

PART II

Consequences of gender inequalities and policy options for gender equitable rural employment

Workshop contributions

Soline de Villard

with Jennie Dey de Pryck and David Suttie

Introduction

Rural communities, where some 70 percent of the world's rural poor are concentrated, generally rely on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock for their livelihoods. Within those communities, the poorest of the poor are often women and young girls (according to UNDP data, six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women) who lack regular and decent employment and income, and who may face hunger and/or malnutrition, poor access to health, education and productive assets, time poverty caused by disproportionate paid and unpaid work burdens and child labour.

Despite the low level of recognition given to their work, the socio-economic contribution of rural women to the welfare of their households and communities is immense. However, they also face many gender-specific constraints that need to be better understood and addressed by policy-makers in the fight against poverty.

These issues were discussed at the FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on “Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agriculture and rural employment: Differential pathways out of poverty”. Using examples from papers presented at the workshop,¹⁶ this chapter outlines issues addressed at the workshop, outlining and summarizing the crucial role gender dimensions play in forming appropriate policies to promote gender-equitable rural employment and combat rural poverty.

This chapter is composed of five sections:

- Section one explains the consequences of gender inequality and why it is such a key issue.
- Section two outlines the extent of this inequality.
- Section three analyses the reasons for existing gender inequalities.
- Section four introduces relevant current global issues in rural employment and gender.
- Section five concludes with some possible policy responses presented and discussed at the workshop.

1. Why does gender inequality in rural employment matter?

Aside from the fact that failure to provide women with equal opportunities is a violation of their human rights, there are a variety of reasons as to why addressing the plight of rural women and promoting policies which take gender dimensions into account makes good economic sense.

First, the fight against extreme poverty, as emphasized in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), necessitates specific attention being given to issues of gender equity, since women are disproportionately represented among the poor. This phenomenon is confirmed in cross-sectoral analyses of data from Cameroon, Laos, Madagascar, Mauritania and Tanzania by Gurkan and Sanogo (2009), which show that, in these countries, female headed households (FHHs) have a greater probability of being poor than male headed households (MHHs). Further evidence is provided for Brazil (Figueiredo and Branchi, 2009), where analysis revealed that being female has a positive and significant effect on the probability of being poor. This was also confirmed by (Tolstokorova, 2009) in the case of Ukraine, where women seem to be one of the groups most vulnerable to poverty. Given

¹⁶ The papers presented at the workshop can be found at <http://www.fao-ilo.org>.

women's disproportionate representation among the poor, policy frameworks designed to alleviate suffering cannot be devised without tackling the issue of gender inequality in rural employment and the related specific challenges faced by rural women.

Second, when gender equitable social and economic policies and institutions are in place, the potential for women to contribute to the overall development and well-being of their communities is enormous. It is well established that educating and providing women with opportunities to take part in skilled paid employment provides benefits to their families and communities in the form of lower fertility rates, decreased child mortality, increased child health and nutrition and improved levels of children's education. In the Philippines, this was highlighted by Salazar and Quisumbing (2009) who showed that higher participation by women in off-farm paid employment led to an improvement in the nutritional status of children. The decrease in the time mothers spent with their children was more than offset by the benefits realized through the greater levels of income controlled by women and generally allocated to improving their children's development. The transmission of greater bargaining power to women through more gender-equitable inheritance customs was also seen to be a factor which could contribute to the health and development of children.

Third, women face a variety of economic and social disadvantages which restrict their ability to acquire land and productive inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers, and to access markets. This limits their potential contribution to the overall national economy. This is illustrated by Vigneri and Holmes (2009), who found that despite these restrictions, women cocoa farmers in Ghana were able to achieve similar yields to men. Thus, if they enjoyed the same level of inputs as men, they might produce even higher yields than men, leading to potential benefits for themselves and for Ghana's rural economy. The as yet untapped nature of this potential is an opportunity cost and demonstrates the importance of gender equity measures not only for women's welfare, but also for developing rural economies at large.

Fourth, recent trends in the feminization of agriculture mean that women are being increasingly marginalized in lower status, unskilled agricultural work. These trends have been particularly pronounced in Asia and Africa and are exemplified by the cases of China (Song *et al.*, 2009), Vietnam (Thin, 2009) and Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (Paris *et al.*, 2009). Increasing migrations and the growth of non-agricultural job opportunities are mainly benefiting men with better paid and higher status jobs, while the women left behind in rural areas are often taking over men's agricultural work, though sometimes under long-distance supervision from their husbands. In some cases the remittances enable women to hire labour and/or place them in a higher-status managerial position, but in many other cases, the extra agricultural work (in addition to their other productive and domestic and caring work) increases women's burdens without necessarily improving their status, empowerment or control of family income. This can negatively affect women's and children's health and welfare.

Fifth, women seem to be trapped in the most vulnerable and unstable segments of the rural labour market, particularly in the agricultural sector. Jutting and Morrisson (2009) demonstrate the feminization of "bad" jobs (defined as jobs in which the remuneration does not provide for a basic minimum standard of living and protection against risk) in 28 developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. In all but one of these countries, women were overrepresented in the "bad" or vulnerable forms of employment, such as family workers, while the stable jobs which brought with them social protection

TABLE II-1
Female and male employment status by country

Country	Year	Region	Ratio of Females to Males by Employment Status			
			Employers	Own Account Workers	Employees	Family Workers
Thailand	2007	Asia	0.48	0.50	0.96	2.39
Indonesia	2007	Asia	0.27	0.37	0.84	4.08
Philippines	2007	Asia	0.36	0.53	0.67	3.25
Malaysia	2007	Asia	0.74	0.62	0.29	4.67
Pakistan	2007	Asia	-	0.20	1.11	2.14
Bangladesh	2005	Asia	0.50	0.25	0.63	5.79
Peru	2007	LAC	0.19	1.22	1.04	2.03
Ecuador	2006	LAC	0.79	1.41	-	0.92
Chile	2007	LAC	0.87	0.69	1.14	1.97
Panama	2007	LAC	0.70	0.58	0.41	6.04
Costa Rica	2007	LAC	0.56	0.49	1.13	2.84
El Salvador	2006	LAC	0.60	0.55	1.14	1.37
Brazil	2004	LAC	0.17	0.31	0.28	2.21
Venezuela, RB	2007	LAC	0.88	0.87	0.71	8.18
Colombia	2002	LAC	0.64	0.95	0.67	3.05
Bolivia	2000	LAC	0.29	0.29	0.37	2.61
Tunisia	1994	MENA	0.13	0.47	0.45	5.84
Iran, Islamic Rep.	2007	MENA	0.09	0.27	0.46	4.01
Morocco	1994	MENA	0.11	0.28	0.34	2.11
Egypt, Arab Rep.	2006	MENA	0.12	-	-	2.91
Rwanda	1978	SSA	-	0.43	0.21	1.95
Cote d'Ivoire	1998	SSA	0.29	0.70	0.16	1.79
South Africa	2007	SSA	0.57	2.19	0.79	3.00
Madagascar	2003	SSA	0.38	0.59	0.93	1.69
Ethiopia	2005	SSA	0.22	0.31	0.21	2.07
Mali	1998	SSA	0.50	0.54	0.50	1.61
Togo	1981	SSA	-	0.96	0.00	1.32
Botswana	2001	SSA	2.29	2.15	0.74	0.97
Mauritius	2007	SSA	0.47	1.18	0.83	5.62

Source: Jütting and Morrisson, 2009.

overwhelmingly went to men. This can be seen in Table II-1, where women dominate unpaid family worker positions, while men are more likely to be self-employed or to be paid employees in the formal or informal sectors.

The predominance of poor women, whose families depend on their incomes for survival in predominantly unstable forms of employment lacking protection or insurance against adverse events, heightens the need for policy-makers to place gender equality considerations at the forefront of policy initiatives aimed at ensuring decent rural employment and fighting poverty.

Finally, the fight against child labour will fail unless parents can produce or earn sufficiently to ensure their family's livelihoods. Globally, an estimated 60 percent of the world's 218 million child labourers are working in agriculture (ILO Statistics 2010). Boys tend to help their fathers and girls their mothers. Thus, the unequal gender burden is reproduced in the next generation, as girls often have to work longer hours than their brothers to share their mothers' multiple productive, domestic and caring roles. Thus, while both boys and girls may have to forego school, girls' opportunities for schooling are often reduced further by cultural stereotypes against spending scarce resources on girls' education, as the benefits would later go to the husband's family when she marries or might make her less docile.

For all those reasons, which are highly interconnected, it is vital to promote rural employment policies which provide women with better opportunities for greater incomes, and empower them through political and economic participation in rural communities. Women with better paid, quality jobs can contribute to local development, to a better future for their children, and thereby, may break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

2. The extent of gender inequality

There are many aspects and dimensions of gender disparities in rural employment. Employment segmentation between males and females enables men to dominate the more financially rewarding, higher skilled positions, while women prevail in unstable, unskilled and unpaid or poorly remunerated work segments. Participation rates in paid employment exhibit gender biases as do earnings, the latter extending beyond the level that can be explained merely by disparities in education and training.

2.1. Gender inequality and household distribution of work

In rural households, agricultural tasks such as growing commercial and food crops and managing livestock tend to overlap with "domestic" tasks such as husking and grinding grain or processing milk products. The former set of activities, which are often undertaken by men as well as women, are counted in national income statistics while the latter, which are predominantly women's work, are often invisible in national statistics and swept into the basket of "non-economic" domestic work. Although some attempts are now being made to give such processing work an economic value and to record it in national statistics, this is still far from universal. This reflects the invisibility of much of women's work despite its vital importance for household survival, and despite the recognition of this problem four decades ago by Boserup (1970). The invisibility is itself due in part to the low status of women and their work in rural communities; intra-

TABLE II-2
Variation of household and agricultural roles across age in Zimbabwe

Household and agricultural roles	Children	Active women	Active men	Old Age
Household domestic work	x	x		x
Care of children	x	x		x
Fetching wood for fuel	x	x	x	x
Household shopping		x		
Tending of gardens	x	x		
Preparation of foodstuffs - grinding maize, groundnuts	x	x		
Livestock management, herding cattle, taking them to the dip tanks	x	x	x	
Gathering of wild fruits and vegetables	x	x		
Road-side selling	x	x		
Tree felling		x	x	
Hunting			x	
Supervising men's and women's activities			x	
Fence repairs, welding, etc.			x	

Source: Muza, 2009. *Household survey conducted in December 2008.*

household gender inequality in access to assets and decision-making power; and biases of urban-based statisticians and policy-makers who fail to question how households ensure their livelihoods and whether there is gender equity in roles and benefits.

Nonetheless, despite the lack of reliable statistics, rural women's work is pervasive throughout rural economies, contributing a multitude of roles which include agricultural production and marketing, food processing and distribution, fuel and water collection, house cleaning and laundry, child rearing and education, caring for the elderly and sick, gathering of wild fruits and vegetables and household shopping. This was illustrated, for example, in the workshop paper on Zimbabwe (Muza, 2009), where rural women are involved in nearly all forms of work, yet their contribution is given an extremely low market value due to a patriarchal ideology and existing gender biases which fail to acknowledge the social and economic value of women's work (see Table II-2).

2.2. Employment segmentation and participation rates

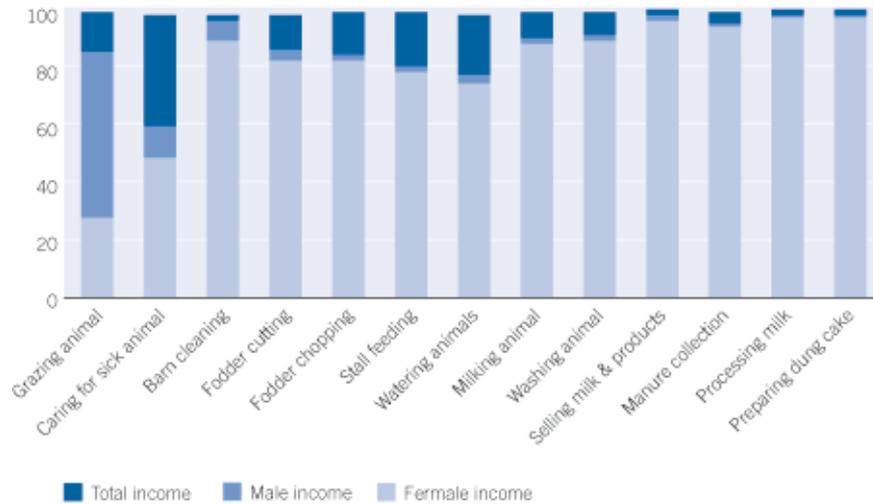
2.2.1. In agricultural sectors

Women tend to be the main producers of food, while men manage most of the commercial crops, not without women's (often unpaid) contributions (except in some countries in Asia). In some regions, women have greater involvement in livestock-related activities than men.

GRAPH II-1

Gender roles in animal agriculture in Punjab, Pakistan

(percent)

Source: Tibbo *et al.*, 2009.

