resources are the medium through which agency is exercised; and achievements refer to the outcomes of applying agency and resources effectively (Kabeer, 2005). In the rural context, a woman can be considered empowered, when she has both the ability and the power to make and act on economic decisions, and is consequently able to succeed and advance socio-economically (Golla *et al.*, 2011).

The empowerment of women may emerge through improved access to resources; the collective action and political mobilization of women; and training and awareness raising (FAO, 2013). Women's collective voice and agency is critical for negotiating transformative gender changes; demanding higher wages; and improving women's access to resources and social services and care services, including SP (Domingo *et al.*, 2015). Men can also benefit from women's empowerment, as it offers the opportunity to live in a more equitable society and reduce the constraints imposed on them by their male gender roles.

Men can also benefit from women's empowerment, as it offers the opportunity to live in a more equitable society and reduce the constraints imposed on them by their male gender roles.

Having power and agency, within both a household and community, is critically tied to women’s ability to achieve gender equality; gain access and control over resources and entitlements, including SP benefits; and in turn, advance economically and move out of poverty (Kabeer, 2005). Women’s empowerment, in particular improvements for women in education, health and control over income, is central to alleviating household poverty and improving food security and nutrition (FAO, 2011). In this technical guide, this is the rationale for exploring the ways SP can contribute to achieving outcomes that reduce gender inequality and support women’s empowerment.

### Gender mainstreaming and women-specific actions

Gender equality and women’s empowerment can be promoted through two twin-tracked strategies:

- ▶ gender mainstreaming and
- ▶ women-specific interventions

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has defined gender mainstreaming as “a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and needs an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (ECOSOC, 1997, p. 27). However, equal treatment in policies and programmes may not necessarily lead to equal outcomes for both sexes. In cases of significant and systemic gender inequity, affirmative action and women-specific interventions must be undertaken. Both the gender mainstreaming<sup>8</sup> and women-specific actions are relevant to the concept of gender-sensitive SP programming.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment can be promoted through **two twin-tracked strategies**: gender mainstreaming and women-specific interventions.

### The typology of gender integration into programmes and policies

Efforts to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment objectives into any given policy or programme can be done along a ‘continuum’. Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) first developed a policy classification tool for helping practitioners determine the degree to which an intervention is explicitly working towards transforming unequal gender relations. They classified interventions into two broad types:

- ▶ Gender-blind interventions that recognize no distinction between the sexes, and may make gender assumptions that lead to a bias in favour of existing gender relations.
- ▶ Gender-aware interventions that recognize that the nature of women’s involvement is determined by gender relations, which make their involvement different, and often unequal; and that consequently women may have different needs, interests and priorities that may sometimes conflict with those of men (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1996).

8 There are many tools and operational approaches to mainstream gender in development policies and programmes, including: gender strategy development, gender analysis and data disaggregation, gender budgeting, gender stocktaking, and audits. For specific examples of these strategies refer to the *FAO Training Course for Gender Focal Points* (FAO, 2013).

Building on the original classification developed by Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) and FAO work in this area, this technical guide defines three categories of interventions (see Table 1) to indicate the degree of gender integration in terms of objectives and scope: gender-discriminatory or gender-blind, gender-neutral, and gender-sensitive. In this technical guide, the gender-sensitive policy classification is used to characterize interventions that incorporate transformative elements in gender objectives and features (see Part 2). Programme designers should aim to develop gender-sensitive SP interventions that maximize positive outcomes related to gender equality and empowerment and do not reinforce gender inequalities.

Table 1: A ‘gender continuum’: FAO typology of interventions

Type	Description of intervention
<b>Gender-discriminatory/ gender-blind</b>	Ignores gender issues, gender roles and the gender gaps between men and women; may contain measures that discriminate against women and men, and/or reinforce gender inequalities.
<b>Gender-neutral</b>	Recognizes gender inequalities, but does not include specific measures to address gender discrimination and inequality.
<b>Gender-sensitive/ transformative</b>	Recognizes specific needs and priorities of women and men, and purposefully and proactively tackles gender inequalities by questioning and challenging the structures, institutions and norms on which these inequalities are based, sustained, reinforced and reproduced over time.

Source: Adapted from FAO, 2016b.

**Practical and strategic gender needs**

Another helpful concept in assessing the types of gender issues that SP programmes may address is the concept of ‘practical and strategic’ gender needs (also referred to as gender interests).<sup>9</sup> For example, programmes can address practical gender needs by improving people’s immediate, material circumstances and reducing deprivation (e.g. improving access to food, health care and education). In such circumstances, the lives of women (or men) may be improved without necessarily altering existing gender norms or challenging women’s traditional roles and subordinate position in society (March *et al.*, 1999). Programmes can respond to strategic gender needs by improving women’s position and status in society and empowering women to claim their rights and entitlements. To achieve this end, programmes must address the ways in which existing gender norms determine the balance of power, social status, and control over resources

Programmes can respond to strategic gender needs by improving women’s position and status in society and empowering women to claim their rights and entitlements.

<sup>9</sup> The concept of practical or strategic gender interests was first coined by Maxine Molyneux in 1985. It was then developed into a tool for planners by Caroline Moser, who looked at ‘needs’ rather than interests. Kate Young introduced a concept of transformative potential to complement the concept of practical and strategic gender interests (March *et al.*, 1999).

by transforming the social institutions that perpetuate discrimination and gender-based exclusion. Practical and strategic approaches are closely related and complementary. Interventions with ‘practical’ objectives can also serve to meet beneficiaries’ strategic gender needs in that they may affect gender norms, roles and power relations, either intentionally or otherwise.

Understanding the concept of practical and strategic gender needs can help development planners to determine how the practical needs of programme beneficiaries can be met through SP schemes in a way that has the transformative potential to assist women and men in challenging unequal gender power relations, and contribute to women’s empowerment. In the Toolkit, we explore the scope for designing SP programmes that address both practical and strategic needs in a synergistic way.

### Summary questions



- ▶ How might gender norms and practices be expressed in the everyday lives of rural households/communities?
- ▶ What are the key gender inequalities in your country? What progress has been made in the areas of gender equality and women’s empowerment in your country?
- ▶ Give some examples of the strategies used by government, donors, and civil society to address gender inequalities and promote women’s empowerment in your country.



### Exercise 1: Reflecting on gender norms and roles relevant to your context

(SEE ANNEX 1:  
LEARNING TOOLS)



## PART 2

# What is social protection (SP)?

## A brief overview



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To understand the functions of SP policy instruments and learn the basic design characteristics of different types of cash transfers and PWP.



### IMPORTANT NOTE:

It is presumed that majority of readers are familiar with the main SP issues. This section presents only a brief overview of key terms and concepts. Since key SP concepts still attract some debate in academia and among practitioners, we provide overarching definitions to develop a shared understanding of fundamental terms used in the technical guides. Part 7 deals specifically with the concept of gender-sensitive SP programming.

## 2.1 Basic definition and benefits of SP<sup>10</sup>

‘**Social protection**’ refers to the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their entire life. Social protection policies and programmes place particular emphasis on poor and vulnerable groups (FAO, 2017).

SP is increasingly recognized as a critical strategy for reducing poverty and building resilience. It has positive impacts on the development of ‘human capital’, income and food security, access to basic services, and social inclusion (FAO, 2017). Evidence from impact evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa shows that well-designed and implemented SP programmes<sup>11</sup> can:



- ▶ **Make important contributions to household food security and nutrition.** By improving access to cash or food, regular social transfers reduce women’s and girls’ vulnerability to hunger and malnutrition, and strengthen women’s ability to meet their responsibilities for maintaining household food security.
- ▶ **Promote productive activities and resilient livelihoods.** Predictable social transfers help poor households to overcome constraints related to liquidity, savings and credit. The transfers enable them to increase their accumulation of assets, generate more income and cope more effectively with livelihood shocks and stresses. The transfers can also address gender gaps in productive resources and assets, and strengthen rural women’s financial autonomy and decision-making capacity.
- ▶ **Contribute to local economic development.** Cash benefits can have important impacts on the local economy. As beneficiaries tend to spend their transfers on local goods and services, the transfers can deliver economic benefits to the broader community.<sup>12</sup>

The FAO rationale for working on SP focuses on: (i) the economic and productive impact of SP, including its contribution to the economic empowerment of women; and (ii) the expansion of the right to SP to all people, regardless of sex, age, ethnicity or marital status (FAO, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> This section is informed by the FAO Social Protection Framework (FAO, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> This evidence comes from impact evaluations of cash transfer programmes conducted by FAO, UNICEF and partners in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as part of the Transfer project. See Davis *et al.*, eds. (2016).

<sup>12</sup> See for example Chapter 5 in Davis *et al.*, eds. (2016).



## 2.2 Core SP functions

SP instruments can have four broad functions:

- ▶ **Protective:** By providing relief to poor households suffering from chronic poverty and food insecurity, SP can help people meet their practical needs for food, nutrition, health care and education. SP can also protect people who are vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. This sort of protection is particularly important for rural women.
- ▶ **Preventive:** By helping people mitigate the negative impacts of the threats that pose risks to their livelihoods and their health at all stages of their lives, SP can help people to retain their assets and prevent them from falling into poverty or deeper deprivation following a shock or crises.
- ▶ **Promotive:** By strengthening people's livelihoods and expanding their asset base, skills and income-generation capacities, SP can enhance incomes and create a pathway out of poverty and food insecurity.
- ▶ **Transformative:** By addressing the structural causes of poverty and vulnerability, such as gender-based inequality and discrimination, SP can promote social justice and equity. It can also address the strategic needs of the poorest groups, women in particular, by protecting them from social exclusion and marginalization and enhancing their agency and bargaining power. Transformative interventions are viewed as critical means to address the underlying causes of vulnerability and achieve positive outcomes related to the sustainable reduction of poverty and the development of greater resilience.

SP instruments can have **four broad functions:** Protective, preventive, promotive and transformative.

Each of these four functions has relevance for gender-sensitive SP. We use these functions in Part 6 in a framework for analysing how cash transfers and PWP address the various gender dimensions of poverty and vulnerability.

## 2.3 SP policy instruments

At the operational level, SP encompasses three broad sets of instruments:

- ▶ **Social assistance:** This includes non-contributory cash or in-kind transfers (e.g. food, vouchers or subsidies) and social welfare services that are typically targeted at people living in chronic and/or extreme poverty with no other adequate means of support. The primary function of social assistance is to protect household consumption and increase access to basic services. However, social assistance can also help people to accumulate assets, increase their access to jobs and enable them to make small-scale investments in their livelihoods. Common social assistance programmes are cash transfers, food transfers, PWPs, subsidies, fee waivers, social welfare services and school feeding.
- ▶ **Social insurance:** This consists of contributory schemes that reduce economic vulnerabilities associated with health issues at different stages of a person's life cycle (e.g. old age, pregnancy), employment and weather-related contingencies. Common programmes are contributory old-age pensions, maternity leave, injury and unemployment benefits, health and agricultural insurance.

SP encompasses **three broad sets of instruments:** Social assistance, social insurance and labour market interventions.

- ▶ **Labour and livelihood enhancement interventions:** These interventions provide assistance in securing decent employment and/or establishing enterprises for self-employment. Common measures are employment services, skills development, asset transfer schemes and microfinance; and actions aimed at securing basic employment rights (e.g. legislation related to the establishment of a minimum wage or safe working conditions).

These core SP instruments can be designed in a transformative way to address the structural causes of rural poverty and vulnerabilities among women and men. For example, sensitization and awareness-raising components, can be embedded within the design of cash transfers and PWPs to address discriminatory socio-cultural norms and attitudes towards marginalized groups, and build support towards gender equality and rural women's empowerment. Core schemes can also be linked to complementary measures beyond SP, such as legislation-based labour market interventions and equity frameworks (e.g. inheritance laws, protection from early marriage and gender-based violence) to reduce people's risks of social exclusion, discrimination and abuse. These complementary measures play an important role in gender-sensitive SP.

## 2.4 Basic design characteristics of cash transfers and PWPs

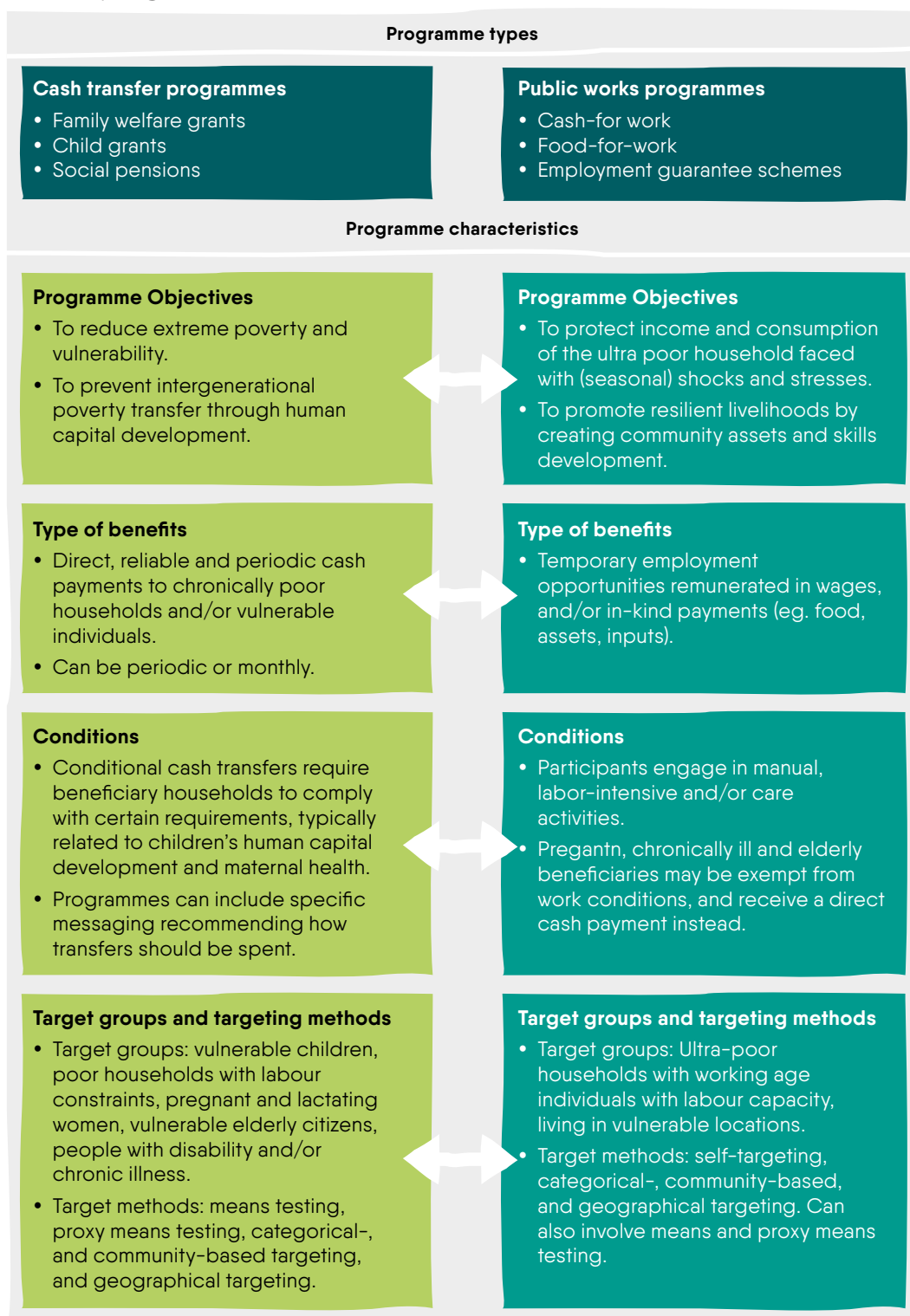
The Toolkit focuses on two types of social assistance programmes:

Our Toolkit focuses on **two types of social assistance programmes**: Cash transfer programmes and PWPs.

- ▶ **Cash transfer programmes**, which are direct and regular cash hand-outs to poor and vulnerable households and/or individuals (World Bank, 2015). Cash transfers can be conditional and unconditional, although in practice such a distinction is often blurred (Pellerano and Barca, 2016).
- ▶ **PWPs**, which engage participants in temporary employment activities to reduce poverty and vulnerability to shocks. PWPs include cash-, input- and food-for-work schemes.

Figure 2 maps out the objectives and basic operational characteristics of the cash transfers and PWPs.

Figure 2: Key characteristics<sup>13</sup> of cash transfer and public works programmes



<sup>13</sup> Programme characteristics represent typical programme design and may differ depending on who is implementing the programme and the setting. Many programmes deviate from these ‘conventional characteristics’.



**FURTHER READING:** For more information on SP in rural areas, consult the readings suggested in Annex 3 (Key resources and references).

### Summary questions



- ▶ What do the four core SP functions aim to achieve?
- ▶ What types of SP instruments exist in your country, and what are their core features, and their gender-sensitive characteristics?
- ▶ Why is transformative SP relevant for gender-sensitive programming?



## Exercise 2: Mapping social protection interventions in your country

(SEE ANNEX 1:  
LEARNING TOOLS)

## PART 3

# Why does gender matter for SP programming?



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To gain an understanding of the importance and rationale for integrating a gender lens into SP programmes in rural areas, and be able to advocate for its inclusion in cash transfers and PWP development.

### 3.1 Rationale for integrating gender into SP programmes

In the development community, SP is increasingly recognized for the role it can play in reducing gender inequalities and promoting the economic empowerment of rural women (FAO, 2017). Interventions that recognize and support women's productive roles, alleviate their reproductive care burdens, and improve their social and economic position are key to achieving positive outcomes that contribute to sustainably reducing poverty, increasing food security and building women's and men's resilience to shocks and crises (UN Women, 2015; Holmes and Jones, 2013).

Despite this knowledge, it remains an ongoing challenge to turn this understanding into concrete actions to mainstream gender in the design and implementation of SP programmes. Difficulties in this regard are often due to a limited understanding of how gender inequalities shape rural women's and men's experience of poverty and their vulnerability to risks in rural settings; and a failure to adequately appreciate the importance of explicitly integrating gender into the SP programme cycle. In this section, we make a case for the importance of incorporating gender in SP programming, and discuss the benefits of adopting a gender-sensitive approach to SP.

There are three main reasons for integrating gender into social protection programmes.

#### i. Rural poverty affects women and men differently due to gender roles and inequalities

Men and women are affected by rural poverty and vulnerability in different ways due to their gender-specific roles, constraints and capacities in agriculture and rural livelihoods. Gender discrimination and inequality plays a significant role in pushing rural women into poverty and food insecurity and trapping them there.

Men and women are affected by rural poverty and vulnerability in different ways due to their gender-specific roles, constraints and capacities in agriculture and rural livelihoods.

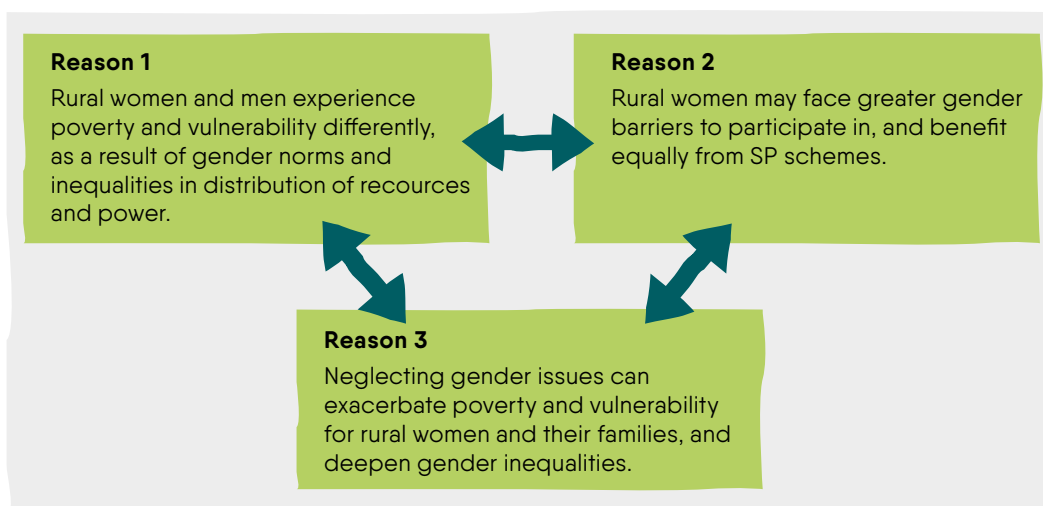
Women farmers play a significant role in agriculture. In developing countries, they make up about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force (FAO, 2011). However, because of gender-based discrimination women have generally less access than men to productive resources, services and employment opportunities. This discrimination creates a gap between women's and men's productivity and incomes. Because of discriminatory gender norms and practices, and women's generally lower status in the society, women are also more likely to experience excessive work burdens and time poverty; have reduced mobility; participate in only a limited manner in decision-making at the household and community levels; and face gender-based violence (de la O Campos, 2015; UN Women, 2015). These disadvantages further reduce rural women's access to economic opportunities and social networks, and limit their participation in SP schemes (Holmes and Jones, 2009).

Consequently, rural women face greater challenges than men in building resilient livelihoods, managing shocks and overcoming poverty. Women, especially those between the age of 20 and 34, are more likely to live in poverty than men in 41 out of the 75 countries where sufficient data is available (UN Women, 2015). Even where women and men are both as likely to live in a poor household, women tend to be deprived in other areas. They generally have less access to labour markets and education, enjoy less financial and social autonomy, and own fewer assets (FAO, 2015). See Part 4 for a detailed discussion of the links between gender inequalities and rural poverty and vulnerability to crises.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** For the above reasons, SP programmes must acknowledge how gender inequalities affect women’s and men’s exposure to, and experience of rural poverty. These programmes need to respond to the different needs of women and men and recognize their different priorities with regard to the support they require. In contexts where rural women are more vulnerable to poverty and crises, it is necessary to promote affirmative action for women to maximize the benefits they derive from SP and empower them.

Figure 3: Rationale for gender-sensitive social protection



## ii. Social inequalities create gender gaps in access to SP

For rural women, gender-related norms and practices may create various barriers that prevent them from participating in, and benefitting fully and equitably from SP schemes. Rural women generally have irregular and interrupted employment histories, and their work is concentrated in the informal sector. As a result, they are less able than men to contribute to social security schemes, including pensions and maternity protection.

Gender-blind programme design and implementation may also ignore the practical and socio-cultural barriers that prevent women from participating in SP programmes. These barriers include child-care demands and time poverty, restricted mobility, illiteracy, limited access to information, and cultural restrictions related to working in public spaces. For instance, mothers with small children may exclude themselves from public works schemes if these schemes do not offer child-care facilities. Even if poor rural women participate in SP programmes, they may not necessarily use and benefit equally from the social transfers. Weak bargaining power in the household, limited confidence and a lack of financial and functional literacy in using cash and wages may restrict their control over benefits.

Women, especially women between the age of 20 and 34, are more likely to live in poverty than men.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Programmes must identify and address the gender-based constraints faced by rural women and men to ensure they both can participate in, and benefit equitably from interventions. Systematic efforts are needed, beyond the targeting of women, to ensure full uptake of programmes among rural women.

### iii. Gender-blind programmes can exacerbate poverty and vulnerability for rural women and their families

Neglecting gender issues in the design and implementation of SP programmes can exacerbate rural women and girl's vulnerability to poverty, and disempower men and boys (Luttrell and Moser, 2004; Bastagli *et al.*, 2016). For example, the conditions that female care providers are expected to fulfil to receive conditional cash transfers can reinforce gender stereotypes, exacerbate their time poverty, and reduce their ability to engage in activities that generate income and produce food for the household (de la O Campos, 2015; Holmes and Jones, 2010; Molyneux and Thomson, 2012). Giving preferential access to employment for women in PWP without a proper public awareness-raising component can potentially have negative consequences within households and the wider community. The programme may disempower men, who may feel threatened by changes in gender roles or alienated from programme activities (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017; IEG, 2014; Molyneux and Thomson, 2012).



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Programmes must take care to avoid any unintended negative effects on rural women and men, and the gender relations between them. This can be achieved by adopting a 'do no harm' approach to programme design and implementation, and undertaking gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation activities that can assess and identify potentially adverse gender-related changes arising from programme delivery.

## 3.2 The benefits of gender-sensitive SP for rural poverty reduction

From the perspective of human rights, addressing the differential needs and priorities of rural women and men, through gender-sensitive SP is an appropriate approach. This approach is also warranted from a broader development perspective. Only by ensuring that every individual achieves their equal socio-economic and political rights will rural poverty and hunger be tackled effectively. Gender-sensitive SP helps fulfil the commitment of 'leaving no one behind', as articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (FAO, 2016a).

There is also a business case for gender-sensitive SP. Gender-sensitive approaches to SP programmes increase the impacts of the interventions. Interventions that tackle the structural causes of gender inequalities, and work to improve women's position and empower them economically, are key to achieving long-term positive outcomes related to poverty reduction and increased resilience at the individual and household level. By enhancing rural women's production and productivity, and improving their bargaining power, gender-sensitive SP initiatives can enable women to increase the investments they make in the overall well-being of their children, and break the cycle in which poverty is transferred from one generation to the next (SOFA, 2011; SOFA, 2015). We now turn to explore in greater detail the links between gender inequalities, and poverty and vulnerability (in Part 4), and gender gaps in access to SP (in Part 5).