In the case of the Punjab province of Pakistan (Tibbo *et al.* 2009), most livestock-related activities are undertaken by women (see Graph II-1), who play a major role in barn cleaning, fodder cutting and chopping, stall feeding, watering, washing, milking and processing milk by-products into food items (e.g. cheese, butter, yoghurt), collecting manure and preparing dung cake. Grazing is the core responsibility of the men, although women also graze animals in the periphery of villages and on fallow lands near the homestead, since cultural norms do not permit them to travel far on their own. Women were found to be largely independent in spending their own earned income, although other income sources were overwhelmingly controlled by men.

The same kind of segmentation is observed in Afghanistan (Ashrafi, 2009), where men are responsible for herding, preparing/purchasing feed and making shelter for livestock, while women focus more on daily animal care and the processing of milk. However, some tasks are shared between men and women (such as marketing animals and their products). Despite women's involvement in livestock-related activities, there are few ways of acquiring livestock, except through inheritance. Women were often found to have a large degree of control over income derived from livestock produce, indicating the potential improvements in their welfare and empowerment that could occur if their access to livestock could be increased.

Worldwide, when women also participate in agricultural markets (either in the context of commercial farming or traditional farming selling surpluses locally), it is usually within a rigid division of tasks. Asymmetry exists, since men may take over women's crops if new technologies make these crops more remunerative than the traditional male crops, while women rarely take over men's crops (except when men migrate). However, in recent years women are benefiting increasingly from wage employment in large-scale estate production and agro-industrial processing of non-traditional products, rather than from high-value smallholder contract farming, although this is still a relatively small sector compared with traditional agriculture.

This situation was exemplified by a study in Senegal (Maertens and Swinnen, 2009), where women perform a large share of the work in modern tomato and French bean supply chains, either as family labourers on contracted plots controlled by men or as hired workers in the agro-industry. Yet women's control over household income is strongly correlated with their access to labour markets and paid employment. Therefore, the way households benefit from modern supply chains, through product-market channels or labour market channels, and the way women are employed (as unpaid family farm workers or as hired agro-industrial employees), has major implications for the intra-household control over the income derived from these activities.

As men mainly deal with the contractors, they usually receive and directly control the income derived from high-value contract-farming. In this case, women may provide a large part of the work in high-value contract production, controlled by their husbands or other male relatives, without getting full benefits of their labour since, as family workers, they remain unpaid or inadequately remunerated. On the contrary, women employed in modern agro-industries may benefit more directly, being themselves the "contracted party" in the labour agreement with the companies and directly receiving the cash wages related to their labour. These wages earned outside the family farm (and outside other family businesses) increase total household income and can contribute to strengthening women's bargaining power within the household, thus benefiting their economic independence and empowerment.

In Uzbekistan, Alimdjanova (2009) has confirmed the existence of employment segmentation. Women were found to dominate health care and education sectors, while female employees comprised less than 15 percent of the workforce in public administration, transport and communication and construction. Familial and societal expectations of women as being more suited to typically lower-status and lower-paying care-giving professions were reflected in girls' educational choices and in the subject content taught in typically female training courses.

Globally, employment rates for rural men are higher than for rural women, and the discrepancy is much larger in the non-agricultural sectors, meaning that rural women have more employment opportunities in agriculture than in any other sector. Ukraine (Tolstokorova, 2009) is a good example of that: men represent some 57 percent of the rural workforce compared with 43 percent for women, but women are heavily concentrated in agriculture: they constitute 40 percent of the agricultural labour force but hardly reach 27.5 percent of the staff employed in health, education and culture. Men predominate in all sectors, (up to 96 percent in transport and public communications), including in agriculture.

2.2.2. In non-agricultural sectors

Domestic services are the most prevalent form of rural non-agricultural employment for women in all regions, particularly in Latin America. Petty trade is very common among rural women in Africa, Latin America and some Southeast Asian countries, and in South Asia most female non-agricultural rural activities are home-based.

In some more conservative countries, for example, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Tibbo *et al.*, 2009 and Ashrafi, 2009), women are largely denied off-farm income-generating activities because of sociocultural norms which restrict them from moving outside of their homestead. Moreover, limited access by girls to education has largely hampered their employability and competitiveness.

Women's paid employment has an important impact on children's nutrition and health status, on educational achievements and access to future income-generating activities. In the case of the Philippines (Salazar and Quisumbing, 2009), women's participation in off-farm paid activities has to be considered as an important path out of poverty in rural areas. Indeed, if the productivity of individuals in rural areas is positively related to their health, and if better health status is associated with higher income, women's participation in off-farm paid activities can serve as a tool to break the circle of intergenerational transmission of poverty.

A similar conclusion was reached in the Ethiopia study (Kimhi, 2009), which shows that female non-farm labour income is the only income source that significantly reduces per capita income inequality. Thus, increasing the opportunities for women to engage in self-employment activities is likely to have a larger impact on disadvantaged households and therefore reduces inequality (all other income sources remaining constant).

2.3. Gender gaps in earnings

Sex-disaggregated data on agricultural earnings indicates a marked gender disparity in wage rates. Such disparities also prevail in the OECD countries, and are more pronounced in some countries/regions (e.g. Afghanistan and Pakistan). Gender wage gaps seem to be lower in some of the NTAE sectors (e.g. Kenya, Senegal, South Africa and Mexico) and larger in agricultural self-employment (e.g. Costa Rica, El Salvador and Ghana).

For example, the India study (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009) shows a marked gender disparity in wages in agricultural and non-agricultural employment, as well as significantly lower wages for both men and women casual agricultural labourers compared with non-agricultural labourers (Table II-3).

TABLE II-3

Wages and percentage distribution of workers by agriculture and non-agriculture and by employment status, India, 2004-2005

Industry	% distribution		Wages (Rs. per day)			F/M Wages
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Average (M+F)	
Casual Labour						
Agriculture	70.6	89.5	47.9	33.2	42.5	69%
Non-agriculture	29.4	10.5	67.5	44.0	63.8	65%
Total	100.0	100.0	54.6	34.7	48.5	64%
Regular Workers						
Agriculture	9.9	11.0	68.1	53.7	65.2	79%
Non-agriculture	90.1	89.0	151.1	86.3	139.1	57%
Total	100.0	100.0	143.0	82.9	131.8	58%

Source: Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009.

Another interesting point in Table II-3 is given by the comparison of the female/male wage ratios in agricultural versus in non-agricultural employment, for casual labourers and regular workers. The last column of this table indicates that:

- for both casual and regular workers, women receive lower wages than men (i.e. wages between 57 percent and almost 80 percent of men's wages);
- women employed as regular workers are less discriminated against in agriculture (where they get 79 percent of the male wage) than in the other non-agriculture sectors (which pay women only 57 percent of the male wage); however, this is not the case when women work as casual labourers. This shows that women who manage to enter the formal agricultural labour market can be better remunerated; their specific competencies are given a value that is not recognized "economically" in non-agricultural work.

As observed by Figueiredo and Branchi (2009) in Brazil between 1992 and 2007, female per capita income increased in real terms by 66.4 percent, considering all sources, and by 53.7 percent considering primary job earnings only (i.e. agriculture) (see Table II-4). The smaller difference between male and female earnings may be related to better education and engagement in the formal labour market.

In spite of this progress, there is still evidence of important gender earning gaps in agriculture since female labour earnings averaged 62 percent of male labour earnings in 2007, when considering only the primary job (agriculture). When accumulating all sources of income, female incomes reach almost 73 percent of male incomes, mostly

TABLE II-4

Farm workers' average earnings by gender. Brazil, 1992, 1999 and 2007

(minimum wage)*

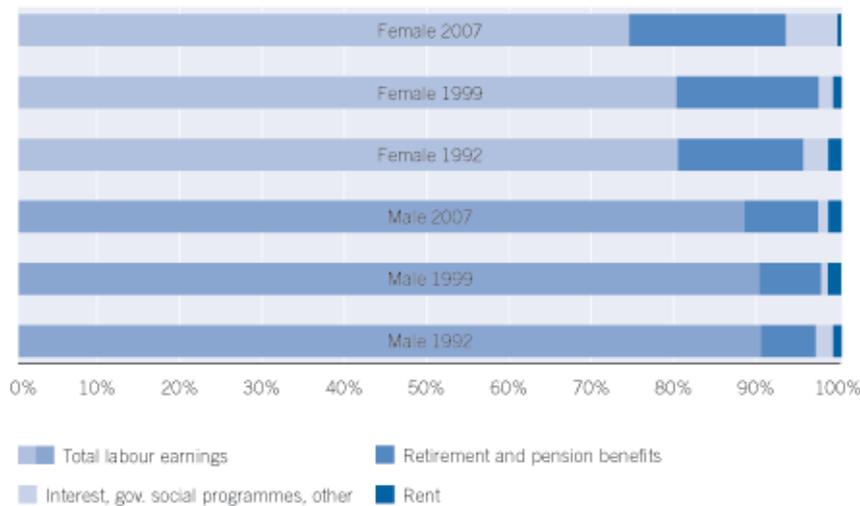
	Taking only income from primary job (agriculture)	F/M earnings	Cumulating all labour sources	F/M earnings	Cumulating all sources of income (labour + public transfers)	F/M earnings
Female						
1992	0.68	49.2%	0.70	48.6%	0.87	54.4%
1999	0.75	54.7%	0.77	53.1%	0.96	59.6%
2007	1.04	61.9%	1.07	61.1%	1.45	72.9%
% 1992-2007	53.70		53.70		66.40	
Male						
1992	1.38		1.44		1.60	
1999	1.37		1.45		1.61	
2007	1.68		1.75		1.99	
% 1992-2007	21.00		21.30		24.40	

Source: Figueiredo and Branchi, 2009 – Elaborated from PNADs 1992, 1999 and 2007.

* as cited in Figueiredo and Branchi, 2009, current values were deflated by the INPC (National Consumer Price Index) controlling for the minimum wage purchasing power, according to Corseuil and Foguel (2002).

GRAPH II-2

Composition of farm workers' income by gender – Brazil, 1992, 1999 and 2007
(percent)



Source: Figueiredo and Branchi, 2009 (elaborated from PNADs 1992, 1999 and 2007).

because of pensions, retirement benefits and measures that include interest payments, dividends and government social programme benefits directed at the family (most of which are cash transfers paid directly to women).¹⁷

Graph II-2 shows the composition of personal income, according to its principal components. The weight of the component that includes cash transfers to female workers has significantly increased over the years.

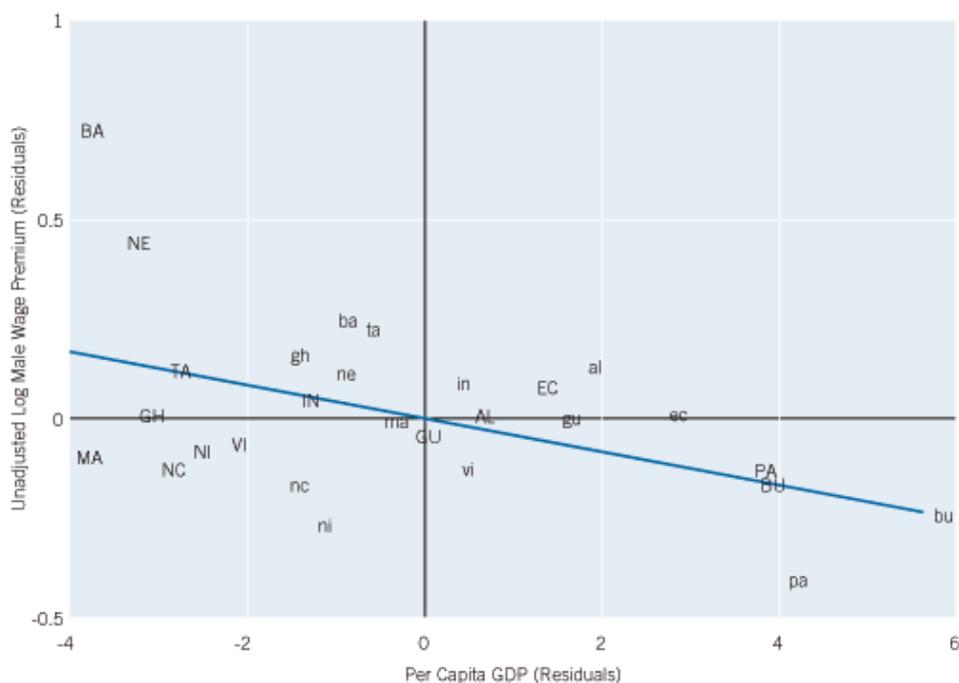
In the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (King Dejardin and Bigotta, 2009) economic growth has led to a narrowing of the rural gendered pay gap. However, by decomposing this pay gap into an explained part (that is attributable to different levels of human capital among workers) and an unexplained part (that is due to gender bias or gender-based discrimination), the authors demonstrate that gender inequalities in earnings may actually be significantly higher than what is generally thought to be the case. Women's higher level of education than men's and their increased participation in waged employment did not contribute as much as they would have thought in reducing the wage gap. The persistence of an unexplained gendered wage gap, which is much larger than the explained part, suggests the presence of systematic gender-based discrimination in pay which has no basis in the relative education, productivity or skill of workers.

Finally, Hertz *et al.* (2009) have shown that the gender bias in society has an important impact on wages. There is some evidence that the gender wage premium falls with economic growth (see Graph II-3). Still, raising the income of rural women requires dealing not just with the lack of rural non-farm employment, but with the gender bias itself, since about three-quarters of these wage gaps cannot be attributed to differences in assets (e.g. land, education) held by men and women (see full paper in Chapter 3).