### Summary questions



- ▶ What are the main reasons for adopting a gender lens in SP?
- ▶ Give examples of how gender inequalities contribute to rural women's vulnerability to poverty in your country.
- ▶ Give examples of how gender equality can contribute to developmental outcomes.



## PART 4

# Understanding the links between gender inequality and women's vulnerability to rural poverty and risks



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To explore in more detail the main factors that contribute to, and exacerbate, rural women's vulnerability to poverty and other crises; understand how determinants other than gender (e.g. age and the different stages in a woman's life cycle, household composition and social identity) compound and influence poverty among rural women; and understand why women and men experience and respond to crises differently.



### IMPORTANT NOTE:

The information in this section can both inform, and serve as a basis for, a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis, as discussed in Technical Guide 2, Part 1.

## 4.1 Gender-specific dimensions of rural poverty and vulnerability

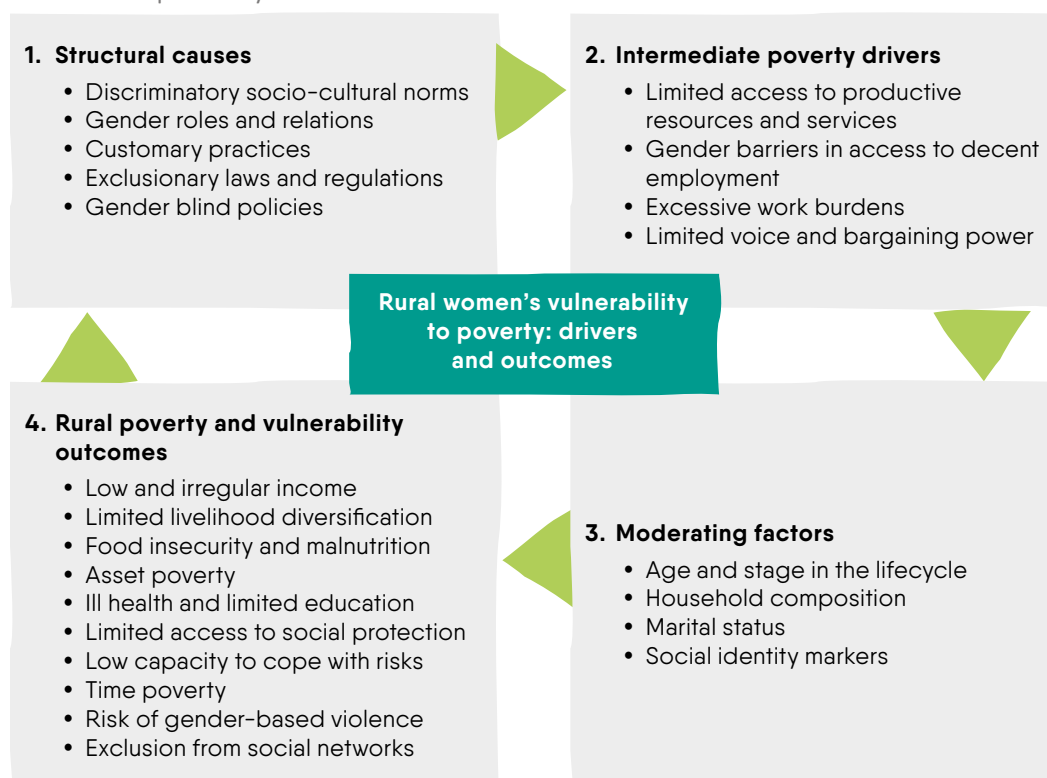
Women's experiences of poverty in rural areas are multidimensional and dynamic. Figure 4 presents a framework for considering how gender inequality, through a complex set of factors and processes, contributes to, and exacerbates, rural women's vulnerability to poverty and crises.

Structural causes (e.g. discriminatory socio-cultural norms, gender roles and practices) lie at the root of women's vulnerability to poverty and risks. These structural causes, which lead to gender-based exclusions and discrimination that affect rural women's well-being and their capacity to achieve an adequate standard of living, operate through four intermediary drivers:

- i. limited access to the productive resources and support required to generate income,
- ii. gender barriers in access to decent rural employment,
- iii. rural women's disproportionate work burdens and time poverty, and
- iv. limited voice and agency in decision-making at the household and community levels.

Different moderating factors, such as age, life-cycle vulnerabilities, household composition and social identity, may further aggravate women's disadvantages and welfare insecurity, and contribute to a number of outcomes related to poverty and vulnerability. The intermediary drivers and moderating factors are considered in the next two sections.

Figure 4: Framework for understanding the links between gender inequality and rural poverty



### 4.1.1 Intermediary drivers of poverty

#### Limited access to productive resources and services required for income generation

In rural areas, access to and control over productive resources (e.g. seeds, inputs, land, water, livestock, and financial and extension services) and access to markets are critical to increasing and/or diversifying agricultural productivity, raising incomes, ensuring food security and building resilience. However, in many settings, discriminatory laws, policy strategies and practices, and socio-cultural attitudes, including a lack of recognition for women's key roles in agriculture, put severe constraints on rural women's ownership and control over productive resources and services (FAO, 2016a).

Although there are large variations across countries, women are generally less likely than men to own and inherit land, and women's rights to water are often less secure than those of men (Meinzen-Dick *et al.*, 2017). For example, in Nigeria, women are sole owners (with the right to sell) of only 8 percent of all plots, while men are sole owners of 71 percent (FAO, 2016a). In most countries, female-headed households are five to ten percent less likely to have access to credit and savings services (FAO, 2011; Petrics *et al.*, 2015). Only five percent of all extension resources are directed toward women and tailored to their needs (Petricis *et al.*, 2015).

Consequently, women have fewer capabilities to expand their production and/or diversify into more profitable and resilient activities to increase their income. If rural women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent, with significant payoffs for improved food security and nutrition, human well-being and productivity (FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2012). A lack of access to affordable agricultural credit and insurance also hampers women's ability to invest and adopt new farming practices, technologies and services (e.g. crop diversification, climate-smart techniques) that can reduce their vulnerability and protect them against environmental shocks.

As a result, poor rural women are frequently locked into subsistence agriculture, and their livelihood strategies have very limited earning potential (FAO, 2015; Winder and Yablonski, 2012). Limited control of household resources and assets, including land and housing, can lower rural women's social status in the family and weaken their bargaining power when decisions are being made in the household and community.

As a result of gaps in productive resources, poor rural women are locked into subsistence agriculture, and their livelihood strategies have very limited earning potential.

#### Gender barriers in access to decent rural employment

Decent employment<sup>14</sup> is a critical means of increasing the incomes of poor people, protecting them from shocks and moving them out of poverty. However, the choice of jobs available to poor rural women and men is generally very limited. Rural women face additional gender-based discrimination in rural labour markets. Within the agriculture sector, much of the work done by women consists of self-employment on family farms often without pay (FAO, 2016b). Globally, a quarter

14 Decent rural employment refers to any activity, occupation, work or business performed for pay or profit by women and men, adults and youth, in rural areas that respects core labour standards, provides an adequate living income, entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability, and promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training (FAO, 2015).

Rural women face additional gender-based discrimination in rural labour markets.

of all women are unpaid family workers (ILO, 2016). In wage work (both on- and off-farm), rural women tend to be disproportionately concentrated in informal and 'vulnerable' employment. These poor quality, irregular jobs require little skill and offer low pay and very limited or no social security (ILO, 2016; FAO, 2016). In 142 countries, women are overrepresented in the lowest-paid occupations (ILO, 2016).

Various gender-related constraints limit rural women's opportunities to participate in secure and decent employment.

- ▶ Women have disproportionate domestic and care responsibilities. This work burden is compounded by an absence of child-care services, poor infrastructure and a lack of safe public transport in rural areas.
- ▶ Gender-based occupational segregation partly related to socio-cultural stereotypes limits the types of jobs that are considered suitable for women and men. In some countries, women are discouraged or legally restricted from paid work or confined to a narrow range of agricultural tasks (World Bank, 2015).
- ▶ Rural women often have limited education, low literacy levels and mobility constraints. Rural women, particularly women who belong to an indigenous minority group, may also face language barriers to join labour market.

By engaging in informal and precarious types of work, women are less able to benefit from secure incomes, basic social or legal employment protection, and access to social security (Ulrichs, 2016). This exposes them to 'working' poverty, financial dependence and potential exploitation and abuse from employers. Being less able to contribute to SP benefits, rural women are also more vulnerable to poverty in old age. Economic insecurity limits women's options outside of marriage and can trap them in highly dependent and exploitative marital and community arrangements (Chant, ed., 2010). Additionally, when household income falls below sustenance levels, to ensure their family's survival, women are often forced to undertake 'distress-driven' work, which can affect their health, physical security and socio-economic advancement (Hunt and Samman, 2016).

### Women's disproportionate work burdens and time poverty

Women in rural areas face excessive work burdens. They commonly assume the bulk of domestic and care duties, which covers a wide range of tasks, including cooking, cleaning, food preparation, caring for children and other family members (e.g. the sick and the elderly), collecting fuelwood and fetching water. Rural women also engage in productive activities in the agriculture sector and provide support to the community.

Women in rural areas face excessive work burdens.

Men also take on household and community tasks (e.g. home construction and maintenance, agricultural work for domestic production, and specific pastoralist roles). In most countries, however, men and women exhibit significantly gendered differences in time use. Time-use surveys from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate that the overall time dedicated to household work (paid and unpaid) is always higher for women than men. The situation is particularly extreme in certain settings, where environmental stresses linked to climate change, or social changes, such as male migration, are adding to women's burdens in obtaining food for the household and maintaining income security (Grassi, Landberg and Huyer, 2015).

Women's work burdens result largely from a combination of interrelated factors.

- ▶ Socio-cultural norms generally dictate that women take primary responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work. Typically, men are legitimately excluded from practical involvement in these tasks. Women may also lack agency to negotiate with male counterparts for a more equal distribution of work responsibilities (FAO, 2013).
- ▶ Rural communities generally lack social and care services. People in need of care must be nursed by their families, and this responsibility generally falls on the female members of the household (Chopra, 2014). Evidence from time-use surveys conducted in China, Mexico and the United Republic of Tanzania show that women do not reduce their work during pregnancy, which affects the health of the mother and infant (Peterman *et al.*, 2013). Single-parent families with significant labour constraints, and female caregivers in households with many dependents/children have disproportionately high work burdens.

Excessive work burdens, and the resultant time poverty, impose significant limitations on agricultural productivity, and may also inhibit women's full participation in paid work. More broadly, time poverty affects women's quality of life, puts their health at risk, and constrains their access to other important entitlements, such as leisure, education and social networking. Rural women's participation and uptake of SP may also be affected by their work burdens related to time and opportunity costs (see Part 5).

Women's time poverty often has a negative effect on household welfare, and is particularly detrimental to children. Children, particularly girls, are the primary helpers in household chores, especially in relatively labour-constrained households. This often harms their educational prospects, which reduces their employment opportunities and increases the likelihood that they will remain trapped in poverty as adults (FAO, 2016a). Even very young children take on gender-assigned responsibilities. For example, girls tend to look after younger siblings, prepare meals and fetch wood, while boys assist with productive activities and farm work. In this way, potentially harmful behaviours and gender stereotypes are reinforced over time, and perpetuate the unequal, gendered division of labour from one generation to the next.

Women's time poverty often has a negative effect on household welfare, and is particularly detrimental to children.

#### **Limited voice and agency in decision-making at household and community levels**

The socio-economic status of poor women within the household and community varies depending on the specific context. Generally, however, rural women tend to have more limited voice, agency and bargaining power than men. They are also frequently prevented from playing an active role in politics and community life, and have less influence than men in decision-making processes in rural organizations. A FAO analysis of women's participation in producer organizations has identified several constraints to women's participation, including: socio-cultural norms, work burdens, women's (relatively lower) status and position in the community, lower educational levels, limited access to assets and resources, and rules of entry to organizations (Kaaria *et al.*, 2016).

Limited voice and unequal intrahousehold bargaining power may reduce women's ability to influence decisions regarding household consumption, production, employment and investments; and inhibit them in asserting their rights and claims over household assets and entitlements (de la O Campos, 2015). A weaker

bargaining position within the household may also hinder women's access to and control over SP benefits, even when women are the principal recipients (de la O Campos, 2015; Pavanello *et al.*, 2016).

Exclusion from social networks and low political representation in community life and rural institutions also present major limitations on women's abilities to access resources, credit, markets and support.

Exclusion from social networks and low political representation in community life and rural institutions (e.g. public meetings, consultations involving community-based targeting exercises for SP programmes, and producer organizations) also present major limitations on women's abilities to access resources, credit, markets and support. During periods when they face shocks and stresses, this social exclusion can undermine their resilience. For example, during the selection of public works assets, women may not have the voice or power to advocate for priorities that meet their own needs (e.g. the construction of water-provisioning infrastructure). Finally, an inability to engage in collective action can bar them from taking advantage of important opportunities for social empowerment, and advocating for greater gender equality in the community and within broader political structures (Domingo *et al.*, 2015).

#### 4.1.2 Moderating factors and their role in influencing poverty and vulnerability for rural women

Women are not a homogenous group. Their experience of poverty and vulnerability varies widely depending on a range of demographic and social factors. Gender discrimination may aggravate other existing disadvantages. The key moderating factors include:



##### Age and the life cycle

Women and men face different types of risks, which change across the main stages of the life cycle: childhood, adolescence, working age and pregnancy, and old age (Newton, 2016).

For example, girl children and adolescent girls are at risk of suffering from malnutrition, obtaining insufficient schooling, being obliged to enter into an early marriage and becoming pregnant at an early age. All of these social and economic vulnerabilities affect their development and have important implications for their future earning potential and socio-economic empowerment (Harper, Jones and Watson, 2012). Boys living in extremely poor rural households may be more vulnerable to harmful forms of child labour. They may be more likely than girls to perform agricultural tasks, such as livestock herding, and take up dangerous employment in the fisheries sector. Engaging in these activities may have serious consequences for their education, health and safety.

Boys living in extremely poor rural households may be more vulnerable to harmful forms of child labour.

Working-age women are vulnerable to income insecurity, malnutrition and ill health. Their vulnerability is likely to increase during pregnancy and childbearing, and if they separate from or divorce their husbands. As the main care providers for family members who become ill, adult rural women shoulder disproportionate work burdens. In rural areas, limited access to care and health services and higher levels of extreme and chronic poverty, which preclude women from hiring support, magnify these vulnerabilities (Gavrilovic and Jones, 2012).

Rural women are susceptible to poverty in old age. They typically live longer than men and have limited access to assets and jobs in the rural labour market suitable to their age, skills and physical status. They also have limited access to contributory social security, as they have less opportunity to save for retirement during their working years (Ulrichs, 2016).



**FURTHER ACTION:** A gender-sensitive life-cycle analysis can help map and understand the various risks and sources of vulnerability for women and men at different stages in their lives; and the transfer of gender inequalities over time and its implications for perpetuating poverty. This information is essential to inform SP programme design.

### Household composition and women's marital status

A woman's exposure to poverty and the type of risks she may face depend largely on the composition of her family/household. Household composition includes the number of dependents, the household labour capacity, and the women's marital status (e.g. whether woman is a single parent, divorced or widowed, or married and lives with a male partner in a nuclear and/or extended/polygamous family). Households may include multiple generations and multiple women with different ranks and levels of authority, as well as men and children of different status.

It is very important to consider these intrahousehold factors. They help determine a woman's social and economic status within the household; her opportunities to access resources and her ability to generate income; and the organization of care-giving responsibilities and related work burdens and time poverty (Chant, ed., 2010).

For example, single women who are the heads of households often face different types and levels of vulnerabilities compared with women living in 'male-headed' households. Living without a male partner (and his earnings) may exacerbate income poverty for female heads of households and other family members. In this situation, woman may have to cope not only with diminished income, but with labour constraints that preclude the expansion of farm production, and difficulties in balancing activities to generate income with the demands of domestic work and care giving. As their marital status changes, women, particularly abandoned, widowed or divorced women, may suffer greater social marginalization and stigma, and be at greater risk of losing of property rights and assets.

Women living in male-headed households, including nuclear families, extended families and polygamous arrangements, may also be vulnerable to intrahousehold inequalities in access to resources and services. They may lack voice and agency, which increases the potential risks of spousal conflict, coercion or even domestic violence. The welfare of females in male-headed households is a relatively neglected policy and research area.

The welfare of females in male-headed households is a relatively neglected policy and research area.



**FURTHER ACTION:** More efforts are needed to understand how intrahousehold gender relations and household composition vary in different contexts; how these relations affect household members as individuals, both in economic and social terms; and what the implications are for SP programmes in terms of their outcomes related to the reduction of poverty and vulnerability at the individual level.

### Social identity markers

Rural women can suffer stigmatization on the basis of their specific occupational roles, such as sharecroppers and landless wage labourers.

Gender discrimination may also intersect with other forms of social exclusion and discrimination. In particular, indigenous and ethnic minority groups, marginalized castes, women affected by (HIV/AIDS) and/or disabilities, and displaced populations are likely to suffer additional barriers to overcoming poverty and vulnerability. FAO research on indigenous women in several countries with significant indigenous populations has highlighted their ‘triple burden’ of discrimination, which is based on ethnicity, socio-economic conditions and gender. Indigenous women are often victims of inequality and violence both within and outside their communities (FAO, 2016a). Often isolated in remote areas with poor infrastructure, indigenous women are less likely to access government services, including health care, education, rural finance, rural networks and SP. Difficulties in accessing these services can be compounded by barriers related to illiteracy and linguistic differences (FAO, 2016; Molyneux and Thomson, 2012). Rural women can suffer stigmatization on the basis of their specific occupational roles, such as sharecroppers and landless wage labourers.



**FURTHER ACTION:** There is limited research on the links between gender inequalities, social identity and poverty. Further efforts are needed to establish an evidence base on this topic to inform SP programme priorities and design.

## 4.2 Are women and men affected differently by crises? Do they respond differently?

Crises and disasters<sup>15</sup> in developing countries can have devastating effects on poor small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fishers and forest-dependent people. These groups are typically hardest hit by shocks and stresses (FAO, 2016; Winder-Rossi *et al.*, 2017). Understanding the gender dimensions of crises is also critical. During a crisis, women and men (and boys and girls) are exposed to different types of risks and challenges. The specific coping strategies of men and women related to food security and nutrition may also vary.

### Existing gender vulnerabilities women and men face are exacerbated in times of crisis

Evidence indicates that rural women and men can experience varying levels of vulnerability to the same shocks and stresses. These differing levels of vulnerability are a result of traditional gender roles and responsibilities, and differing capacities to cope with and respond to crises. These differences are linked to a number of factors, such as inequality in terms of skills, ownership of assets, and access to support and information (Quisumbing, Kumar and Berhman, 2017).

For example, during the 2007-2008 food security crises, poor female-headed households were 1.6 times more likely to be food-insecure than poor male-headed households. This situation reflects the fact that female-headed households spent a larger proportion of household income on food, had comparatively lower purchasing power, and had less capacity to increase food cultivation to meet household compared to male-headed households needs (FAO, 2011). FAO gender assessments of the Myanmar flood, the Nepal earthquake, and the El Niño event

<sup>15</sup> In this document, the definition of crisis encompasses covariate shocks related to natural disasters, food price hikes and economic crises, and long-term stresses related to conflict, environmental degradation and climate change.



in the Sudan found that women and children suffered more from displacement, lower food consumption, reduced access to services and assistance, and loss of livelihoods (FAO, 2016a). Rural women were also more vulnerable to physical threats, including gender-based violence. These risks tend to increase during a crisis when traditional rural community protective mechanisms break down (FAO, 2016).

Women farmers are more exposed to climate risks than men for a number of reasons. Women tend to be more dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. They also have fewer endowments and entitlements to help them absorb shocks, and less access to information and climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices that would enable them to adapt to climate change. Women are less mobile than men, which makes it harder for them to move away from affected areas (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2015).

Domestic and economic burdens caused by environmental degradation and the loss of natural resources that is associated with climate change often are disproportionately shouldered by women and girls. This greater burden is due to the fact that women and girls are often responsible for fuel and water collection, food preparation and other domestic purposes. As food and natural resources become more scarce, and competition for these resources increases within communities, the tasks of fetching fuel, water and food will become more time-consuming for women and girls. The longer distances they need to cover to gather these resources and the more intense competition for resources may expose women and girls to a heightened risk of gender-based violence and abuse (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2015; Jones and Stavropoulou, 2013).

#### **Women and men often cope with shocks and stresses differently, and family coping mechanisms may have a harmful impact on women in particular**

Poor households adopt various strategies to prevent, mitigate, cope and recover from the adverse effects of shocks. Coping strategies may include: drawing down savings; the distress sale of physical assets; utilizing formal and informal sources of credit for consumption; migrating for work; and tapping into social networks (de la O Campos and Garner, 2012). The coping strategies adopted by families in the face of shocks are often gender-specific and can lead to a disproportionate level of deprivation for rural women and girls.

The gender-specific roles and responsibilities rural women have in maintaining household welfare, compounded by their customarily weaker agency, can limit their influence over household decisions pertaining to the distribution of resources and food, health care and schooling. In times of economic shocks, women and girls are typically the first to reduce their food intake, shift to less diverse and nutritious food, and reduce their use of health care and education services in order to safeguard food consumption for other members of the household (de la O Campos and Garner, 2012). In these situations, lower household income can lead to higher levels of malnutrition among women and girls. This has particularly dire health consequences for pregnant women and their children, and can lead to a reduction in household labour productivity (de la O Campos and Garner, 2012).

The coping strategies adopted by families in the face of shocks are often gender-specific and can lead to a disproportionate level of deprivation for rural women and girls.

Similarly, due to lower bargaining power in the household, married women's tangible assets, such as jewellery or small livestock, are more vulnerable to being sold in times of crisis than their husbands' 'lumpier' assets, such as land, cattle or vehicles (Holmes, Jones and Marsden, 2009; Quisumbing, Kumar and Behrman, 2017). Distress sale of assets can be particularly harmful to rural women who already have very limited possessions, as it may deepen their financial dependence and increase their prospects for future poverty.

When men migrate, the woman becomes the *de facto* head of the household and must assume a higher proportion of work to compensate for the loss of labour.

Migrating to cities to look for employment is another important mechanism that rural households use to cope with crises. The data shows that men are more prone to labour-driven migration. However, the impacts of this strategy can still be gendered (de la O Campos and Garner, 2012). In some contexts, the domestic obligations of rural women and girls may limit their migration to temporary periods and they may have to remain relatively close to the homestead. When men migrate, the woman becomes the *de facto* head of the household and must assume a higher proportion of work to compensate for the loss of labour (de la O Campos and Garner, 2012). Male migration also has implications for agricultural labour and farm productivity. In some settings, women must wait for their husbands' approval before making decisions, such as whether to plant a different crop or hire additional labourers (Coon, 2008).



**FURTHER ACTION:** As the magnitude and impact of shocks and stresses increase from climate change, environmental disasters and conflict, more and more households, and women and girls in particular, will become less resilient and more vulnerable to future shocks. This situation underscores the importance of building gender-sensitive, shock-responsive SP systems to address women and men's specific needs during crises, and build their resilience and adaptive capacities to manage and recover from threats more effectively.

### Summary questions



- ▶ Why are rural women more likely to be disproportionately vulnerable to poverty and risks than rural men?
- ▶ What are the key causes of rural women's vulnerability to poverty and risks in your country?
- ▶ Give some examples of differences in coping behaviours adopted by rural women and men. Why is this the case? How do these strategies affect the well-being of women and men?

### Exercise 3: Assessing gender- specific effects of shocks and crises

(SEE ANNEX 1:  
LEARNING TOOLS)

## PART 5

# Gender gaps in access to, and uptake of, SP in rural areas



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To understand how gender dynamics may hinder equal access to SP measures for rural women and men.

## 5.1 Why women face gender barriers in accessing social protection?

Approximately 73 percent of the world population lacks access to appropriate SP schemes, and most of these unprotected people live in rural locations (FAO, 2015). Agricultural workers, especially women farmers, are among the least protected in terms of access to social security measures, including workers' compensation, long-term disability benefits, survivors' benefits and old age pensions (UN Women, 2015). Also, various gender-related barriers (e.g. limited mobility, time poverty, care demands, and social norms) may prevent rural women from fully participating in and benefiting from SP schemes.

There are three main reasons behind women's unequal access to, and uptake of, SP.

### i. Structural disadvantage in the rural labour market

As discussed in Part 4, rural women farmers are more likely than men to work in irregular, low-paid (or unpaid) jobs in the informal economy. In addition, because of their care-providing roles, rural women tend to have interrupted work histories (Ulrichs, 2016). Consequently, rural women are less able to contribute to social security benefits (e.g. pensions, maternity coverage and unemployment insurance), particularly in the absence of subsidized schemes (UN Women, 2015; Hunt and Samman, 2016). In many countries, women have lower rates of access to pensions than men (see Figure 8, Annex 2) while globally only a little over one-quarter (28.4 percent) of employed women are effectively protected during maternity through contributory or non-contributory cash benefits (ILO, 2015a). Such a disadvantage is exacerbated in rural areas where there is a severe lack of access to both state and privately run social security schemes that cater to workers in the informal sector (ILO, 2016).

In many countries, women have lower rates of access to pensions than men.