¹⁷ Unfortunately, the PNAD questionnaire combined all these income sources into a single question, which makes it impossible to precisely evaluate the portion corresponding to government cash transfers within programmes like combating famine, family farming and rural development. For the agricultural workers, it is unlikely that the portion corresponding to interest and dividends on average is substantial.

GRAPH II-3

Male log wage premium versus per capita income



Source: Hertz et al., 2009.

3. What are the causes of women's disadvantaged position?

Gender inequitable rural employment outcomes persist because of a range of interlinked social, economic and political factors. This section sets out the specific causes of these outcomes, bearing in mind that, to a large extent, it is gender-biased social institutions which form the platform upon which these factors are built, interact and are reinforced.

3.1. The invisible but powerful role of social institutions

Social institutions refer to evolved practices with stable rules of behaviour that are outside the formal system (Sen, 2007, as cited in Jutting and Morrison, 2009). They include the traditions, customs and social norms that govern the intricate workings of (especially) rural societies. These typically and overwhelmingly act as a constraint on women's activities and restrict their ability to compete on an even footing with men in the employment market.

Patriarchal ideologies, steeped in traditional customs and culture, underlie the workings of most rural societies. The following ideologies frequently dictate the type of work which is available to women and the conditions in which this work takes place, leading to unequal employment opportunities and gender differentiated welfare:

- Commonly held views that it is a woman's obligation to work in the home, undertaking reproductive and unpaid tasks, restrict female participation in paid employment;
- Beliefs that women are less able to manage assets, which are engrained and erroneous, as documented in studies carried out in Afghanistan by Ashrafi (2009) and in Ghana

by Vigneri and Holmes (2009), effectively diminish women's opportunities to take part in skilled and non-farm employment;

- Social restrictions on women's movement in conservative societies limit their access to decent employment opportunities. For example, a World Bank study in Morocco (mentioned in Jutting and Morrisson, 2009) revealed that 85 percent of women are required to obtain their husbands or guardians permission before they could leave the house;
- Patriarchal norms largely account for women's restricted role in decision-making at household, community, regional and national levels. This lack of female voice reinforces women's own sense of self and underpins the continuance of the economic and social realities which make women unable to compete equally in employment markets (Hambly Odame and Sarapura, 2009);
- Social institutions also play an indirect role through their influence on formal systems. Commonly held beliefs on the roles of men and women, social norms and customs, and culture form the platform upon which rules governing the operation of formal systems are built, including producers' associations and microcredit institutions (see Hambly Odame and Sarapura, 2009). It is hardly surprising, given the dominance of patriarchal ideologies, that laws and regulations often remain gender unequal. Thus, beyond being restricted by cultural expectations and ideologies regarding their activities, women are also disadvantaged by laws which preclude or constrain their access to land, livestock, productive inputs and finance.

3.2. The burden of domestic work and time poverty

The presence of rigid, socially sanctioned gender roles in rural societies severely constrains women's choices regarding how they allocate their time among different paid and unpaid productive and household activities, giving rise to the incidence of time poverty. Culture, religious beliefs and social norms are all factors which dictate that unpaid domestic and reproductive activities (such as water collection, child care, cooking and washing clothes) are the domain of female members of the household. This is precisely the situation in rural Africa, as R. Serra articulates in her recent study (2009), summarized in Box II-1.

The effects of this domestic burden on women's economic opportunities are damaging and predictable but often neglected in policies aimed at increasing female participation in productive paid employment. Several aspects of this problem must be considered:

BOX II-1

The time factor

Interventions to give African rural women better access to credit, land or other inputs have at times failed to encourage women to take up more profitable, productive activities – the main constraint being the inability to mobilize sufficient labour resources to make these options worthwhile. The paper proposes a theoretical model that shows women's choices may be critically constrained by the rigidities governing their time use. These are partly governed by social norms that regard certain tasks as being purely female. Policies that provide high-return work opportunities for women but which are oblivious to their overall time constraints, may actually deteriorate women's living conditions. There is a need to make household production more visible when addressing the question of increased rural incomes or economic diversification.

Source: Serra, 2009.

First, the time burden of rural women's domestic unpaid work and the lack of substitutability of female labour in household work by men serve to limit women's choices with regards to accessing paid employment. Activities that are time intensive and physically arduous (e.g. loading and fetching indispensable household goods like water and fuel) are generally the domain of female household members, with little help from males. Lack of infrastructure, such as running water, fuel-efficient stoves and electricity, exacerbate women's unequal burden. Consequently, inequalities in the amount of time available to women and men to devote to paid employment play a significant role in delivering the unequal outcomes previously outlined. Furthermore, even in the absence of cultural restrictions, time poverty restricts women from taking advantage of employment opportunities which require travel or migration far from their rural homes.

Second, time poverty may be a significant factor in men's dominance of riskier but also more lucrative types of work. The probability of success of a given venture is at least partly determined by the amount of time invested in it (that is, the degree of risk can be endogenous). Accordingly, the relative scarcity of time for women naturally leads to their having fewer opportunities than men to pursue such ventures (Serra, 2009). Related issues of risk adversity will be discussed in section 3.7.

Third, female time poverty contributes to unequal education outcomes which, in turn, hinder women from competing with men for more skilled, better paid jobs. When men do not substitute for women in domestic labour, female children are often called on to share this burden (boys are generally sent to the fields, but they have fewer working hours). This, combined with gender discrimination, often results in lower school enrolments and attainments for girls and reinforces girls' weaker position in the labour market. However, in some cases, in particular in Latin American countries, boys are withdrawn from school to work in agriculture, and this worsens their educational levels relative to girls.

3.3. Unequal access to assets

Laws, traditions and social norms often prevent women from gaining equitable access to and control of assets. The situation is aptly described by Raj Kumari, a woman from the Etawah District in India (as cited in Kelkar, 2009):

“Women never control any assets... Land is passed on from father to son. Even jewellery that is gifted to a woman on her marriage is not given to her; it is kept by the parents-in-law. If a man dies or remarries, the woman is completely dependent on others for survival.”

In many countries, gender-biased inheritance and property and land tenure laws restrict women's ability to own assets. Even in areas where women do have use rights, gender-biased social customs and norms (see section 3.1) often restrict their opportunities of gaining equal use of assets. Unequal access to assets undermines women's economic performance for a number of reasons.

The study conducted by R. Pellizzoli (2009) in Box II-2 mentions, however, that access to assets is not enough if women do not have the relevant tools to optimally utilize them (in this case study, the lack of adequate resources to manage irrigation systems efficiently is critical).

BOX II-2**Access and control over the assets**

In Chókwè, in southern Mozambique, women account for more than 30 percent of total registered farmers, although their actual numbers could be twice that given that plots are usually registered in the name of a family member or relative. Women have had and still have the same right as men to obtain a land title, provided there is a vacant plot in the irrigation scheme. In Chókwè, the problem for women is not accessing land, but the use that they make of it and the factors that influence this use and reduce women's livelihood possibilities: lack of time and financial capacity to acquire new skills in farming, to differentiate crops and to commercialize them; the amount of productive and reproductive work that has to be carried out by women; and the high rates of HIV and AIDS infection in the area.

Women of Chókwè hold a title to their plot, but this is not sufficient insurance against the risk of landlessness: land tenure security in Chókwè depends on individual (and group) capacity to meet the criteria of productivity of the irrigation scheme management. The scheme management's expressed desire that irrigated land be used to grow cash crops creates further difficulties, particularly for women farmers. Factors that inhibit women from satisfying the conditions set out by the scheme management, leading to the possibility of their losing the land or having their use of the land restricted in the future include: unavailability of credit; lack of marketing and processing facilities, and limited control over price; gender inequities in local and national decision-making bodies; unsuitability of rice for export and cheapness of imported rice; lack of education and productive know-how; poor quality and unavailability of productive inputs; and other difficulties such as the migration of young labourers to South Africa.

In another analysis of the Massaca irrigation scheme in Maputo Province (Vijfhuizen, 2001), women, who comprised 70 percent of the members of a 144-hectare scheme built by a development project of the Italian Cooperation, lost control over their irrigated lands, to the advantage of men from the local community and from outside. In a context of growing commercial values of irrigated land, women's inability to access or control other forms of income and therefore scarce access to farming inputs and resources made it very difficult for them to raise enough money to pay the water fee – meaning that many of them (especially widows, divorced women and single mothers) were forced to rent or sell the irrigated parcel and return to rain-fed agriculture. Stressing the importance of access to irrigated land for women's livelihoods and for households' food security in rural areas, the study suggests that – notwithstanding land's potential for commercial agriculture – the management of the irrigation scheme has to consider the social value of that land too: "There is more to irrigated land than mere soil".

Source: Pellizzoli, 2009

3.3.1. Low access to assets affects women's bargaining power

Initially, the very fact that women tend to bring fewer assets than men into marriage is crucial. Assets and wealth (or lack thereof) influence women's status and bargaining power in the household, as explained in an anonymous collective discussion in Bangladesh (Kelkar, Nathan and Jahan, 2004; as cited in Kelkar 2009):

"If you have no money, there is no value for your choice. You are sitting in a corner like a little thief... if you have assets, everyone loves you."

As well as having broad implications for intra-household relations and the welfare of children, women's lack of bargaining power in the household is reflected in decisions regarding production, consumption and human capital formation. In addition, research has indicated that lack of bargaining power is responsible for women having restricted access to information regarding new technologies and innovations in agricultural production (such as, for example, new techniques for preventing livestock diseases). These effects combine to ensure that women's opportunities of participating in skilled

and better paid forms of employment are restricted, with the result that low-paid, low-skill jobs tend to be dominated by women. Certainly, lack of household bargaining power resulting from limited access to assets is one of the key factors behind gender unequal outcomes in rural employment markets.

3.3.2. Lack of access to assets and gender bias: a vicious circle

Women's lack of access to assets acts as a self-perpetuating cycle which only serves to strengthen already existing gender biases in employment opportunities. Without assets to act as collateral, it becomes more difficult for women to access credit to purchase property and productive inputs. Initiatives such as the Grameen Bank have been set up with the aim of alleviating this constraint. Though the Bank has been lauded for its contribution to improving the opportunities and livelihoods of poor households and communities, from a purely gender perspective (despite the fact that 97 percent of borrowers are women), the study carried out by Chowdhury, 2009 casts doubt on its success in providing women with the means to set up microenterprises of their own, as is illustrated in Box II-3.

Also, women's limited means of attaining the use of key productive assets such as land, water and livestock minimizes their capacity to use what assets they do have access to in a productive way. This further undermines their opportunities of taking part in skilled productive activities. (The overall ability of women to utilize assets as productively, or more productively, than men when given opportunities to do so should not be doubted, as Vigneri and Holmes showed with their research on the Ghanaian cocoa sector referred to in section I). This is exactly the situation which is observed in Afghanistan, as can be seen in Box II-4 (Ashrafi, 2009).

BOX II-3

Microcredit schemes in Bangladesh

This study highlighted that the Grameen Bank came into existence in the 1970s as a response to the credit constraints of poor people in starting microenterprises. The instalment-based small loans (i.e. microcredit) are given to poor people without collateral, and women are specifically targeted for the loans. In Bangladesh, 97 percent of the members are women, and it could be assumed that access to microcredit helps women members of the Grameen Bank to start microenterprises that are owned and managed by them.

However, results indicate that women members are not using their microcredit loans to start microenterprises. This is largely a result of cultural and religious values within Bangladesh, where the sociocultural environment is not conducive for women to start a microenterprise of their own. In spite of some positive changes in sociocultural attitudes of the society towards women's participation in economic activities in the last two decades, in rural areas it is still regarded as unacceptable for women to run their businesses outside the home.

Microcredit loans to women were found to benefit families through their positive effect on husbands' ability to start microenterprises and expand the capital of existing ones. Such family businesses may have welfare-enhancing effects on women themselves. The loans, therefore, have played an important role in poverty reduction and development of local economies, although their ability to empower women has been less than what was envisaged.

Source: Chowdhury, 2009.

3.3.3. Lack of secure land access undermines attempts to empower rural women

As described in the paper by *Doss et al.* (2009), the complexity and inequality in land tenure systems is a key determinant of the outcomes of projects designed to help (particularly) female agricultural workers. Projects enabling women to improve land or labour productivity have sometimes led to negative outcomes. This can be, among other things, the result of women's insecure land tenure which enables men to take over the land if the land, or new crops introduced by projects, become more profitable. Thus, projects specifically designed to help rural women farmers and workers have, on occasion, actually worsened their positions as a result of gender-biased land tenure practices and the lack of a legal framework to protect the rights of women to have equitable access to assets.

BOX II-4

Access to productive assets

Land, water and livestock

Of the many productive assets that contribute to increased income and well-being of rural populations, land, water and livestock are perhaps the most powerful. For women, secure access to or ownership of, land and livestock increases their decision-making power within the household. Moreover, women are often able to control the income gained from the sale of livestock products, and these assets can become bargaining tools for better care from relatives when women reach old age. Despite such potential, many women do not have secure access to, let alone ownership of, these critical assets. As only one example, the Afghanistan study (Ashrafi, 2009) indicated that few women own land that was not inherited. An analysis found that of 360 households studied, only 1.87 percent of women owned land by themselves and only 11 percent of women owned livestock individually, and these were almost all widows. The two main possibilities for gaining ownership of land and livestock are described below.

Women owning livestock in Afghanistan: Jaz

At the time of marriage, women receive mostly small household items and clothes from their parents. In both the Badakhshan and Bamyan villages, women receive livestock through a tradition known as Jaz – the first visit of a new bride to her parental home after marriage (this appears to be a form of pre-mortem inheritance). The woman then takes the animals to her marital home. In theory, the animals belong to her, but whether this ownership is respected and whether it translates into control over the animals and their produce varies from household to household. In some cases, the husband's parents take control and even sell the animals without asking the woman's permission. In other cases, other household members will consult her before making decisions over the animals and their produce.

Borrowing livestock

Women in both of the villages in Badakhshan access livestock such as sheep, goats and cows through a local practice of borrowing animals from wealthier households. In some cases, because women are fully responsible for arranging this, they are considered to own the animals, although this appears to depend on the relations inside the household. Several women said they have authority to sell the animals they obtained through this system without anyone's permission, and that if anyone else wants to sell them they have to ask them. In a few cases, where women had acquired several animals through borrowing, men said that women were able to keep one of the animals and decide what to do with the animal; if they choose to sell it they can decide how to use the income. Where women cannot control decisions about the sale of an animal, they often have some control over the animal produce, which women in all the villages were found to trade inside the village, and in some cases, the women may decide how to use the income.

Source: Ashrafi, 2009.

The potential costs of women's insecure and unequal access to housing is high. Secure tenure over housing reduces vulnerability, and ownership of housing reduces the likelihood of falling into poverty. The productive nature of housing may be especially true for rural women, who frequently operate small businesses out of their homes, selling items such as cooked or processed food. Women's vulnerability and ability to earn a livelihood may depend on secure access to housing. Depending on tenure and family arrangements, women may lose their homes when their household dissolves. Reports of women being evicted from their homes when their husband dies of HIV/AIDS are common in parts of Southern and Eastern Africa. At the same time, there are large variations in tenure patterns for housing, including differing rights of individual household members to a particular dwelling.

3.3.4. Lack of access to transport further worsens rural women's conditions

The frequent unavailability of basic transport-related assets (e.g. vehicles, bikes, horses, donkeys, oxen or carts) to help women in their work, including going to markets, health centres or banks, is another explanatory factor in gender-unequal rural employment outcomes. There are two relevant issues here: the scarcity of such transport assets, and the tendency for such assets, where available, to be chiefly controlled by the male household head. Given the predominance of women in household tasks, such as collecting water and fuelwood, women's restricted access to crucial transport assets only serves to increase their time burden so they have less time to devote to income-generating activities and to investing in their own education. The situation in rural Tanzania (Gutierrez, 2009) (see Box II-5) is indicative of rural regions throughout the world.

BOX II-5

Gender aspects of rural transport in Makete District, Tanzania

Patterns of travel and mobility are different among household members, and women's patterns are more time-consuming and burdensome. A survey of the transport and production activities of rural households was conducted for a sample of 431 households in the Makete district from 1986-1987.

The findings demonstrated that:

- 90 percent of all the trips and 95 percent of the total weight of transporting productive and reproductive things occurred within and around the village.
- In a year, transport activities occupied 2 500 hours and involved moving a load of about 23 tonnes.
- On average, women are responsible for nearly 67 percent of transportation of goods and 85 percent of the load carried. The rest of the transport burden is carried by men and children. Men are responsible for only 21 percent of the time spent in travel activities and 11 percent of the load.
- The average adult woman makes more than three trips per day. She spends over four hours per day, or more than 1 500 hours per year, solely on transport (usually fuel and water). In contrast, men make about one trip per day and devote less than two hours per day to transport activities.
- On average, women in Makete move about 50 kg daily, or nearly 18 tonnes per year. Men, in contrast, move about six kg per day (2.2 tonnes per year).
- More than 90 percent of the trips are by foot. This applies to trips within and outside the village.
- Nearly the entire load is carried by head-loading.

Source: Sieber, Niklas. *Appropriate transport and rural development in Makete district, Tanzania* (as cited in Gutierrez, 2009).

TABLE II-5

Distribution of rural agricultural workers by educational attainment, India, 2004-2005
(percent)

Education level	Agricultural labourers			Farmers		
	Male	Female	Average	Male	Female	Average
Illiterate and below primary	65.9	85.5	74.1	45.7	74	57.5
Primary	15.7	7.5	12.3	16.2	10.8	14
Middle	13.3	5.3	10	18.9	9.5	15
Secondary	3.7	1.2	2.6	10.3	3.9	7.6
HS & above	1.5	0.4	1	8.9	1.9	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009.

3.4. Gender differences in education, training and child labour

Education and training are fundamental determinants of employment outcomes in any labour market. Generally, higher levels of educational attainment for males contribute to their greater capacity to access higher skilled and more rewarding employment opportunities in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sector. Gender differences in education levels between male and female workers in the Indian agricultural sector exemplify the situation in many rural developing regions, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009).

Table II-5 shows that female farmers and agricultural workers lag behind their male counterparts at every level of educational attainment, and are between 20 and 30 percent more likely to be illiterate than males. Lower levels of educational attainment among women contribute to their being unable to compete with men for better and more skilled jobs. This underachievement in education can be explained with reference to three variables: gender differences in enrolment rates; gender differences in school performance at all levels; and gender differences in technical and vocational skills development (TVSD).

3.4.1. Gender differences in enrolment rates

Progress towards gender parity in primary and secondary education enrolment, as set out in the third Millennium Development Goal, has been steady, with many countries and regions approaching or having already achieved equality in enrolment rates. The majority of Latin American countries have already achieved the goal and although sub-Saharan Africa lags behind other regions, significant progress has been made in countries such as Botswana, Ghana and Rwanda, where gender disparities in terms of enrolment have almost been eliminated. However, globally, 55 percent of the out-of-school population are girls (UNESCO, 2007) and this figure is thought to be higher in rural regions, though reliable data are frequently unavailable. The 2007 UNICEF report on Pakistan gives a very illustrative example of that in the Balochistan province: 53 percent of the rural boys and 68 percent of the rural girls are not enrolled in primary school. A variety of factors explain lower levels of female school enrolment.

First, as ever, culture and social norms are paramount. In many rural societies, boys are valued more than girls, so parents are more willing to invest in boys' education

(Murray and Hurst, 2009). This effect is particularly strong for poor families who cannot afford to educate all their children (even in countries where school fees have been eliminated, indirect costs such as uniforms, books and transport make the price of education high) and tend to give precedence to sons over daughters.

Second, girls' greater (and frequently unpaid, unrecognized domestic) work burden in rural areas causes interruptions in their schooling and makes dropping-out more common for female students. Girls' work often includes economic and domestic labour, especially if their mothers are working. For example, in India:

"In addition to employment for wages, girls are invariably seen collecting firewood or fetching water for households in rural villages and participating in other domestic and non-domestic work, for example, engaged in cottage industry." (as cited in ILO, 2004)

Third, in rural villages, schools are often far away from the family home, hence lack of transport and boarding schools constrains school attendance. From a gender perspective, this can be particularly damaging for female school attendance given girls' greater vulnerability to sexual harassment and violence.

Fourth, the lack of consideration for female students' specific needs can lead to their having higher drop-out rates than their male peers. For example, an aspect as simple as failing to provide a separate toilet block for female students can lead to (particularly post-pubescent) girls dropping out of school.

3.4.2. Gender biases in school performances

In many rural societies, higher rates of female school enrolment have not been matched by higher levels of sensitivity to the specific needs and learning styles of female students. The scarcity of female teachers, traditional and gender insensitive teaching methods and course syllabi and unequal treatment of male and female students can lead to girls being at a disadvantage in terms of their ability to compete with boys in academic achievement. More specifically, attitudes within school which accord girls a lower status than boys, and gender biases in the allocation of school tasks, such as giving so-called high status tasks (for example ringing the bell) to boys and traditional female tasks to girls (for example cleaning the classroom floor), reinforce female students' low self-esteem and diminish their academic expectation of themselves in many areas. As well as contributing to higher female drop-out and lower enrolment rates, these factors can also influence the performance of those girls who remain in school as long as their male counterparts.

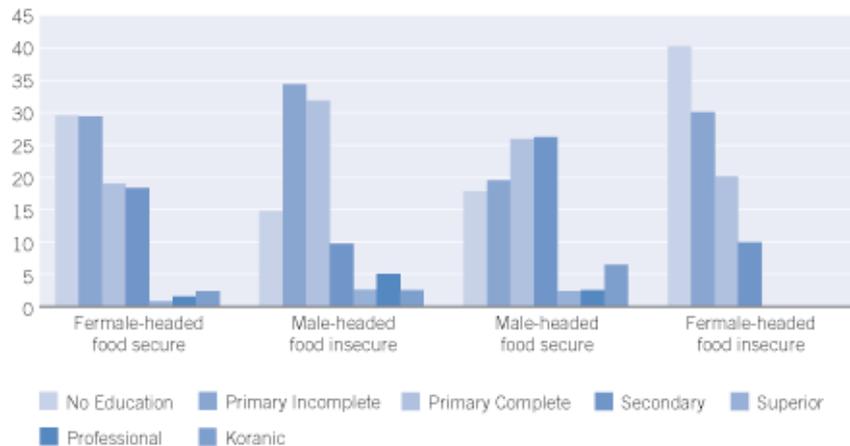
3.4.3. Gender biases in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development (TVSD)

Gender-appropriate technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) are often neglected despite the considerable potential to improve rural women's economic opportunities. For the rural poor, the newer term TVSD is often used to describe the need for flexible skills, learning to learn, going beyond literacy and numeracy skills and including more than 'life skills' (King & Palmer 2006; McGrath 2005). TVSD comprises three main types of education or training: public school-based technical education, in the form of junior and senior secondary education but non-tertiary institutions; public vocational training centres and industrial training institutes; and training in the informal sector which often include traditional

GRAPH II-4

Cameroon levels of education by food security status

(percent)



Source: Gurkan and Sanogo, 2009.

apprenticeship training or traditional forms of training offered at artisan workshops owned by master craftsmen/women (King *et al.* 2007).

TVET and TVSD programmes have been underfunded as a result of the focus on basic and primary education as called for by the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the lack of a gendered approach to TVET has seen women under-represented in formal training programmes and, where included, often directed towards typically female occupations (Hartl, 2009). As a consequence, female-headed households may be pushed into disadvantaged positions. The consequences of educational deficiencies were shown by several workshop papers to reach beyond the labour market, with food security, nutrition, health and fertility and mortality rates all adversely affected. Education and training of females, more than males, has been found to have a direct influence on these variables, making the issue of gender biases in education all the more critical from a development perspective. In the case of Cameroon (Gürkan and Sanogo, 2009), the lower the educational level of female household heads, the higher the probability of the household being food insecure (see Graph II-4).

The relationship was more ambiguous among male-headed households, with a significant portion of the male heads of food-insecure households having completed secondary school. Caution should be exercised in generalizing about cause and effect, particularly given the likely presence of other causal factors; however, this situation in Cameroon appears to support evidence on the costliness of failing to educate girls.

3.5. Migration

Migration carries significant implications for the women or men left behind in rural areas. In some countries, culture and social institutions dictate that migration is generally the domain of men, while women remain in the home to perform domestic and reproductive duties. While the general perception is that mostly men migrate, in 2009, female migrants constituted nearly 50 percent of the total international migrant stock. The burden on the women left behind is typified in Zimbabwe (Muza 2009), as explained by Alois, who has been an urban migrant worker in Zimbabwe for 37 years:

“Having my wife at our rural home is important in our Karanga culture. It has always been like this [...]. I can't change it now. My wife takes care of our home while I am working in the city. I come home whenever I can to check on them. She is so used to our home that she can't even visit me in the city for more than a week. She manages our fields and she knows exactly what is to be grown in all our fields each year”.

BOX II-6

The case of 27 villages in Southwest China (Guangxi, Yunan and Guizhou)

The major economic and social transformations taking place in China are changing the structure of agriculture and rural households. Subsistence farming is increasingly commercialized and most men and youth migrate out of agriculture.

A study in 27 villages in the three southwest provinces in 2008 revealed that during the last decade and a half, the total number of migrants in the 27 villages has doubled. However, fewer women than men have migrated, and migration by women is also more recent compared with men.

Data indicate that, on average, about 76 percent of all people actively engaged in agriculture throughout the year are women – this proportion is evident when spending time in the villages. One of the first things to notice is the virtual total absence of men in the fields, forests, on the paths and in the streets. The average age of the farming population (women and men combined) ranges from 45 to 50 years. The average age of the migrants is around 20 years younger than the farming population. Thus, married women and older people have become the main agricultural labourers throughout the year – a trend that seems to be increasing. In some cases, male migrants return home for short periods of time to help during harvest season.

The study also showed that there has been an overall increase of per capita annual income in all 27 villages. In most cases, incomes doubled and some even tripled between 1995 and 2007. Meanwhile, the income structure has changed significantly during the same period. The proportion of income from migration (remittances) has increased more than two times, representing 40-45 percent of household incomes. While both the crop and livestock income percentages have decreased as compared with 1995, they now account for about 30-40 percent of rural household income.