### ii. Weaknesses in design and delivery of social assistance programmes

Women often have more success in accessing non-contributory social assistance programmes, especially where these programmes offer universal benefits to individuals rather than only to the male head of the household (UN Women, 2015). Women are likely to qualify for non-contributory programmes because of their poverty, vulnerability and status as 'caretakers' (IEG, 2014; UN Women, 2015). However, in rural areas, complex and laborious administrative procedures; the limited communication and awareness of programme eligibility and targeting criteria; and the perceived value of benefits in relation to the cost (in time and money) of participation, may make women less likely than men to enrol in and fully participate in SP programmes (Hunt and Samman, 2016). For example, evidence from Mexico's Prospera conditional cash transfer revealed that very poor female beneficiaries living in remote rural communities dropped out of the programme because complying with the programme's conditions interfered with their income-generating opportunities (Molyneux, 2017).

Poor, female-headed households, which rely heavily on their immediate income to survive, are also disproportionately affected when SP programmes deliver irregular and late payments of benefits (Kidd, 2014). In Rwanda, for example, considerable payment arrears in the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) public works, forced single mothers with children to exclude themselves from its activities and take up less-preferred types of employment to cover income gaps (Pavanello *et al.*, 2016).

### iii. Socio-cultural barriers

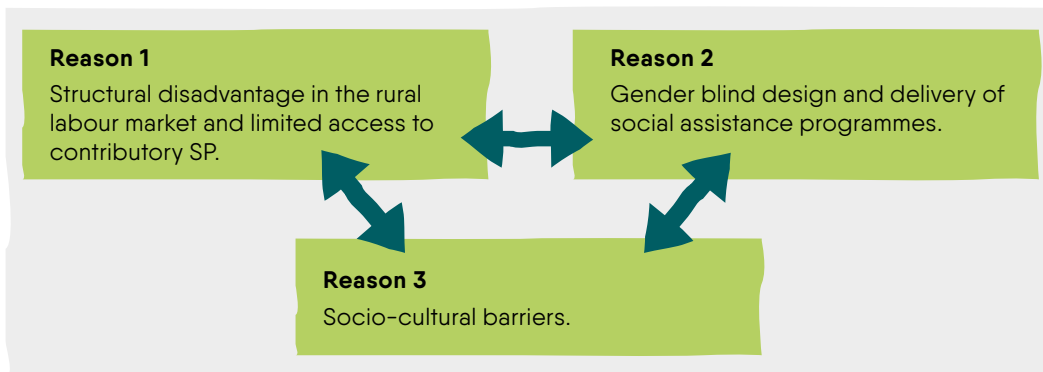
Socio-cultural circumstances, including discriminatory gender norms, job segregation and restricted mobility, can leave rural women out of reach of SP programmes (UN Women, 2015). For example, in Burundi and Rwanda, women's limited physical mobility and their household care responsibilities have created a preference for male household members to enrol in PWPs (de la O Campos, 2015; Pavanello *et al.*, 2016). In Afghanistan, some women were not allowed to work alongside men outside the home (IEG, 2014; Holmes and Jones, 2010).

It is critical to note that even if poor rural women participate in social programmes, they may not necessarily use and benefit equally from social transfers. Women are often the main recipients of cash transfers and PWPs, but may still face constraints to controlling the use of the money/wages due to their weak bargaining power and authority, limited confidence, and lack of financial and functional literacy (Ulrichs, 2016; Kidd, 2014).



**FURTHER ACTION:** Gender-sensitive approaches can ensure that gender inequalities in contributory SP programmes are addressed by subsidizing contributions for low-income earners and workers in the informal sector or recognizing periods of non-work resulting from care-giving responsibilities. Likewise SP programmes need to be designed to address gender constraints in programme uptake and eliminate gender discrimination in accessing benefits. Integrating specific design features (e.g. gender-sensitive targeting, providing culturally sensitive information regarding entitlements, and making mobile crèches available) can help ensure equal access between women and men. The means through which this can be carried out specifically within cash transfer and PWPs is covered in detail in Technical Guide No. 2.

Figure 5: Reasons limiting women's access to SP



### Summary questions



- ▶ Do rural women and men have access to SP programmes in your country? What types of programmes?
- ▶ Are there gender gaps in access to these SP programmes you mention? Please explain.
- ▶ What factors contribute to rural women's exclusion (including self-exclusion) from SP schemes?



## PART 6

# How can SP address the different aspects of poverty and vulnerability that rural women face?



### KEY OBJECTIVES:

To analyse how cash transfers and PWPs can address various dimensions of poverty faced by rural women and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas; and explore how different design features can be used to promote positive gender outcomes.

## 6.1 Overview

In previous sections we have explored the different gender dimensions of rural poverty and vulnerability and their various causes. Drawing on the available research and evidence, we now turn to look at how cash transfers and PWP can address these different dimensions. Where evidence is available, we also discuss the operational features that are deliberately incorporated into their design for this purpose. The discussion is organized across the following broad areas of impact:<sup>16</sup>

- ▶ food and income security, access to health and education, and reduction in work burdens
- ▶ risk management capacity;
- ▶ productive capacity, income generation and employment;
- ▶ women's agency and decision-making power, psychosocial welfare and social capital; and
- ▶ changes in gender norms and relations



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Programmes that do not deliberately incorporate gender-sensitive features into their design can still have an impact on women's welfare and empowerment (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017). SP interventions can address the different aspects of poverty and vulnerability that rural women experience, and promote positive changes in gender norms and roles and relations between women and men (Molyneux and Thomson, 2012; Bastagli *et al.*, 2016). There is also limited evidence that incorporating gender-sensitive elements into the design of interventions improves positive gender outcomes (IEG, 2014; Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017). Nevertheless, further research is required on the linkages between variations in design<sup>17</sup> and implementation features and gender-specific programme outcomes (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016).

## 6.2 Protective outcomes: addressing women's and girl's practical needs

When delivered regularly and predictably, social transfers can address the practical needs of rural women by helping them meet individual and household requirements for food, health care and education. For example, family allowances and child support grants mainly distribute cash transfers to primary care providers (often women) to improve children's well-being and support the cost of child care (Bonilla *et al.*, 2017). Evidence shows that they are particularly beneficial for mothers or care providers (e.g. grandmothers looking after orphaned children) who live as single guardians and receive little or no external support (Davis *et al.*, eds., 2016). They can also be especially important for protecting the welfare of rural girls, who are often in a more marginalized position within rural households, and less prioritized by parents when allocating scarce resources for food and/or education (Harper, Jones and Watson, 2012).

Social transfers can directly enhance rural women and girls' access to health services and education, and improve their nutrition.

<sup>16</sup> This typology is aligned with the different SP functions discussed in Part 2, and the gender-specific drivers of poverty and vulnerabilities outlined in Part 4.

<sup>17</sup> Variations in core design parameters may relate to the target beneficiaries, the timing and frequency of the transfers; their value and conditionality; payment and grievance mechanisms; programme governance; sensitization and messaging; and complementary interventions.



By creating communal assets and infrastructure tailored to the needs of rural women and girls (e.g. building crèches, tarmac roads, wells, water and sanitation facilities, and electricity services), PWP can alleviate their care burdens and the labour constraints associated with household chores and farm work (de la O Campos, 2015). For example, rural women in Yemen have benefited from PWP projects that have built schools, health facilities and water supply schemes. A 2004 World Bank appraisal (cited in IEG, 2014) found that these projects have reduced women's time poverty and improved women's health by reducing the incidence of maternal malnutrition. However, for female participants, direct involvement in public work activities, which can entail hard physical labour, can exacerbate their labour burdens and increase their risk of malnutrition and health problems (IEG, 2014). To avoid harm, some PWPs have adapted the type of jobs that are available to women to match their capabilities. This adaptation can include access to more lightweight work (e.g. social services), as in the case of the VUP in Rwanda. PWPs can also offer direct payments for individuals and households suffering labour shortages to address issues related to life-cycle vulnerabilities, as is the case in the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia (Holmes and Jones, 2013).

Social transfers can directly enhance rural women and girls' access to health services and education, and improve their nutrition. Cash transfers typically adopt a child-centred focus, but many also target pregnant and lactating women to help them avoid reduce malnutrition and improve their health. For example, the Bono Juana Azurduy programme in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Children in Togo, and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps) in the Philippines all combine cash benefits with free access to antenatal and postnatal health care, nutritional supplements and information sessions on breastfeeding and maternal nutrition. This combination has had positive outcomes on women's reproductive health and reduced maternal mortality (de la O Campos, 2015; Molyneux and Thomson, 2012; Holmes and Jones, 2013). These impacts are particularly important for rural women who face considerably higher risks of ill health and maternal mortality than urban women. These higher risks are partly a result of the greater financial barriers women face in accessing health care in rural areas and the more limited coverage and quality of basic health services (WHO, 2018).

Cash transfer programmes can also be designed to promote gender parity in education. For example, the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Scholarship Programme in Cambodia and the Girls School Stipend Programme in Bangladesh exclusively target girls (IEG, 2014). Other programmes offers parents financial incentives to send their children to school. For example, Mexico's Prospera conditional cash transfer, provides higher transfers for girls, and a conditional cash transfer programme in Jamaica provides higher payments for boys to compensate for the higher opportunity costs of their schooling as compared with girls (IEG, 2014). Unconditional cash transfer programmes have had strong and consistent impacts on school enrolment, with most programmes reporting positive impacts for boys and girls (Davis and Handa, 2014). These outcomes are particularly relevant in traditional communities where discriminatory socio-cultural norms and institutions, such as the 'son bias', which systematically restricts girls' rights to education, remain prevalent. The son bias, in conjunction with financial barriers, may prevent poor parents from making it a priority to send their female children to school (Harper, Jones and Watson, 2012).

Cash transfer programmes can also be designed to promote gender parity in education.

### 6.3 Preventive outcomes: strengthening the capacities of rural women to manage risk

Well-timed social transfers can help women avoid harmful coping strategies, such as selling off assets and reducing food intake.

By providing temporary employment and/or access to income during crises, cash transfers and PWPs can enhance the capacities of rural women to manage risk, which can contribute to safeguarding their welfare and productive assets (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016). Well-timed social transfers can help households avoid harmful coping strategies, such as selling off assets and reducing food intake. These transfers benefit both rural women and men. However, they are of particular significance to women, as women are more vulnerable to shocks and stresses and have less capacity to cope with them. The Chapeau de Palha Mulher conditional cash transfer in Brazil, for example, targets female sugar-cane workers in rural areas of the country with cash transfers to help them manage income insecurity between harvests (UN Women, 2015).

To a certain extent, cash transfers can also address gender-specific social vulnerabilities to which girls are particularly vulnerable in times of crises (e.g. child marriage and dowry, hired domestic work, trafficking, and transactional sex), and the gender-specific challenges faced by boys (e.g. involvement in hazardous child labour in agriculture). Although the evidence is still weak, there is some indication that cash transfers, delivered through income production pathways, can reduce the need for child labour for both girls and boys – with larger reductions for boys working in paid agricultural employment (IEG, 2014; Dammert *et al.*, 2017). This greater reduction among boys is partly a result of their more disproportionate representation in paid agricultural work to begin with, compared with girls who are more heavily engaged in unpaid domestic work (IEG, 2014; Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017).

### 6.4 Promotive outcomes: improving women's income generation and employment opportunities

Social transfers can reduce gender gaps in access to productive resources and, at the same time, promote the inclusion of women into the financial sphere and their entry into the rural labour market. This has positive impacts on their income, livelihood security and economic advancement.

#### Promoting income generation and diversification

Enhancing women's ownership of productive assets strengthens their economic decision-making power.

From a gender perspective, transfers can play a key role in improving the allocation of resources and creating economic opportunities. FAO evaluations have found substantive evidence that unconditional cash transfers enable rural women to accumulate productive assets, such as small livestock, farm inputs and tools. In some cases, these transfers can increase women's access to credit, which allows the women to obtain more substantive assets, such as land (Asfaw *et al.*, 2014; Covarrubias, Davis and Winters, 2012; Barca *et al.*, 2015; Natali *et al.*, 2016). Qualitative research conducted by FAO in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia, has found cash transfers allowed rural women to expand their existing small trade businesses and improve their income base (Barca *et al.*, 2015).

Enhancing women's ownership of productive assets strengthens their economic decision-making power. It also improves their food production capacity and their ability to start and/or expand small businesses, and, at

the same time, builds their resilience to future risks. These economic benefits can have positive effects on other aspects of women's social empowerment (e.g. greater participation in household decision-making and improved psychosocial welfare (Bonilla *et al.*, 2017; de la O Campos, 2015).

Increasing the income-generating capacity of recipients is not necessarily a goal of cash transfers. However, specific design features can assist in promoting these productive effects. For example, to improve women's economic participation, programme facilitators may adjust the size of benefits; encourage recipients through messaging and communication platforms to allocate a share of the transfer to asset accumulation or asset-generating activities; and build linkages with other livelihood programmes intended. The 4Ps conditional cash transfer programme in the Philippines helps beneficiaries establish income-generating projects by combining cash transfers with livelihood services and training. This combination enables the beneficiaries to escape from poverty and end their reliance on social assistance (NEDA, 2011).

Transfers can also strengthen rural women's access to financial services, credit and savings. In some programmes, such as Rwanda's VUP and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), cash wages are delivered through banking institutions. Women participants receive support to open bank accounts to access their income, which contributes to their financial inclusion and improves their access to credit (Pavanello *et al.*, 2016).

### Reducing gender inequalities on labour markets

PWPs can support women's participation in temporary employment. This is particularly true when they include features such as job quotas, flexible work conditions and access to child-care services (de la O Campos, 2015). Through training and skills development components, PWPs can also facilitate women's transition into a more stable engagement with the rural labour market once the programme ends. For example, a PWP in Senegal established links to female adult literacy classes to increase women's employability in the fishing industry (Holmes and Jones, 2010). There is also some evidence that cash transfers can support women's entry into the labour market. For example, Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme increased female labour participation in the labour market at a higher rate than male participation: 4.3 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively (Soares and Silva, 2010).

There is also some evidence that cash transfers can support women's entry into the labour market.

However, the promotion of women's and men's employability through social transfers is not automatic. Outcomes vary according to available job opportunities in rural areas and the skill levels of the prospective workers. Analysis of the PSNP in Ethiopia and the VUP PWP in Rwanda found no effect on female employment outside of the programme. This was partly a result of labour market inefficiencies in rural areas and inadequate and irregular delivery of complementary skills training (Holmes and Jones, 2013; Pavanello *et al.*, 2016). PWPs have been criticized for offering women and men access to low-skilled irregular jobs. Sometimes these jobs offer also lower wages for women, which can have important implications for gender inequalities (Chopra, 2014; Holmes and Jones, 2013).

## 6.5 Transformative outcomes: enhancing women's social empowerment and promoting positive changes in gender relations

When SP programmes are designed in a transformative way, and delivered effectively, they can be empowering to rural women. Direct access to benefits, and the extent to which women receive and control transfers, can potentially:



This thinking underlies many cash transfer programmes and has prompted the direct provision of transfers to women, even if women are not the programme's principal beneficiaries (IEG, 2014).

### Enhance women's financial autonomy and decision-making role within the household

Several cash transfer programmes have been found to have positive impacts on women's voice, agency and negotiating power in the home. These programmes include: Mexico's Prospera programme, Brazil's Bolsa Família programme, India's Basic Income Grant pilot, and Zambia's Child Grant Programme (de Braw *et al.*, 2014; de la O Campos, 2015; Bonilla *et al.*, 2017). Transferring cash directly to women can reduce their dependence on male income and give them a measure of financial autonomy over their private savings and economic investments in small businesses (Pavanello *et al.*, 2016; Schjoedt, 2016). Overall, however, the evidence of the ability of cash transfers to lead to significant increases in women's decision-making and agency is still inconclusive (FAO, 2015; Bonilla *et al.*, 2017).

### Improve women's psychosocial welfare and promote positive intrahousehold dynamics

Reduced financial insecurity can provide a platform for improving intrahousehold gender relationships, promoting women's strategic interests, and empowering women beyond the economic realm. In Latin America, some rural female beneficiaries of SP have reported gaining greater respect from men and improved status within the household and their communities (de la O Campos, 2015; Molyneux and Thomson, 2012).

Secure livelihoods can also reduce anxiety and contribute to feelings of hope, dignity, happiness and satisfaction among both women and men, and can reduce marital tensions and the risk of domestic violence.

Secure livelihoods can also reduce anxiety and contribute to feelings of hope, dignity, happiness and satisfaction among both women and men, and can reduce marital tensions and the risk of domestic violence (Barca *et al.*, 2015; Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017). For example, female beneficiaries of India's Basic Income Grant experienced lower stress, and men reduced their alcohol consumption because they felt more economically secure and better able to satisfy their children's basic needs (Schjoedt, 2016). In Mexico, an evaluation of the Prospera programme (Bobonis, Castro and Morales, 2015) found that female beneficiaries were 5 to 7 percent less likely to become victims of physical abuse than non-beneficiary women. It should be noted however, that positive results of social transfers on intrahousehold dynamics are not universal. An ODI systematic review of cash transfers found that

It should be noted however, that positive results of social transfers on intrahousehold dynamics are not universal. An ODI systematic review of cash transfers found that

in some instances emotional abuse of women increased when they received larger cash transfer amounts, as husbands resented their wives receiving cash (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017). Further research is needed on this issue.

### Assist in transforming gender roles

Social transfers can be designed in a way to directly address discriminatory gender norms and practices, challenge the traditional economic roles assigned to women and men, and promote more equitable distribution of work responsibilities.

Programmes can be explicitly designed to challenge the gender division of labour by providing women with employment opportunities in non-traditional fields of work. In Brazil, the *Chapeu de Palha Mulher* conditional cash transfer supports the economic empowerment of rural women by training them to take up non-traditional jobs in the construction industry in rural areas (Sholkamy, 2011). Some public works schemes address gender-based wage discrimination directly. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA programme) in India promotes a commitment to equal pay between men and women performing similar tasks. In some states, this feature has contributed to raising work standards in other areas of employment, particularly agriculture, that are outside the scope of the programme (Chopra, 2014; IEG, 2014).

Cash transfer programmes such as *Juntos* in Peru and *Bolsa Família* in Brazil are also helping to balance gender roles and the allocation of labour associated with care and domestic work in the household. Through group discussions and messaging and communication campaigns, these programmes engage with men to change their attitudes about taking on care-giving tasks and/or sharing responsibilities for meeting programme conditions. These programme activities also address issues of domestic violence. An evaluation of the *Juntos* Programme, which is delivered predominantly in rural provinces, reveals an increase in the participation of men in housework and child care as a result of sensitization training (Molyneux and Thomson, 2012).

Some SP schemes strengthen women's awareness of their social and economic rights by organizing awareness-raising and sensitization sessions, and providing complementary access to legal support and social services. In Viet Nam, for example, the National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction provides legal aid to poor rural women to increase their awareness of their legal rights, and promotes the implementation of related laws, such as the Land Law, that gives women access to land titles (Jones and Tran, 2010).

### Improve women's access to social networks and participation in public life

Social transfers can improve rural women's access to social networks and promote their participation in public life and rural organizations, which can have positive impacts on their economic advancement. In Ghana and Somalia, participation in cash transfer schemes has helped very poor and marginalized women, particularly widowed and divorced women, to feel more included in social functions, and re-engage with contribution-based savings and credit groups (Barca *et al.*, 2015).

Rural women generally view these platforms as providing opportunities to socialize and network; obtain access to information and expand their knowledge; boost their mobility; and gain self-esteem and confidence in expressing themselves in public gatherings. This was documented in the *Juntos* Programme in Peru (Molyneux and Thomson, 2012) and cash transfer programmes in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi

Programmes can be explicitly designed to challenge the gender division of labour by providing women with employment opportunities in non-traditional fields of work.

(Barca *et al.*, 2015). Group meetings and training sessions delivered as part of SP programming can also provide rural women with a greater sense of solidarity. They can encourage women to engage in collective action and raise their concerns in community and local government meetings. Collective action and capacity building can enable rural women to develop the leadership and advocacy skills required to challenge harmful traditional structures and gender norms that affect their status and welfare. This effect was documented in the Chars Livelihoods Programme in Bangladesh (Scott, 2012).

## 6.6 Limits to transformative and empowering outcomes

While SP has potential to address various gender dimensions of poverty and vulnerability, its impacts are not automatically empowering or transformative.

Limited evidence indicates that transfers targeting women are not always a better approach.

First, the scale of transformative impacts is highly context-specific. The ability to make changes in women's social status, economic advancement and decision-making depend on the degree to which discriminatory gender norms are entrenched in local customs and institutions (Bonilla *et al.*, 2017). For example, the effects of SP may be more limited for rural women living in very patriarchal societies where women's bargaining power and authority may be more difficult to assert (de la O Campos, 2015; Bonilla *et al.*, 2017). Evaluations of the Child Grant Programme (CGP) in Zambia, Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme in Ghana and VUP in Rwanda found that, despite women being the principal recipients of transfers, their access to cash did not increase their overall decision-making capacity. Very few of them influenced strategic decisions about reproduction, mobility, significant farm investments and the purchase of large assets (Pavanello *et al.*, 2016; Barca *et al.*, 2015; Bonilla *et al.*, 2017).

Changing deeply entrenched discriminatory socio-cultural norms and societal behaviour towards women is a long-term and time-consuming process. Without adequate political and institutional support, capacity building, and the active engagement of men and boys, programme staff may approach gender inequalities and discrimination superficially, and/or fail to deliver on gender-sensitive design commitments (Holmes and Jones, 2013).

Second, impacts are influenced by the gender-sensitivity of programme objectives, design and implementation. For example, transformative gender outcomes will depend on: whether there is an explicit aim to reduce gender inequalities and empower women; the level of gender sensitivity within programme design and implementation; whether the benefit levels are regular and adequate enough to increase women's involvement in household decision-making; and whether women are targeted by SP in their roles as caregivers or productive actors among other factors (de la O Campos, 2015; UN Women, 2015).

Limited evidence indicates that transfers targeting women are not always a better approach. Many programme objectives and goals intended to enhance women's empowerment may lead to unintended effects if they do not pay attention to intrahousehold gender dynamics in their design (IEG, 2014). For example, giving cash to women directly without proper sensitization can trigger emotional abuse or controlling behaviour by husbands towards female recipients. In this situation, men may be disempowered and feel threatened by changes in gender roles or alienated from the programme and care responsibilities (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2017).

Finally, long-term commitment and systematic action to mainstream gender in SP is crucial. Multiple, integrated efforts are required to contribute to the transformation of the gender structures and norms that underpin women’s vulnerability to poverty and deprivation. To fundamentally shift rural women’s strategic position in the household and/or advance their economic opportunities, core SP programmes need to be linked to gender-sensitive complementary programmes and services that strengthen women’s economic empowerment, build agency and voice, and bridge the inequality gap with their male counterparts.

Table 2 provides a checklist of various programming features that can be adopted to enhance positive gender impacts.

Table 2: Checklist of gender-specific impacts and programming features that can enhance positive outcomes

Function	Gender impacts	Features that can enhance positive outcomes <sup>19</sup>
<b>Protective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguards and improves income, and assists rural women in meeting their practical household needs and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Supports women’s unpaid care responsibilities and maintains child welfare.</li> <li>• Reduces gender gaps in access to food, education and health care.</li> <li>• Protects all vulnerable people from harmful gender/social practices that can be exacerbated by income poverty (e.g. child marriage, trafficking, child labour, gender violence).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring regular and predictable transfers and efficient access to basic information regarding programme benefits and procedures.</li> <li>• Providing benefits of adequate size (size adjustments can be made to address specific gender gaps and issues).</li> <li>• Including women in the participatory selection of PWP projects and community assets.</li> <li>• Carefully designing conditionalities that are adequately linked to the reliable provision of good-quality social services, or making conditionalities softer.</li> <li>• Setting up a monitoring system to identify any adverse effects of programmes on women’s and girls’ work burdens, time poverty, production and intrahousehold and community dynamics; and including effective mechanisms to mitigate these adverse effects.</li> <li>• Culturally sensitive communication, programme messaging, and sensitization events delivered through visits to local committees and households.</li> </ul>
<b>Preventive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports women in coping with risks associated with pregnancy, childbearing, and reproductive health.</li> <li>• Protects women’s assets and prevents negative coping strategies.</li> <li>• Promotes adoption of new farm technologies to prevent risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring timely and predictable transfers that can be expanded easily during times of crisis.</li> <li>• Providing links to complementary insurance schemes (e.g. maternity benefits, micro-insurance and agricultural insurance) that are tailored to the needs of women working in rural and informal settings.</li> <li>• Providing links to extension and rural advisory services (e.g. climate-smart technologies, water conservation techniques and drought-resistant seeds) and microcredit tailored to rural women’s farming needs.</li> </ul>

Function	Gender impacts	Features that can enhance positive outcomes <sup>19</sup>
<b>Promotive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces gender gaps in access to productive resources and assets.</li> <li>• Promotes rural women's economic empowerment by improving access to infrastructure and technologies that can enable producers to raise their productivity and/or diversify their livelihood base.</li> <li>• Promotes women's participation in rural labour markets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the adequate size, regularity and duration of benefits.</li> <li>• Carrying out messaging to encourage the partial use of cash transfers/wages for women's productive activities and accumulation of assets.</li> <li>• Integrating productive components and/or creating linkages to complementary services and measures that provide livelihood, foster financial inclusion and improve access to markets, and are tailored to rural women's needs).</li> <li>• Providing access to labour-saving technologies and care support to reduce work burdens and improve productivity and/or programme participation (e.g. child-care services and flexible PWP work conditions).</li> <li>• Providing complementary training/services to develop skills related to production and business management (e.g. financial literacy and vocational skills) and increase access to employment.</li> </ul>
<b>Transformative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes women's social empowerment and strategic gender needs.</li> <li>• Improves women's status within households and communities.</li> <li>• Improves women's voice, bargaining power and decision-making authority.</li> <li>• Improves women's access to and participation in social networks; supports legal empowerment and creates greater awareness of women's rights.</li> <li>• Supports more egalitarian relationships between women and men and more positive gender norms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysing specific local contexts to determine how gender relations can change and how community members perceive empowerment, gender norms and roles.</li> <li>• Framing access to benefits as an economic and social right, and as an entitlement rather than a 'handout'.</li> <li>• Linking transfers to social services; raising awareness about rights and social relations, access to justice, and anti-discriminatory legislation related to employment, inheritance and land ownership.</li> <li>• Implementing sensitization activities to raise awareness and build skills related to household budgeting and money management, and increase the recognition of gender equality in the household and community more broadly.</li> <li>• Monitoring the impacts of programmes on intrahousehold dynamics, including women's and men's status and psychosocial well-being.</li> <li>• Building the capacities of the staff who are responsible for designing and delivering SP programmes.</li> </ul>

Source: de la O Campos, 2015; Holmes and Jones, 2010; Newton, 2016; Winder and Yablonski, 2012; IEG, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Many of these features cut across the four SP objectives and gender outcomes.