This male-dominant migration model in China is determined by two major factors. First, the traditional patrilineal ideology in society, the household, and even among women themselves maintains women's inferior status in terms of resources and allocation opportunities. Second, the current structure and status of rural households makes it very difficult for all members of a rural family to migrate because it is almost impossible to obtain a permanent residence permit in the cities. As a consequence, most of the male migrants become temporary labourers in cities. For them and for their farm households, land and agriculture remain as a kind of insurance and retreat.

While rural men and women have always worked in agriculture, traditionally the men's role was predominant since women were also engaged in domestic work. However, the new social context is transforming the intra-household gender division of labour, i.e. from “the men till and the women weave” to “the women till and the men work in industry”. This involves an expansion of the traditional model of the gender division of labour in China, i.e., “men control the outside world, women the inner”. Women's “inner world” thus has expanded to include agriculture, which is considered an inferior profession with lower cash returns, although it also provides a valuable retreat and insurance for rural households in this transition period.

One important consequence is that the externalization of costs during the transition is being borne by women, who remain in farming. Most married middle-aged and old women are still engaged in subsistence farming on small plots to meet their families' food needs and contribute to national food security, both of which are still heavily dependent on the efforts of small farmers.

Although women play crucial roles in food security and poverty reduction, they face great difficulties in accessing technology, credit and markets because of their limited human and social capital and insufficient external support. Current policies, particularly land tenure and gender insensitive government support services (e.g. extension and credit) have undermined women's contribution to agriculture and food production as well as their employment in and benefit from economic growth.

Source: Song, 2009.

This tendency seems reasonably consistent in Africa and Asia, with men forming the overwhelming majority of migrant workers. For example in China (Song, 2009), rising urbanization and increasing out-migration of younger economically active men, are leading to the feminization and ageing of the agricultural workforce (see Box II-6).

Though these tendencies are reasonably representative of the situation in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, migration trends, either within these regions or globally, are by no means uniform. In Vietnam, for example, there has been a marked increase in the female share of overseas migration, rising from 28 percent in 1992 to 54 percent in 2004 (Thin, 2009). While there are country-specific variations in migration, the overall dominance of men in rural to urban migration has impacted on women's employment and welfare in a variety of ways (see Section 4.2).

3.6. Lack of advocacy power and voice

Factors that contribute to autonomy and negotiating power within the family include education, an independent income, new responsibilities due to the migration of a spouse, personal inheritance assets and participation in community decision-making processes. Rural organizations that mobilize and represent women are also essential to create awareness around rights and give women greater voice and bargaining power relative to both their employers and family members (see "the importance of collective capacity" in Box II-7).

Farmers' organizations, when they exist, are usually dominated by men; women are under-represented or not represented at all, particularly at the leadership level. To be legitimate and to have a real voice in a male-dominated society, women need to be strongly represented and recognized in national and local mixed farmers' organizations. When women cannot express their voice within a group composed of men and women (despite recognized membership or in contexts where women have little or no experience

BOX II-7

The importance of collective capacity

A distinction can be made between "organizing women" and "women organizing." "Organizing women" is imposed (and may be still, by the end, very empowering), in opposition to a process owned by women themselves since the very beginning (women organizing). Therefore, the individual-, organizational- and network-level of capacity development must speak to "women organizing", not "organizing women." Gender inequality not only erodes opportunities and benefits associated with socio-economic development, but also deepens structural vulnerabilities and conflicts in society.

The need to organize or take action as a group arises from the experiences of women who are oppressed. These lived experiences create action and provide a reason for organizing. They are closely tied to the self-concept at the individual level of capacity development. This means that women should analyse and have a sense of self (e.g. self-worth and self-determination) to understand and emphasize individual "self" (autonomy, awareness, human agency) before they can use their voice and realize collective power or social agency. The importance of the individual is referred to as the self concept in interpersonal communication and the links between individual, organizational and systemic change are crucial to capacity development.

Personal change is a necessary step for collective and institutional change (i.e. changes in the way people collectively think, behave and organize themselves for interaction with others). Capacity-development activities accompany and strengthen all of the above by taking the form of learning through action and reflection.

Source: Hambly and Sarapura, 2009.

BOX II-8**One approach to empowering communities: the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), India**

SEWA is a trade union of poor, self-employed women workers who earn a living through their own labour or small businesses. Such workers do not obtain regular salaried employment with welfare benefits like workers in the organized sector. Of the female labour force in India, more than 94 percent are in the unorganized sector. However, their work is not recorded in the official statistics and hence remains invisible. SEWA's approach to empowering communities is as follows:

Involve rather than intervene

- Given years of underdevelopment, poor rural women need to develop confidence before initiating any process of change. A 'project' or 'mission' should not start with a blueprint; rather the blueprint evolves with the participation of members in specific areas.
- SEWA's major success has been because of the role played by its grassroots leaders known as Aagewaans, who are instrumental in involving the local communities, winning their trust and confidence and taking decisions that are locally relevant.

Coordinate attempts from different sister organizations/units

- Livelihood finance is not an activity that can be implemented by a single unit or organization with a specific expertise. It is an ongoing process that involves well-coordinated approaches from various quarters, with the poor placed in the centre.
- It is critical that government agencies, which need to work with various other government departments, ensure a well-coordinated approach.

Develop community support systems (health care, child care and education)

- These activities contribute to 'indirect' savings of income (fewer expenses on medication, etc.) and act as support systems in adverse times.
- Often, such activities are the entry point to involve local communities in a new area and to understand their related problems better.

Identify and develop skills

- SEWA has usually focused on developing traditional skills and activities, thereby equipping the local communities for livelihood generation in contemporary markets. Fostering new skills and building them to a marketable level is a very costly process.
- Training of communities to build their capacities in alternative livelihood activities and skills is equally important because this gives them the flexibility to choose between different means of livelihood.

Build capacities before providing market services

- Align activities with modern trends and developments in the outside market and world. The development of new skills in different fields will bear no fruit if no market exists for them.
- Inculcate planning and managerial skills to build self-sustaining systems. Local communities must be able to take care of themselves after initial "hand holding".

Provide financial services

- Provide financial security (e.g. credit, banking and insurance).
- Provide access to credit, investments and working capital.

Build linkages

- Market linkages (backward and forward) to save communities from being trapped by middlemen and to put in place a system to earn livelihood.
- Institutionalize the linkages. Build infrastructure and organizations to take care of the market linkages and other systems built over time.

Source: Nanavaty, 2009.

in public speaking or working in groups), it can be more efficient for women to set up and run their own separate organizations, in which they can develop and practise some basic skills in a more familiar, more comfortable or culturally appropriate setting. A good example is provided by the SEWA case, described in Box II-8.

The importance of collective action is also highlighted in the study on gendered employment in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Asia and the Pacific (Weeratunge and Snyder, 2009). For example, women participate in community-based fisheries committees in Cambodia in order to improve their livelihoods, enhance their capabilities (i.e. skills, knowledge and self-confidence) and promote sustainability in fisheries resources for the next generation. While women are active in the savings and credit programme and self-help groups, only a minority assume leadership positions in these committees. Their roles in savings and credit groups are socially sanctioned by traditional gender norms that associate women with financial management of the household, as well as patience and negotiation skills to collect dues from group members. Women identify as their immediate capacity-building needs, improving skills (especially related to overcoming illiteracy), upgrading well-being and improving health care, and gender equity (building support from men and sharing tasks). They consistently cite the difficulty in balancing productive (income generating) with reproductive (housework) tasks, based on gender-restrictive social norms, as the main constraint to improving their livelihoods and participating in community-based management.

The situation with respect to cooperatives in conflict settings in Arab states is also instructive (see Box II-9). Esim and Omeira (2009) highlight the potential of cooperatives to promote women's access, agency and voice. Sharing risk, pooling resources, learning together, generating income and balancing work and family responsibilities can offer new opportunities to women and can promote their empowerment. However, gender-mixed cooperatives have often been unsuccessful in incorporating women into leadership roles, with management positions frequently taken up by the wives of male leaders. In

BOX II-9

Donor support to cooperatives in Lebanon

As cited in Esim and Omeira (2009), in the words of Rami Zurayk (2007) recounting the experience in Lebanon: *[A] co-op is often a precondition for accessing development aid by small farmers. Driven by our donors' agendas, we development workers coerce poor farmers into creating a cooperative, and they usually passively obey. Once we stop injecting it with funds, the cooperative dissolves and fades away. Of course, there are some successes, the exception is necessary to prove the rule. But out of the hundreds of cooperatives that were created in the past 10 years, only a few are still functioning.*

The support of donor agencies in promoting rural women's employment similarly has had mixed blessings. When donors identified gender equality as an entry point for rural development, they focused on applying their own models of gender integration in institutions whether this was about establishing women-only cooperatives or encouraging women leadership in mixed cooperatives. One common experience in the post-Beijing era has been of international donor agencies encouraging governments to create women's departments in line ministries along with national women machineries at centralized government levels. These women departments have often become isolated islands of expertise, with resources and knowledge generated staying at a level that hardly trickles down. Many rural women units in agricultural ministries became equipped with well-trained staff with little connection to the other departments of the ministries nor rural women themselves, except for a few pilot studies and projects here and there in Lebanon.

Source: Esim and Omeira, 2009.

addition, women-only cooperatives sometimes suffer from their exclusion of men, which can result in resistance to their initiatives and impede changes in existing gender relations in society. Sometimes women-only cooperatives, when focussing on traditional activities such as sewing and weaving, merely reinforce established gender roles. Finally, donor-led processes that push women to become organized in a certain predetermined configuration (in this case, cooperatives) can sometimes lead to “artificial” structures with weak foundations and high risks of dissolution when the external support stops.

To conclude, the importance of women contributing to collective actions through membership in producers’ organizations in rural areas has been unanimously recognized as a powerful tool for women’s economic and political empowerment, as it increases female participation in community decision-making processes. When freely and independently established, with equal voice given to men and women, and programmes based on very focused objectives taking into account gender specificities, these organizations can achieve successful results in terms of poverty reduction, economic development, empowerment of small and poorer producers (of whom most are women) and gender equality.

3.7. Differing female preferences are often ignored in market-led approaches to poverty alleviation

Research by Anderson *et al.* in rural Vietnam (2009) finds that women are typically more risk averse than men. Women were found to be less willing to compete than men, to underestimate their chances of success and to generally prefer low-risk/low-return outcomes when compared with men. This trend was particularly pronounced among the poorer segments of rural communities. It is not known whether these preferences are innate or the result of social factors, but their existence has implications for rural employment outcomes.

Such female preferences for low-risk activities may be partly responsible for lucrative and risky rural income-generating activities being dominated by men. Further, past policies aimed at reducing the gender-differentiated constraints that individuals face may have been inhibited by their failure to take gender preferences into account. Attempts to mainstream women into markets and other institutions which have evolved in line with male preferences may suffer if this issue is not taken into account.

4. Current issues and trends

It is important to analyse gender and rural employment within a more comprehensive socio-economic context, considering current issues and trends in the global economy and their bearing on men and women’s performance in rural labour markets.

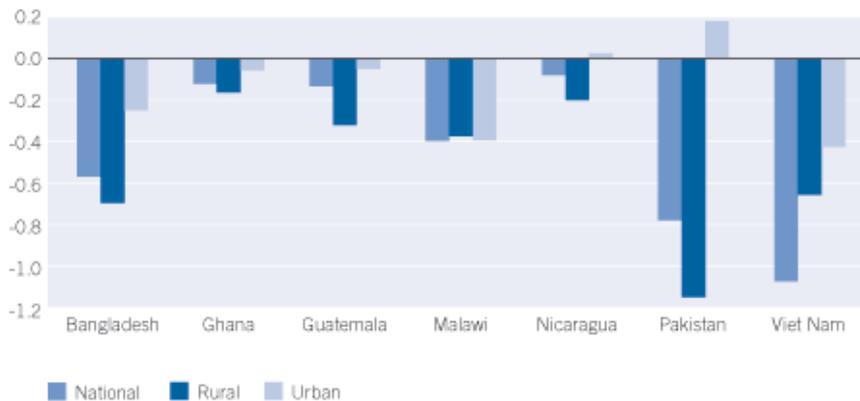
4.1. The financial and food crises

The recent financial and food crises have slowed down the progress towards greater gender equity that has been made in past years: poverty levels around the world are worsening, and the number of people who are unemployed, have a precarious job and are among the working poor, is increasing. Women are frequently among the first to lose their jobs, since they are often seen as a flexible buffer workforce who can be drawn into the labour force during labour market upturns and expelled in downturns. With job losses and cuts in spending on social services and infrastructure, women’s care burdens and unpaid work

GRAPH II-5

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, food crisis hits female-headed households harder (2008-2009)

(percent)



Source: FAO -SOFI 2009.

have intensified, and their financial contribution to household food security is likely to decrease. This is particularly dramatic for female-headed households.

Graph II-5 plots the relative welfare change of female-headed households (FHHs) compared with male-headed households (MHHs) as a result of the food crises. Clearly, in rural areas the burden has been disproportionately borne by FHHs.

One of the main reasons that women are generally more affected by economic crises is their overrepresentation in vulnerable forms of employment. Table II-6 shows that in the world generally and in the poorest regions in particular, female workers have a significantly higher probability than male workers of being involved in vulnerable forms of employment.¹⁸

Table II-6 shows that men and women are engaged in vulnerable employment in similar proportions worldwide, but the gender disparities in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are much more pronounced. In those regions, where the working poor represent the

TABLE II-6

Male and female proportions of vulnerable employment

	Agricultural employment (share of total employment (%))	Working poor (US\$2 per day) (share of total employment(%))	Vulnerable employment (share of total employment (%))		
			Total	Males	Females
World	34.4	40.6	50.6	49.1	52.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	62.5	82.0	77.4	72.0	84.4
South Asia	48.2	80.9	77.5	74.3	85.1
East Asia	38.6	33.0	55.5	50.8	61.0

Source: elaborated from ILO Global Employment Trends 2009 (data 2007).

¹⁸ Vulnerable employment is defined as persons who are less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to benefits or social protection programmes, and are therefore more exposed to economic fluctuations (ILO, 2008).

majority of the working population (over 80 percent), about 85 percent of women have vulnerable jobs, while only 75 percent of men face a same situation.

The particular vulnerability of women in employment demands that a gender lens be used when developing policy responses. Yet, although women are more likely to be vulnerable than men, many men are also vulnerable (Gurkan and Sonogo, 2009). A focus is therefore needed on women, but not at the expense of the needs of vulnerable and poor men.

4.2. Migration and feminization of rural activities

As indicated in Section 3.5, migration influences rural employment opportunities positively or negatively, and is closely linked to the world economy. Rural-rural, rural-urban and international migration affects household welfare and women's roles in rural communities in various ways:

- In some regions, male migration has been largely responsible for the feminization of agriculture. In China, for example, high levels of male migration have increased the female proportion of the agricultural labour force up to 78 percent (Song, 2009).
- Paris *et al.* (2009) find that in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, male migration leads to an increase in women's empowerment, as women take on greater management and decision-making responsibilities in the absence of their husbands (see the full paper in Chapter 3).
- The same authors found that migration caused women's workload to increase in some countries (e.g. Vietnam), but remain unchanged in others (e.g. the Philippines and Thailand) as women used remittances to hire labour to take on the increased work burden arising from male migration.

TABLE II-7

Share of different sources of income and household income per year
(percent)

Source of income	Thailand		Vietnam		The Philippines	
	WM	NM	WM	NM	WM	NM
	(n=268)	(n=295)	(n=304)	(n=346)	(n=321)	(n=349)
Remittances from migrant workers	38		36		59	
Cash income from rice	12	19	37	49	17	36
Cash income from other crops	16	21	2	1	a	
Off-farm	4	8	2	4	2	2
Non-farm	21	45	10	25	20	57
Capital gains from land and non-land assets	1	1	a	a		a
Sale from livestock	8	6	13	21	2	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Annual household income (USD)	2 541	1 842	1 411	1 306	2 857	1 512

WM: with migrant; NM: no migrant; a: less than 1%.

Source: Paris et al, 2009.

- Remittances from migrant workers increase family income. Table II-7 (Paris *et al.*, 2009) confirms that in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, households with migrants tend to have higher incomes than those without.

The effect of migration on female welfare is, however, more ambiguous:

- In Mexico, for example (Appendini, 2009), some (particularly young) women reported the lack of help with decision-making and raising their children to be problems, while other (particularly older) women enjoyed their greater freedom and autonomy resulting from their husband's migration.
- In Vietnam (Thin, 2009), social problems such as family break-ups owing to marital infidelity and increased alcohol use were identified as negative effects of migration.
- Paris *et al.* (2009) reports increased female empowerment resulting from male migration in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. However, women left behind often complained of suffering from loneliness, depression, insecurity and difficulty in disciplining their sons. Indeed, it is reported that many women broke down in tears when talking about their troubles from the absence of their migrant husbands.
- In Ukraine, Tolstokorova (2009) reports the feminization of migration over the past ten years, with women migrating to Western Europe in the relatively well-paid care economy, while men find less profitable seasonal employment in agriculture or in construction (in Russia, Poland, Portugal and Spain). This outflow of women from rural villages induces family, social and behavioural changes which can be dramatic for the members of the rural household left behind.

The effects of migration are by no means uniform throughout diverse regions of the world. However, several overarching conclusions can be drawn. Clearly, migration generally improves household welfare through its positive effect on total household income. Female empowerment has also been found to be a benefit of male migration, though it can't be assumed that this is always the case, nor that the welfare of women left behind by migrating husbands is always enhanced. Welfare impairing impacts from migration include the incidence of depression, loneliness and lack of support in controlling household affairs reported by some women left behind. Additionally, social problems have been observed to arise within households and communities, both in the cases of women being left behind by their migrating husbands and vice versa.

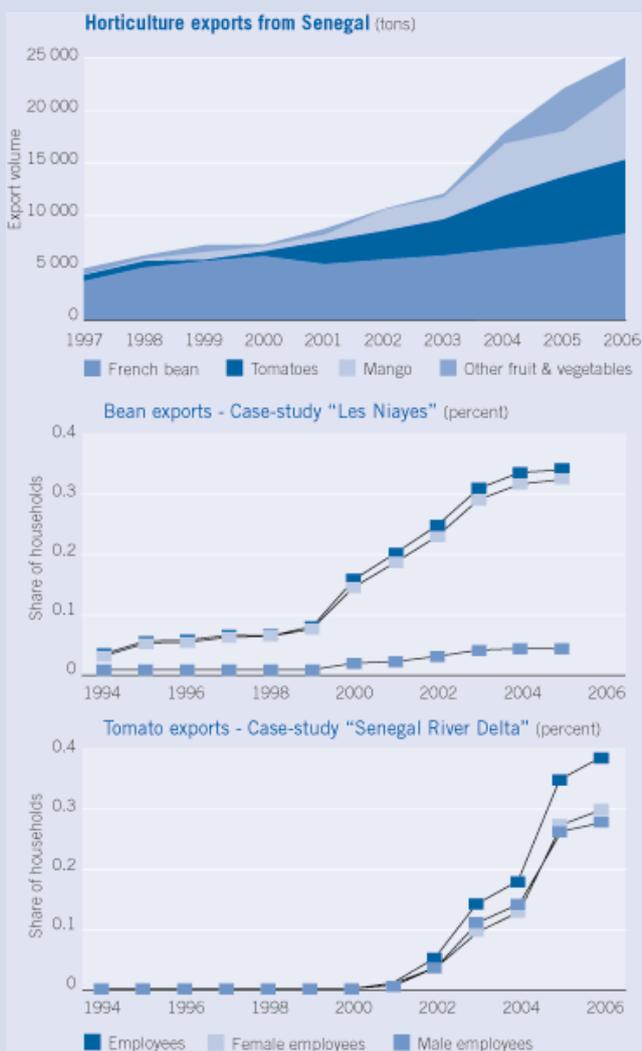
4.3. International trade and diversification of the rural economy

As global employment in agriculture has declined throughout the world (from 40.8 percent of the total active population in 1998 to 33.5 percent in 2008 according to ILO),¹⁹ corporate farming has emerged as an important source of employment for rural women (especially in Latin America). However, evidence of gender disparities in working conditions (i.e. labour standards) and pay in these new sectors is mixed. Those remaining "outside" as smallholders (many of whom are women), often stagnate and face hardship. The study in Box II-10 on commercial farming in Senegal (Maertens and Swinnen, 2009) is quite illustrative. While men dominate in high-value smallholder contract farming, women benefit more and more directly from wage labour in large-scale estate production and agro-industrial processing.

19 Source: ILO http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_101461.pdf Table A6 page 31.

BOX II-10

Horticulture exports from Senegal

**Gender effects of export-oriented agro-industries:**

- Increased employment in surrounding areas
- Employment of a large share of female workers
- Significant increase in female-earned income in the households
- No evidence of gender discrimination in these labour markets

Rural income and poverty effects of contract farming and agro-industrial employment:

- Both better-off and poorer households benefit; the former through contract farming and the latter through employment in the agro-industry
- Contracted farmers have incomes that are 110 percent higher than average income in the region, and agro-industrial employees have incomes that are 60 percent higher
- Poverty is reduced by 12 percent, mainly through employment generation in agro-industries

Source: M. Maertens and J. Swinnen, 2009.

The diversification of the rural economy (e.g. in Latin America) has created rural non-agricultural employment pathways out of rural poverty. But these new job opportunities do not necessarily generate greater gender equality, since women generally engage in the lowest paid and most vulnerable forms of work, such as domestic services. For example, in Brazil, the pay of domestic workers remains below the agricultural wage rate (Figueiredo and Branchi 2009). Generating more jobs in rural areas does not necessarily mean that they are better jobs.

The development of value chains can stimulate national governments to promulgate and implement sound labour legislation for the agricultural sector, and enforce ethical standards, codes of conduct and decent work provisions in agro-industries. In addition, training and educational programmes are needed to provide opportunities for female employees and employers to learn, discuss and take action on labour standards and employment rights. As described in Box II-11, this could contribute to ensuring enforcement and monitoring of labour laws and codes of conduct in agriculture, including for temporary workers (i.e. seasonal or casual jobs).

BOX II-11**Kenya flower project (Ethical Training Initiative)**

The Kenyan cut flower industry has grown rapidly in recent years and now provides a vital income for up to two million people (55 000 Kenyans, mainly young women, are directly employed in the industry). It relies on a large supply of cheap labour, and requires limited skills in grading, packing, harvesting, tending beds and watering. Many of the workers are women who are poor and vulnerable to exploitation.

In 2002, the Ethical Training Initiative (ETI) and its members were alerted to serious violations of labour rights and of the ETI Base Code in the Kenyan flower industry: low pay, poor health and safety (particularly in pesticide handling), poor housing, excessive overtime, abusive supervisors, sexual harassment and barriers to freedom of association. Action taken by members in response to the allegations helped establish productive dialogue in both Kenya and the United Kingdom, which imports one-third of all flowers exported from Kenya. A group of ETI members visited Kenya to meet workers and talk to other players in the flower industry.

The visit helped build platforms for ongoing dialogue, including between agricultural worker unions and industry bodies. Kenyan stakeholders – including NGOs, government and industry – formed the Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI), the aim of which was to work together to tackle flower workers' conditions. ETI members encouraged their suppliers to take part in dialogue in Kenya through HEBI and industry bodies.

While there is still work to be done, changes to the audit process and in the purchasing practices of ETI members have led to a number of improvements for workers in Kenya, including the following: more permanent contracts, establishment of worker welfare and gender committees, better provision of protective equipment, stricter pesticide controls and extensive improvements in housing. More women now have access to day care facilities and there is general acceptance that pregnant women should have light duties.

Although work initially focused on Kenya, ETI members that source flowers have been applying these lessons to other areas of their supply chain. In April 2007, ETI brought Colombian flower exporters, trade unions and companies sourcing from Colombia to the discussion table for the first time. All parties agreed to establish the first-ever multi-stakeholder forum for addressing workers' rights in the floriculture industry. This was a major achievement in terms of constructive debate between companies and trade unions on labour rights.

Source: ETI, 2009. <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/kenya-flower-project>.

4.4. Child labour

Among the trends and issues related to gender and rural employment, child labour is a topic that is receiving growing attention. Child labour undermines decent employment for rural youth since it preconditions working children to accept informal and precarious work when they reach adulthood. Poor health and safety, unenforced legislation, high drop-out rates of child workers and low school attendance and performance limit the opportunities for children involved in work to improve their prospects when they become adults.

Child labour is particularly prevalent in rural areas, especially in the agricultural sector. The ILO Global Report on Child Labour (2010) revealed that out of the 215 million child labourers around the world, 60 percent work in agriculture (129 million between 5 and 14 years of age). In this sector, regulations on child labour can be easily ignored, particularly for farming and rural employment systems which are far from labour inspectors and plagued by poverty and subsistence-oriented livelihood strategies. Work on family farms is often excluded from legislation. In addition, as the study on rural child labour in Africa (de Lange, 2009) points out, the relationship between household wealth and child labour is complex in rural Africa. Research mentioned by A. de Lange indicates that ownership of land or livestock can even increase (rather than reduce) the number of hours that children spend on household work, because their labour is used to make these assets productive.

Despite a lack of sound sex-disaggregated data on child labour in agriculture, there is growing awareness that this issue should be tackled with a differentiated approach for boys and girls. The set of circumstances leading to them being involved in work are by no means homogenous, nor are the conditions and nature of the work itself. Despite the invisibility of some types of work that girls do, efforts are being made to research and document it. Moreover, ‘non-economic’ work (i.e. different types of household tasks undertaken by girls and boys) is recognized as an important aspect of child labour, and an area in which girls are engaged for longer hours than boys. Finally, girls face additional risks of exploitation and sexual abuse that are often underestimated and may not be appropriately addressed in the strategies to eliminate hazardous child labour.

Rural boy labourers suffer from the hazardous nature of their work and from a higher probability than girls of being involved in economic activities. Hazardous child labour is defined as work which, by nature or circumstances, is likely to harm the health, safety, morals and/or development of the child. According to ILO, working girls and boys face different types of hazards based on the different types of work in which they engage (ILO-IPEC 2006b). In the Ghanaian cocoa sector, in addition to working without appropriate protective equipment, boys are more likely than girls to be involved in hazardous activities such as spraying pesticides (de Lange, 2009).