## Summary questions



- ▶ **What is the potential of cash transfer programmes to address the gendered dimensions of poverty and vulnerabilities? What about PWP's?**
- ▶ **Give three examples of evidence for the positive gender-specific effects of cash transfers and PWP's. What design features were used in these programmes to achieve these outcomes?**
- ▶ **Which factors can undermine the positive outcomes on gender equality and rural women's empowerment?**



### **Exercise 4: Assessing how social protection programmes address gender dimensions of rural poverty and vulnerability**

(SEE ANNEX 1:  
LEARNING TOOLS)





## PART 7

# What is a gender-sensitive approach to social protection in rural context? An overview of key features



### KEY OBJECTIVE:

To understand the basic elements of integrating gender into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SP interventions in rural areas.

## 7.1 What can gender-sensitive SP programmes aim to achieve?

This final section presents a brief preview of the: (i) the main objectives of gender-sensitive programming; and (ii) the key features of the gender-sensitive approach to SP throughout the programme cycle.

The ultimate goal of a gender-sensitive approach in SP programme is to make these programmes more attentive to women's and men's specific needs for support in the context of their rural livelihoods; and increase gender equality in programme access and outcomes. SP programmes need to address gender-based vulnerabilities and risks that prevent rural women and men from accessing and benefiting from economic opportunities and claiming their rights and entitlements; and help these men and women to overcome individual and household poverty and food insecurity.

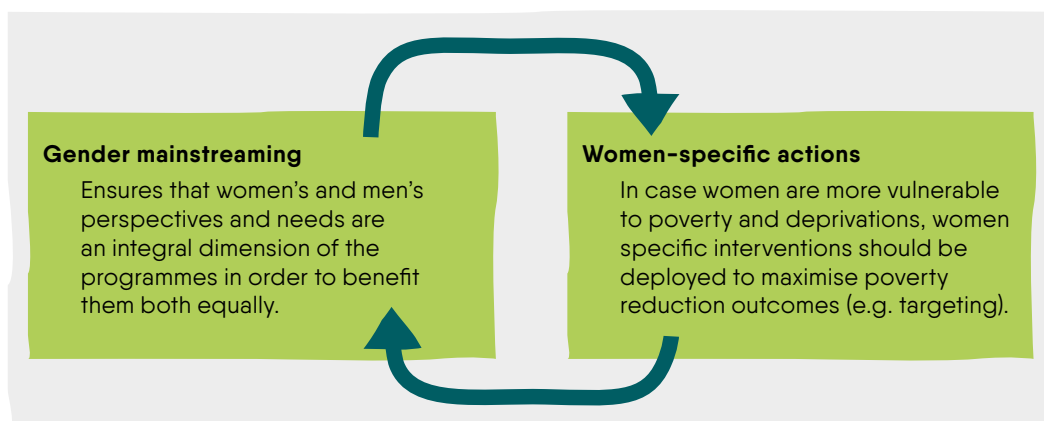
Gender-sensitive programming can achieve several specific objectives:

- ▶ create awareness of the ways in which gender norms and gender inequality and exclusion both contribute to and perpetuate rural poverty;
- ▶ ensure equal access to SP programmes for women and men;
- ▶ address gender inequalities in resources and assets, employment and financial services;
- ▶ strengthen women's voice, bargaining power and decision-making roles, and reduce their work burdens; and
- ▶ avoid reinforcing gender inequalities and exacerbating gender-specific risks

## 7.2 How to implement a gender-sensitive approach to SP?

An important first step in making SP more gender sensitive is to explicitly work towards gender equality. To benefit both women and men equitably, the principle of gender equality needs to be mainstreamed consistently in programme objectives and along all the stages of the programme cycle: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In situations where rural women are more vulnerable to poverty and deprivation, women-specific interventions should be undertaken to maximize gender equality and poverty reduction outcomes. For example, programmes may explicitly aim to target and empower rural women, where this is seen as 'essential' for achieving the main poverty reduction objectives.

Figure 6: Twin-track strategy of gender-sensitive approach to SP



In concrete terms, the following key actions can help ensure a gender-sensitive approach throughout the programme cycle.

At the planning stage:

- ▶ **Undertake a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis.** The critical step in undertaking a gender-sensitive approach to SP is to assess the risks and vulnerabilities that rural women and men face throughout their lives, and determine how discriminatory gender norms and inequality contribute to these risks and vulnerabilities. A gender analysis will provide a better understanding of the different roles women and men play; the resources they have; the way they share work burdens (or not); and their practical and strategic needs and priorities in regards to livelihoods security. The results of the analysis can help identify key issues and define gender-sensitive programme objectives, priorities and activities.



**FURTHER READING:** Refer to Technical Guide 2, Part 1 for specific guidance on how to plan and undertake a gender-sensitive poverty and vulnerability analysis..

At the design stage:

- ▶ **Adopt gender-sensitive design features.** Various design features (e.g. adjusted benefit size, flexible work requirements, training and livelihoods support) can be adopted to address women and men's specific vulnerabilities and promote their participation in the programmes. In certain situations, special targeting provisions may be included (e.g. job quotas, and/or individual entitlements) to increase women's participation and benefits from the programme. Effective communication and outreach activities used to reach out to and target particularly vulnerable and excluded rural populations (e.g. 'forest populations', unpaid family workers, landless peasant workers, people with disabilities, the chronically ill, refugees and widows) are also essential dimensions of the inclusive targeting process.
- ▶ **Pay attention to intrahousehold dynamics.** To ensure equitable distribution of transfers within households, programmes must pay attention to aspects of intrahousehold gender dynamics, including: gender roles; the balance of power between women and men; and the way they affect individuals' access to and control over SP benefits. Appropriate strategies and activities are needed to promote positive intrahousehold dynamics and gender-equitable outcomes for all members participating in the programmes.
- ▶ **Engage women and men in programme planning and delivery.** It is essential to engage with female beneficiaries when determining programme priorities and design provisions. Particular focus should be placed on the participation of women experiencing the greatest marginalization. Men and boys should also be actively engaged in programming. This can be done through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities that promote positive changes in gender norms and roles, and increase their understanding of the importance of (and their commitment to) programme objectives related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

At the **design stage:**  
Adopt gender-sensitive design features, pay attention to intrahousehold dynamics, engage women and men in programme planning and delivery, link cash or wages with complementary support.

- ▶ **Link cash or wages with complementary support.** Complementary interventions may include social and care-based services; productive and livelihood interventions; access to markets and rural organizations (e.g. women cooperative and producer networks). Finally, integrated SP systems need to be embedded in broader rural development and social equity frameworks. Anti-discrimination legislation related to inheritance and property laws, and/or minimum wage, and access to legal support are essential transformative measures that can reduce the exposure of both women and men to social risks and discrimination.

At the implementation and monitoring and evaluation stage:

- ▶ **Strengthen staff capacity and set up gender-friendly institutional arrangements.** This includes enhancing staff capacity for gender awareness, gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. It also involves providing adequate incentives, budget allocations and institutional support, including staff operational guidelines to ensure that gender-sensitive design provisions are implemented in practice. Establishing institutional gender mechanisms (e.g. gender focal points within SP ministries and programmes executed by local governments) is also important to ensure advocacy, commitment to continuity, and the monitoring of gender work.
- ▶ **Build political commitments for gender-sensitive SP interventions through advocacy for gender equality at the national and local levels.** Social accountability mechanisms (e.g. community scorecards, social audits and grievance platforms) are also necessary to strengthen the inclusive governance, transparency and accountability of the programmes (Holmes and Jones, 2010). These mechanisms must consider the potential constraints (e.g. restricted mobility, time poverty, limited voice and basic levels of literacy and confidence needed to engage with programme officials and participate in decision-making processes) that women encounter when engaging in governance activities.
- ▶ **Establish innovative monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to track progress, assess a range of gender impacts, and ensure opportunities for incorporating the results of the assessment into the redesign of programmes and their implementation.** Gender-sensitive indicators and the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data can be used to monitor the access rural women and men have to SP programmes and their participation in them. Particular efforts are needed to develop innovative methodologies and indicators that can assess: gender-related changes linked to women's empowerment, productive capacity and access to work; intrahousehold roles and dynamics (e.g. decision-making and agency, and work burdens); and whether the programmes (including programmes in which the beneficiaries participate in multiple interventions) negatively affect rural women's and men's welfare or exacerbate gender inequalities and risks.



**FURTHER READING:** In [Technical Guide 2](#), readers can find detailed guidance on how gender issues can be integrated into specific design features of cash transfers and PWP. [Technical Guide 3](#) discusses in detail the issues related to gender-sensitive implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 7: Key dimensions of integrating gender into SP programming


**PART 7:** What is a gender-sensitive approach to social protection in rural context? An overview of key features

Planning stage	Design stage	Implementation stage	Monitoring and evaluation stage
<p data-bbox="164 367 355 501"><b>Conduct age-, and gender-specific poverty and vulnerability analysis</b></p> <ul data-bbox="164 533 355 1249" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key gender issues.</li> <li>• Assess how gender inequalities affect women's vulnerability to poverty and livelihood risks.</li> <li>• Identify other causes, beyond gender, which contribute to women's exposure to, and experience of poverty.</li> <li>• Pay attention to men's and boys' poverty and insecurity.</li> <li>• Ensure findings inform programme priorities and features</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="400 367 639 479"><b>Integrate gender into core design features of social protection programmes</b></p> <ul data-bbox="400 510 671 1854" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate gender-sensitive programme objectives.</li> <li>• Adapt targeting eligibility criteria and methods to ensure equal inclusion of women and men in programmes (and promote uptake).</li> <li>• If relevant, include appropriate provisions to reach particularly vulnerable and excluded groups of women/men.</li> <li>• Provide clear information on programme benefits and process.</li> <li>• Adjust benefit size and frequency to programme goals.</li> <li>• Design culturally sensitive programme messaging, and sensitization events to promote gender equality.</li> <li>• Include women in the participatory selection of PWP projects.</li> <li>• Integrate transfers with complementary measures aligned to programme gender equality goals.</li> <li>• Carefully design programme conditionalities.</li> <li>• Include women and men in programme formulation.</li> <li>• Review programme components for their gender-sensitivity and identify potential risk mitigation strategies.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="703 367 879 479"><b>Set up gender-sensitive implementation mechanisms</b></p> <ul data-bbox="703 510 911 1809" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy.</li> <li>• Ensure regular and predictable transfers.</li> <li>• Design payment transfers in a gender-sensitive way, and ensure they promote women's financial inclusion.</li> <li>• Carry out culturally sensitive sensitization activities.</li> <li>• Allocate specific and sufficient resources (financial, human, time) to enable the achievement of programme objectives.</li> <li>• Build political commitments for gender-sensitive interventions and promote community support.</li> <li>• Set up participatory social accountability mechanisms.</li> <li>• Ensure reliable provision of quality complementary services and measures.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="943 367 1150 555"><b>Set up monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to track progress and assess gender-related effects</b></p> <ul data-bbox="943 586 1166 1639" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop gender-sensitive M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>• Identify age- and gender-disaggregated indicators and data to be collected.</li> <li>• Allocate sufficient resources and build capacity to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>• Build the evidence base on links between gender design provisions and programme outcomes.</li> <li>• Set up a feedback loop mechanisms to ensure results are taken up into the programme re-design.</li> <li>• Use evidence and research to develop communication and advocacy strategies.</li> </ul>

## Summary questions



- ▶ Reflecting on your work situation, what can SP programmes achieve in terms of gender equality and rural women's empowerment outcomes? Is there the capacity and willingness to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to programming? How can staff capacity and commitments be enhanced?
- ▶ What are some of the elements of gender-sensitive SP design and implementation?
- ▶ What are some of the elements of gender-sensitive programme monitoring and evaluation?