The situation for girls in agriculture seems to vary according to the cultural, religious and ethnic traditions of the country (Murray and Hurst, 2009).²⁰ In some cases, they seem to be discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, throughout their childhood and into adulthood. However, the precise magnitude of this discrimination is difficult to estimate since girls’ work in agriculture (like that of female adults) is often invisible, and their contribution to domestic work (that comes on top of agricultural work) is not given any specific economic value nor recognized as work.

Murray and Hurst (2009) conclude that, “differentiated sensitization messages need to be put in place for rural girls and boys because of the significant impacts of family situations, tradition and gender roles. Statements and guidance from intergovernmental development bodies suggest that integrated mainstreaming-type approaches for combating child labour are required”.

5. What are the policy options?²¹

5.1. General conclusions

5.1.1. The need for a package of policy options and policy evaluation

As seen in the previous sections, gender is a key determinant of the degree of access to productive resources, but also the basis for the division of labour within the household, bargaining power and the social value attributed to different types of work. This makes it a key determinant of decent work outcomes. Although gender inequality varies considerably across regions and sectors, there is evidence that, globally, women benefit less from

²⁰ More information on girls and the difficulties in the transition to decent work for young women can be found on <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=10291> and more updated data on child labour can be found in the ILO Global Report on Child Labour 2010 http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/I-News/lang--en/WCMS_125263/index.htm.

²¹ The policy options listed here are a result of workshop discussions and do not necessarily reflect the official policy viewpoints of the three UN agencies hosting the event.

rural employment, whether in self- or wage-employment, than men do. Women face inequalities in all the pillars of decent work: standards and rights at work, employment creation/enterprise development, social protection and social dialogue (see Box II-14).

Since the reasons for gender differences in rural employment are many, and are often intertwined, effective policies need to be designed as a package of mutually reinforcing measures. As the India study (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009) made clear, higher work participation does not lead to better employment outcomes unless accompanied by higher education and better access to assets. Pathways out of poverty vary for rural women and men, depending on socio-economic and institutional settings. A different policy mix will be required in each country to generate decent jobs and facilitate women's and men's equal access to them. Policies must give consideration to women's limited bargaining position, both within the household and in the labour market, as poverty is linked to weaker incorporation in both.

Women farmers and workers in developing countries benefit more from “package systems” (including policies and concrete measures) that focus on capacity development rather than on capacity building. This means a broader approach and a longer-term engagement are required, including training not only on technical skills or financial management, but also on the development of human and social capital, organizations and institutions, and on the creation of a propitious and enabling environment that includes laws and policies to ensure gender equality in access to property, finance, education, work opportunities and wage rates (see case of Sri Lanka in Box II-12).

Monitoring the effectiveness of existing policies and projects from a gender perspective must take into account distinct gender contexts (Sancar and Bieri, 2009). These contexts may include: the time women have left for recreation; the shift of responsibility to maintain the household economy; decision-making processes; wage gaps; and the production and reproduction of gender norms. Failure to take account of such realities often leads to inadequate monitoring of qualitative change with respect to gender roles and outcomes.

BOX II-12

Multiple pathways and policies towards gender equity in Sri Lanka

There is a need to introduce “policy packages” that include capacity-building measures, financing, credit and social capacity building. The contents of the package should be determined in relation to the existing situation, in order to address the issues and conditions that impede women from achieving the goal of equity. Rather than targeting issues or problems in isolation, policies should address multiple pathways for reducing poverty and the gender gaps in agrarian economies. To reduce the gender gaps which have been inculcated as a result of social construction, policy initiatives should be strategically designed, in partnership with the private sector.

Policies for agricultural commercial development need to be designed to eradicate technological, social and financial obstacles to gender equity. Capacity building of women is effective when women work through their social organizations. They work as centres of change, facilitating agricultural commercialization through transformative action. In this regard, a gender-inclusive policy framework with tailored extension/mobilization mechanisms should be introduced. Policies should be formulated to mainstream gender into agriculture and to open multiple pathways of upward mobility for women.

Source: Wickramasinghe, 2009.

5.1.2. The need for more and better sex-disaggregated data

The paucity of sex-disaggregated data needs to be acknowledged and seriously addressed as a starting point for better systems, diagnoses and more effective policy design. Quantitative data, trends, examples of good practices and innovative policies, as well as solid evidence of the different experiences and needs of rural women and men, are needed to better guide policy development. Such knowledge and information can help convince policy-makers, who often have scarce resources, to prioritize gender-sensitive investment in rural communities and develop sustainable, gender-equitable rural employment strategies.

Research based on sound sex-disaggregated data and analysis, to better understand gendered dynamics in rural employment, is a prerequisite for effective policy design.

As demonstrated in the studies on the Gaza Strip, Iraq, Lebanon (Esim and Omeira, 2009) and Ukraine (Tolstokorova, 2009), there are often no reliable national databases of gender-sensitive statistics on agricultural development and no proven methodology for their collection, analysis and interpretation. Data on the full range of assets and bundles of rights held by individual men and women are needed to understand the interaction among the various assets held by household members and differential outcomes. This additional data would strengthen both project design and evaluation. In terms of analysis, there is a need for:

- mezzo and micro-level analytical studies on how rural employment is gendered and embedded in wider social, cultural, economic, political and ecological structures and processes (with domestic labour as a key variable);
- global, regional and national reviews on current policies that maintain or exacerbate gender disparities in rural employment and policy reform to bring about gender-equitable outcomes.

BOX II-13

Increasing knowledge of asset inequality

An important first step in increasing knowledge about asset inequality by gender would be for data on individual and joint ownership of land and housing to be collected in national censuses. The incidence of asset ownership by gender would provide a needed baseline indicator of gender inequality across countries. It would be relatively easy for existing multi-purpose surveys to add a minimal set of questions regarding individual and joint ownership of a broad range of specific assets as well as questions regarding how these assets were acquired and who made decisions regarding their use. Systematically collecting such data in surveys would greatly enhance gender analysis of the processes through which assets are acquired, utilized and sustained.

More specific data are needed to understand gender-differentiated access to and ownership of productive assets and the relationships with rural employment. Data on the full range of assets and bundles of rights held by individuals are needed to understand the interactions among the various assets held by household members and differential outcomes. These additional data would strengthen both project design and evaluation. With additional information, it is less likely that projects will backfire and worsen, rather than improve, women's employment opportunities and well-being. Recognition that women have insecure land rights in a region, for example, would mean that an intervention would need to secure these land rights before attempting to increase agricultural productivity, in order to avoid increasing the possibility that women will lose rights to the land.

Collecting these data is key to developing programmes that take into account the role that assets play in moving people out of poverty and how this differs for men and women.

Source: Doss *et al.*, 2009.

5.2. Policy recommendations classified under the four pillars of decent work

While acknowledging women's vulnerability in the rural labour market, new policy approaches are needed to explicitly address gender inequalities in the framework of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda (see definition in Box II-14). During the workshop's interactive sessions, in which in-depth discussions took place between the authors and other participants, a number of policy options were presented and debated as ways of improving women's employment outcomes and thus gender equality. They are presented in the pages that follow, structured around the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda.

5.2.1. Fundamental rights

Decent work respects a person's fundamental rights at work, which include freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Forced or compulsory labour should be eradicated, child labour abolished and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation eliminated. These rights, which were adopted in 1998 in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, are regarded as human rights and employees' rights. They are universal and apply at all times in all situations.

Ensuring productive and decent work for rural workers is crucial if they are to escape from poverty and have the means to produce or purchase adequate and nutritious food. However, efforts to reduce poverty and hunger by raising on- and off-farm incomes and

BOX II-14

Definition of decent work

What is decent work?

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives – their aspirations for opportunity and income; rights, voice and recognition; family stability and personal development; and fairness and gender equality. Ultimately these various dimensions of decent work underpin peace in communities and society.

Decent work is captured in four strategic objectives: fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards; employment and income opportunities; social protection and social security; and social dialogue. These objectives hold for all workers, women and men, in both formal and informal economies; in wage employment or working on their own account; in the fields, factories and offices; in their home or in the community.

Decent work is central to efforts to reduce poverty and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

Source: ILO – http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Mainpillars/WhatisDecentWork.

Decent work and gender issues

Decent work applies to all workers: both women and men benefit from more “decent” jobs and income. Decent work can only be assured in a society that allows labour markets to provide equal opportunities and equitable incomes to various social groups regardless of various personal, biological, social or political attributes. In all countries, however, social barriers and discrimination persist to varying degrees because of prevailing social institutions and norms that are often slow to change. More specifically, with respect to gender-based discrimination, despite substantial progress made in promoting gender equality and narrowing gender gaps in the labour market during the last century, much of women's work remains in traditionally “feminine” occupations. These are often more precarious and receive less pay than men's occupations across the world. Women continue to dominate care work, which is generally poorly remunerated or unpaid.

Source : ILO Turin, 2001. Naoko Otobe, *Gender equality and poverty alleviation*.

diversifying livelihoods can be hindered by emerging forms of employment relationships based on more flexible and casual types of agricultural work. Dramatic changes are taking place in agricultural systems worldwide. The expansion of value chains associated with agribusiness and agro-industry, the difficulty of self-employed small farmers to earn a living wage, and labour shortages in some regions together with underemployment in others, are transforming rural labour systems. Achieving fairer conditions of employment means providing opportunities for productive work that deliver a fair income; workplace security and social protection for workers and their families; better prospects for social integration and personal development; equality of opportunities and treatment for all women and men; and freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Three specific dimensions of the fundamental rights at work were discussed in the workshop and suggest a set of policy recommendations:

1. Support ratification of international conventions, educate women on their employment rights and enable local organizations to participate in monitoring codes of conduct related to labour standards. Within rural areas, the following are particularly important:
 - Encourage national governments to ratify ILO conventions relevant to female agricultural workers, and implement international labour standards. Recently, legislators in some countries have begun to pay greater attention to gender aspects of labour relevant to agriculture. For example, in South Africa, women farm workers had very little protection until 1993, when the legislation on minimum labour standards was extended to agricultural workers. In 1998, the Employment Equity Act started to prohibit unfair discrimination on grounds of gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status and family responsibility.
 - Motivate governments to promulgate and implement sound labour legislation, including the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association for the agricultural sector, and to enforce ethical standards, codes of conduct and decent work provisions in agro-industries. The elaboration and adoption of codes of conduct should cover employment conditions of southern producers exporting to European markets. Since the 1990s, over 200 codes related to worker welfare have been developed, of which only 20 apply to agriculture in developing countries; most of these have resulted from the development of agricultural value chains, though they are not yet very convincing in terms of gender sensitivity (Barrientos, Dolan and Tallontire, 2001, as cited in Maertens and Swinnen).
 - Involve civil society and governments in awareness raising and educating women on labour conditions and employment rights, without forgetting to provide continuing communication and accessible means to fight for these rights.
 - Raise awareness through public advocacy, denouncing gender inequities and labour conditions that violate existing standards.
 - Organize training and educational programmes using appropriate and available information and communication technologies to disseminate information on employment rights, labour standards and social clauses.
 - Enforce and monitor labour laws and codes of conduct in agriculture, including for temporary workers (i.e. seasonal or casual jobs).
 - Increase women's access to reliable and affordable legal advice so that they can easily and freely benefit from assistance in case of litigation.

2. Create partnerships between governments, local organizations and the private sector to enhance the implementation of labour standards in rural areas:

- Expand occupational health and safety measures for informal agricultural and agro-industrial workers, in partnership with producer and worker organizations and the private sector.
- Encourage local organizations to participate in monitoring and auditing labour standards and the social aspects of codes of conducts (e.g. flower industry in Kenya).
- Promote the role of women as leaders and members of institutions that govern women's labour rights, from the fields (with women's unions and organizations) to the highest levels of the legislative bodies (Ministries and Parliaments).

3. Governments should enhance gender equality in rural employment through the following:

- Provide core public goods (including rural infrastructure), improve the investment climate, regulate natural resource management, enforce labour standards and promote social and gender equity.
 - Upgrade rural infrastructure, especially with regard to water, transport and markets (including market spaces reserved and equipped for women with children). Employment-intensive public works are a key means of both upgrading rural infrastructure and providing employment. Special efforts should be made to enable women to engage in public works employment, as further described.
 - Develop social services in rural areas, such as health and child care, to ease the unpaid (largely reproductive) work burden on rural women and improve their lives.
 - Improve women's access to land (e.g. through preferential treatment in land titling or land reform programmes), and raise awareness on women's legal or customary rights to inherit or buy land.
 - Promote labour-saving technologies to ease women's workloads.
 - Introduce affirmative action for women workers and entrepreneurs (e.g. jobs, training, credit, child care, representation in decision-making processes, legal rights to own property and engage in legal acts without a male relative's signature, fiscal incentives and other benefits) as women often do not assert their legal rights because they fear challenging existing practices and norms.
 - Encourage women to undertake paid work in farming and agro-industries and to develop their experience and skills to improve future job prospects.
- Encourage or initiate public works programmes that can contribute to enhancing gender equality in rural employment by fulfilling the following objectives:
 - Make it easier for women to participate on equal terms with men through education, training, child-care facilities, etc.
 - Create assets, such as vehicles, water pumps or wells and stoves, that reduce aspects of women's domestic workloads and thus facilitate their participation in the programmes.
 - Develop mechanisms that allow women to establish a stable working history to attract potential future employers.
 - Provide financial services to help women and men save and/or invest their savings/earnings in new economic activities, thus enhancing the long-term benefits of the public works programmes.