### Exercise 5: Mapping the opportunities and challenges for adopting gender-sensitive approach to social protection

(SEE ANNEX 1:  
LEARNING TOOLS)



# ANNEX 1

## Learning tools

### Exercise 1: Reflecting on gender norms and roles relevant to your context

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** To discuss differences between concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and reflect on local and contextual understanding of gender norms, gender roles and relations, and progress in gender equality and women’s empowerment.

#### Instructions

Undertake a 5-minute reflection and/or discussion in pairs:

When did you first realize you were different from the opposite sex:

- ▶ How old were you?
- ▶ Who made you aware of it?
- ▶ What was the issue about?
- ▶ How did you feel about it?
- ▶ What did you do?

### Exercise 2: Mapping SP interventions in your country (breakout groups and plenary)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** To introduce participants’ work on SP to the broader group. To understand if/how the existing SP programmes tackle gender issues.

#### Timing indication

10 minutes (group breakout discussions)

20 minutes (presentation of findings; five-minute presentations)

10 minutes (plenary discussions)

#### Notes to the facilitator

- ▶ Ask participants to reflect on the SP programme they manage/work on and prepare a five-minute presentation on the following questions:
  - What types of national SP programmes exist in your country?
  - What are the main programme characteristics?
  - Is gender integrated in programme design in an explicit or implicit way?
- ▶ Ask participants to use Figure 2 to guide their discussion.



### Exercise 3: Assessing gender-specific effects of shocks and crises (breakout groups and plenary)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Understand the gender-differentiated impacts of different shocks and stresses on people's livelihoods, work burdens and social empowerment.

#### Timing indication

30 minutes (group breakout discussions)

20–30 minutes (presentation of findings)

#### Instructions

- ▶ **Step 1:** Divide participants into small groups of maximum 5 people.
- ▶ **Step 2:** Ask participants to select a type of risk suggested in the table below. Encourage them to (a) reflect on the differences and similarities in the way this risk affects rural women and men, and (b) then discuss how women and men may address this risk, and whether there are similarities and/or differences in their coping strategies. Record your key points in the table below.
- ▶ **Step 3:** Discuss what type of research methods and tools you would use to assess this issue and collect data to inform your programme priorities and activities.
- ▶ **Step 4:** Present the findings in the plenary.

Source of risk	How does this risk affect women?	How does this risk affect men?	How do women and men cope with this risk?
Crop failure			
Pest infection			
Drought			
Flood			
Climate change			
Food price hikes			
Seasonal unemployment			
Health shock			
Lean/hungry season			
Land/water grab			
Deforestation			
Tsunami			
Dowry expenses			
Conflict			
Marriage			
Pregnancy			
Time poverty			
Withdrawal of social protection support			

## Exercise 4: Assessing how SP programmes address gender dimensions of poverty and vulnerability to risks (breakout groups and plenary)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Understand what types of gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities the SP programmes address and how.

### Timing indication

30 minutes (group breakout discussions)  
20 minutes (presentation of findings)  
20 minutes (plenary discussions)

### Notes to the facilitator

Based on a discussion of gender-differentiated risks mapped out in Exercise 2, encourage participants to discuss what types of risks and vulnerabilities the SP programmes address, and what programme features (if any) they adopt deliberately to achieve these objectives. The participants should also reflect on the gaps and limitations in programme outcomes, and propose ways to address them.

## Exercise 5: Mapping the opportunities and challenges for adopting gender-sensitive approach to SP

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Assess the scope for, and challenges to, adopting gender more meaningfully in daily work.

### Timing indication

30 minutes (group breakout discussions)  
20 minutes (presentation of findings)  
20 minutes (plenary discussions)

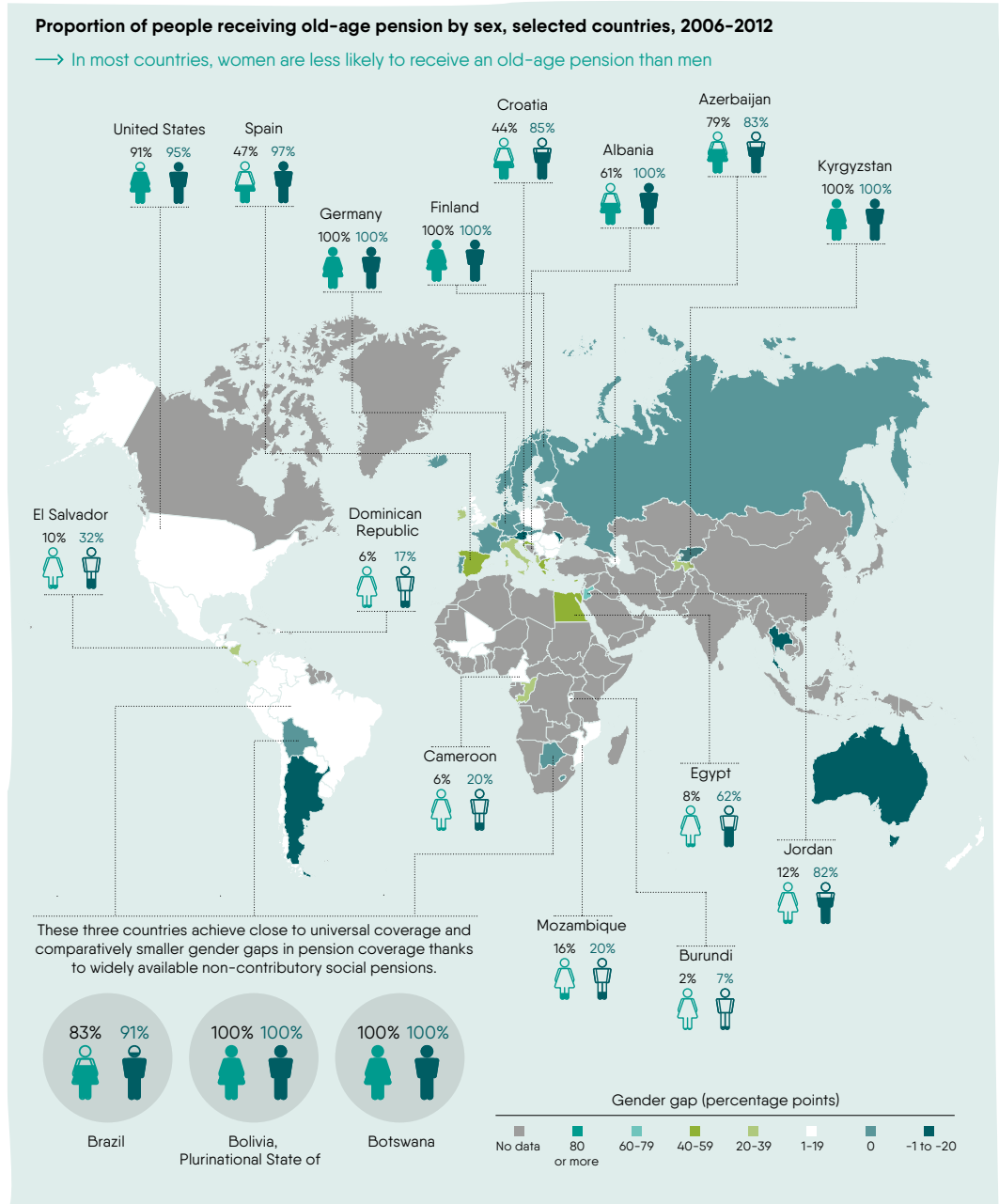
### Notes to the facilitator

Encourage participants to use a gender continuum tool (Table 1) and a checklist of gender-sensitive activities in SP programming (Table 2) to reflect on the scope for, and challenges to, adopting gender more meaningfully in their daily work, and adapting this to the local context. If they are already working on gender-sensitive programming, they can provide examples of how gender is integrated (or not) in various stages of the programming cycle, the strengths and shortcomings associated with this approach, and how these shortcomings can be overcome.

# ANNEX 2

## Programme coverage data

Figure 8: Gender gaps in access to old-age pensions



Adapted from ILO, 2014 cited in UN Women, 2015.

## ANNEX 3

# Key resources

### FAO resources on social protection and gender

**From Protection to Production (PtoP)** project research publications on social protection: [www.fao.org/economic/ptop/publications/reports/en/](http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop/publications/reports/en/)

#### FAO Gender publications

[www.fao.org/gender/resources/publications/en/](http://www.fao.org/gender/resources/publications/en/)

See in particular:

**de la O Campos, A.P.** 2015. *Empowering rural women through social protection. Rural transformations*. Technical Papers Series No. 2. Rome, FAO. [www.fao.org/3/a-i4696e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4696e.pdf))

**FAO.** 2013. *Gender Focal Points: Introductory Training Module*, Rome.

**FAO.** 2017. *Social Protection Framework: Promoting Rural Development for All*. Rome. [www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/87c92abf-466d-4b01-b8ec-57ca7317ed57/](http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/87c92abf-466d-4b01-b8ec-57ca7317ed57/))

### The Transfer Project publications on cash transfer impact evaluations

[https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/?page\\_id=310](https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/?page_id=310)

See in particular:

**Davis, B., Handa, S., Hypher, N., Winder-Rossi, N., Winters, P. & Yablonski, J., eds.** 2016. *From Evidence to Action: The Story of Cash Transfers and Impact Evaluation in sub-Saharan Africa*. Oxford, UK, FAO, UNICEF and Oxford University Press.

[www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/0b24b92e-5254-4d06-a317-84ccd6babe23/](http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/0b24b92e-5254-4d06-a317-84ccd6babe23/)).

### International Labour Organization (ILO) resources on social protection

[www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/lang--en/index.htm)

See in particular:

**ILO.** 2015. *World Social Protection Report 2014/15. Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Geneva, Switzerland.

[www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2014/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2014/lang--en/index.htm))

**World Bank resources on social protection and gender**

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/discover?query=social%20protection>

See in particular:

**IEG (Independent Evaluation Group).** 2014. *Social safety nets and gender. Learning from impact evaluations and World Bank projects.* Washington, DC, World Bank.

<https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/evaluations/social-safety-nets-and-gender-learning-impact-evaluations-and-world-bank-projects>)

**World Bank.** 2012. *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development.* Washington, DC.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391>)

**World Bank.** 2015. *The state of social safety nets 2015.* Washington, DC.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22101>)

**Institute of Development Studies (IDS) resources on social protection and gender**

[www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/centre-for-social-protection](http://www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/centre-for-social-protection)

**ODI resources on social protection and gender**

[https://www.odi.org/search/site?f\[0\]=im\\_field\\_programme%3A38&f\[1\]=bundle%3Aresource&solrsort=ds\\_sort\\_date%20desc](https://www.odi.org/search/site?f[0]=im_field_programme%3A38&f[1]=bundle%3Aresource&solrsort=ds_sort_date%20desc)

**Social Protection and Human Rights platform**

<http://socialprotection-humanrights.or>

## ANNEX 4

# List of key informants

### External experts

**Deeptha Chopra**

Research Fellow, IDS

**Valeria Esquivel**

Senior Research Fellow, UNRISD (at time of interview, Valeria was based at UNRISD)

**Rebecca Holmes**

Research Fellow, ODI

**Nicola Jones**

Research Fellow, ODI

**Anna McCord**

Independent Consultant

**Amber Peterman**

Impact Evaluation Researcher, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

**Pamela Pozarny**

Senior Research Fellow, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)/FAO (at time of interview, Pamela was based at the GSDRC)

**Rachel Sabates-Wheeler**

Research Fellow, IDS

### FAO Focal Points

**Mohamed Ag Bendeck**

SP Focal Point, FAO Regional Office for Africa

**Claudia Brito**

Gender Focal Point, FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

**AlHassan Cisse**

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**Ishida Tomomi**

SP Focal Point, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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**This three-part Toolkit focuses on the role of social protection in reducing rural gender inequalities, rural poverty and hunger.**

The Toolkit is composed of three technical guides. The first technical guide is an introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty. The second, provides practical guidance on a gender-sensitive design of cash transfer and public works programmes. The third and last guide is dedicated to integrating gender into implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of cash transfer and public works programmes.

**The Toolkit on gender-sensitive social protection programmes to combat rural poverty and hunger** is designed to support social protection and gender policy-makers and practitioners in their efforts to systematically apply a gender lens to social protection programmes in ways that are in line with global agreements and FAO commitments in order to expand social protection systems to rural women and rural populations more broadly.

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