- Gain a better understanding of public works initiatives and the determinants of their success and long-term effects.
 - Explore investment opportunities in rural infrastructure or activities designed in crisis recovery situations, as they provide an opportunity for generating rural employment and often reach isolated rural areas, thus benefiting vulnerable populations, including indigenous people and rural women.
4. Develop gender-sensitive strategies to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in agriculture.
- Low family incomes, the absence of schools, the lack of regulations and enforcement, and ingrained attitudes and perceptions about the roles of children in rural areas are only some of the numerous factors which make child labour in agriculture particularly difficult to tackle and eliminate. Policy-makers should first recognize and tackle household poverty as the major underlying cause of child labour. Poverty reduction is the starting point for successful strategies against child labour, since improving overall household economic situations (through a set of actions such as improving access to land and agricultural productivity, diversifying economic opportunities, improving wages and accessing social benefits and health care) can improve families' income security and reduce dependence on extra labour or income supplied by children, especially rural girls.
 - Gender-sensitive policy options for governments (with the support of civil society and local community groups) to tackle child labour could include the following:
 - Ratifying and implementing international conventions on the Rights of the Child, which provide an important framework for addressing issues of child labour and for ensuring that girls receive special attention. Priorities include: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age (1973), and the ILO Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999).²²
 - Supporting the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (set up by ILO, FAO, IFAD and other international organizations²³) at national levels, with the help of national ministries of agriculture, agricultural extension services, farmers' cooperatives and producers' organizations.
 - Strengthening the monitoring, regulation and enforcement of child labour legislation in rural areas.
 - Undertaking sex-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis. Since child labour in agriculture is mostly informal, information is lacking. Quantitative surveys are necessary to assess the magnitude, employment profile and gender distribution of child labour in agriculture, and to design appropriate and differentiated support to boys and girls. The active participation of girls and women in research and evaluation activities is essential.
 - Consolidating gender and child labour mainstreaming by checking that both issues are systematically integrated into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes with the aim of reducing the supply of and demand for child labour.

22 The ILO's Global Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour aims at eliminating all worst forms of child labour by 2016.

23 The partnership includes the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Funds for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR, including IFPRI), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and International Union of Food (IUF).

- Setting up awareness-raising and training opportunities for rural employers and parents, and bringing governments, agencies and families together to look for solutions to the problem of female child labour. For example:
 - › support the development of labour saving technology to take pressure off families;
 - › develop child-care facilities where working parents can leave their children so that they receive appropriate care in their parents' absence and girls looking after their younger brothers and sisters can go to school;
 - › provide compulsory, free and quality education of good for all children, with a special effort to encourage rural girls to attend schools.
- Ensuring that all rural girls and boys enter the education system and make school accessible (with adequate equipment and infrastructure and public transport for those who live in remote areas) and relevant for rural girls. School programmes are often designed without any regard for gender differences; the curricula should be adapted to the daily life of rural children, according to their individual profiles (e.g. gender, age and social origins). FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach is a good example of specific training designed and adapted to rural youth's needs in poor countries (see Box II-15).
- Improving skills training in agriculture for girls so that when they reach the minimum age of employment, these skills contribute to increasing their incomes and the productivity and profitability of the local agricultural sector.

5.2.2. Employment creation

Employment needs to be created through initiatives and policies that promote sustainable and productive employment. Policy-makers must seek to ensure that everyone, men and women, has equal access to work.

BOX II-15

The Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS)

Initiated and disseminated by FAO, the JFFLS approach has a unique learning methodology and curriculum which combines both agricultural and life skills. An innovative aspect of the JFFLS is the way youth are encouraged to develop as people. A school timetable includes cultural activities such as singing, dancing and theatre. This allows the youth to develop confidence while keeping local cultural traditions alive.

The one-year learning programme follows the crop cycle; links are established between agriculture, nutrition, gender equality and life-skills knowledge so that young participants learn to grow healthy crops while making informed decisions for leading healthy lives. Participatory field activities include crop selection and cultivation, land preparation, pest management, cultivation of medicinal plants and income generation. Local theatre, art, dance or songs are also integral aspects of each JFFLS day.

Implemented by community facilitators, the JFFLS curriculum addresses a wide range of issues such as gender sensitivity, child protection, psycho-social support, nutrition, health, hygiene, sanitation, education and business skills, as well as ad-hoc modules for child labour prevention and land and property rights, if needed. Experience has shown that the schools provide a safe and social space for boys and girls, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

The local community plays an important role in monitoring and implementing the schools, including providing land and volunteers. A JFFLS is run by a small group of people, often including a local extension worker and a teacher.

Source: FAO, 2009. *Rural Youth employment and the JFFLS*.

To achieve this goal for women in rural areas, the following recommendations were made:

- Reduce constraints in access to land, finance, market information and technology.
 - Women's differential and inferior access to assets, endowments and opportunities often results in lower productivity and income. Lack of access to land is not always the most binding constraint to women's agricultural production and productivity, especially in countries where land is abundant (e.g. parts of sub-Saharan Africa). In such countries, labour shortages can be a more fundamental constraint. For this reason, critical policy interventions should include the provision of agricultural and domestic technologies that enhance labour productivity, smooth out peak labour demand in certain seasons for labour-intensive operations, and/or reduce the time women (and their daughters) spend in domestic chores (e.g. running water and electricity – or at least improved wells or pumps to facilitate water collection; wood lots or improved stoves to reduce time and effort spent collecting fuel; mills for processing cereals).
 - However, in land-scarce countries, such as India, innovative approaches are urgently needed (e.g. integrated programmes that support landless women's collective purchase of land, financial services and training in environmentally-friendly farming practices), in addition to legislation to improve equality in women's land rights. Mere access to microcredit does not necessarily enhance self-employment of women by enabling them to start micro-enterprises. In some cases, credit directed towards women is used by their husbands for their own or for male-controlled family businesses. Thus, it is also crucial to promote attitudinal changes in the sociocultural environment that will have an impact on intra-household dynamics to allow poor women to develop, own and manage micro-enterprises.
- Promote female education and vocational training in rural areas for all age groups.
 - For children, it is important to develop innovative teaching methods that are gender sensitive and treat rural girls and boys equally. School systems which channel boys and girls into different subject areas at a very early stage reinforce gender labour market segregation and unquestioned acceptance of girls to engage in traditional female tasks that are often of lower status. Culturally sensitive strategies are needed to entice rural girls into school. WFP has been doing this in Malawi through a food distribution programme (at school), targeted at girls (see Box II-16). It is important to broaden the training skills offered to older girls to complement agriculture work and to ensure that older boys are also given opportunities for agriculture-related skills training. Without training, it becomes difficult to build a new generation of farmers and rural workers who can increase local agricultural productivity and profitability. There is an overall need to focus on agri-market-oriented training alternatives for both young women and men.
 - For adults, gender-sensitive extension services can play a very important role in training and empowering women by:
 - › increasing women's agricultural knowledge; this has the potential to increase labour productivity in agriculture-based contexts (especially in Africa), and increase food security at the household level;
 - › providing opportunities for technical education that can build women's entrepreneurial skills for self-employment and wage employment. Training women in income-generating activities that can be performed at home (such as dairy processing, cashmere production and processing, handicrafts, carpet and felt making) can generate very positive effects on family welfare. It is important

BOX II-16**Gender-sensitive school distribution of food by World Food Programme in Malawi**

Abigail Kagwa can tell you exactly how many days she has spent at school this month. “Today is my 18th day,” she says with a broad smile. “That means I will get a bag of maize at the end of the month to take home to my family”. So will hundreds of other girls at Mdzobwe primary school in central Malawi, where farmers tend small plots of maize and vegetables. As an incentive for parents to keep their daughters in class, the World Food Programme (WFP) provides a monthly take-home ration of 12.5 kg of maize to any girl who attends school for a minimum of 18 days each month.

When the programme began in 2001, far more boys attended Mdzobwe than girls. Most poor parents could only afford to send their sons to school. Daughters stayed behind to work in their homes or fields. Today, Mdzobwe's 1 600 girls easily outnumber boys, accounting for more than half of the student body. Indeed, there are 400 more girls than the total number of pupils before school feeding started.

Abigail's story is played out in many of the other 678 schools across Malawi, where WFP runs this programme in conjunction with the Ministry of Education – with rising numbers of girls attending and succeeding.

But 12-year-old Abigail is not only interested in collecting her monthly ration. “There are seven people in my family and we normally don't have enough food to eat breakfast at home,” she says. “So the meal I get at school every morning helps me a lot.” Every pupil receives a daily bowl of hot, nutritious maize porridge, providing them with another reason to turn up for school and the nutrition they need to concentrate in class.

“I want to be a nurse when I am older so that I can help people suffering from diseases,” Abigail says. “But I can only become a nurse if I stay in school and if I work hard. Without this food, it would be very difficult for me to do that.”

Source: WFP, 2009. <http://www.wfp.org/stories/meal-and-bag-maize-draw-malawi-girls-school>.

that potential employment opportunities are carefully identified before any training takes place and that the training is then tailored to provide women with the skills necessary to undertake such work. The benefits of such training can be further strengthened by encouraging/supporting the formation of self-managed producer groups or cooperatives to improve their members' access to markets and financial services and enhance their bargaining power;

- › training in the “intangibles” that facilitate change across different levels of capacity; these intangibles include the ability to learn, cooperate and develop self-respect and the communication and social competencies needed to articulate self-interests to bargain, participate in community and producer organizations and negotiate and peacefully resolve conflicts;
- › facilitating the formation of women's groups to sustain the adoption of different income-generating activities. One strategy would be to train and involve rural women more often in agricultural advisory services so that they can transfer their knowledge to other women and play an active role in widening the outreach of technical information and awareness of women's rights over productive assets and incomes.

5.2.3. Social protection

Work must be safe and it must provide security. Working conditions must meet health and safety regulations and the work must provide sufficient income for a person to live. The work must be dignified and it must offer prospects for personal development. It must also be linked to some form of social security that provides protection if the employee is unable to work.

Vulnerable employment is defined as persons who are less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to benefits or social protection programmes, and are therefore more

exposed to economic fluctuations (ILO, 2008). Vulnerability is often associated with gender pay gaps, low representation in producer and worker organizations, limited security, hazards and overall poverty. In all regions over the last decade, women's and men's employment conditions in rural labour markets have improved. An example of this improvement is in the shift from being unpaid contributors to family work to becoming waged workers or employers. In some specific contexts, where conflict, disease, death from HIV/AIDS and male out-migration have increased the relative proportion of women working in agriculture, the observed process of "feminization" of rural labour markets may contribute to this shift, with women having to play a more dominant role in rural activities.

However, the negative impacts of economic shocks and crises are not shared equally between men and women, and this must be taken into account when elaborating safety nets and other policies to mitigate the impacts of crises. Gender is a key factor in determining vulnerability to changes in food prices and job loss. While richer countries have the resources to establish safety nets and other policies to mitigate the impact of the crises, developing countries often lack these resources and systems. If these differentiated impacts are not taken into account in policy responses, countries run the risk of failing to assist those most severely affected and not being effective in mitigating the impacts of the crises.

Among the policy options presented to enhance social protection for women was the creation of social safety nets. In order to protect rural women workers, it is important to create the necessary safety nets that protect against dramatic changes in livelihoods for women and the poor, including shifts from formal to informal employment, migration and return migration. Rural women whose primary occupation is still agriculture are "weaker" in the sense that they are less able to change occupation because of their personal profile and location. The pathway out of poverty for them often includes heavy reliance on public programmes and public transfers such as food rations or public works, at least in the initial stages or in periods of economic downturns.

BOX II-17

India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in India in 2005. This Act guarantees 100 days of work to all rural households whose adult members are willing to perform unskilled manual labour. Women and men are paid an equal wage, which is the statutory minimum wage ascertained by the state government.

In May-June 2008, a survey of 1 060 NREGA workers in six Hindi-speaking states of North India was conducted to study the impact of the NREGA in the lives of workers. Significant benefits reported by the women include improvement in food security, health benefits and a chance to avoid hazardous work. Women have started earning the minimum wage, which is a big achievement. Further, a majority of women workers reported collecting their wages and keeping it.

The availability of local wage employment at the statutory minimum wage for women is a new development associated with the NREGA in many of the areas covered by the survey. However, the participation of women varies widely across the survey regions. Serious problems remain in implementation across states (such as the lack of availability of child care and the continued presence of illegal contractors). Given the critical gains made by women workers – in accessing work and income, food and health care for themselves and their families, and in leaving potentially hazardous work – it is critical that problems in implementation be resolved and not derail the gains.

Source: Khera and Nayak, 2009.

- In Brazil, for example, 1.45 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) is dedicated to social protection in rural areas (e.g. for sickness, old age, maternity). Such social investment in favour of women has had positive impacts on rural welfare and poverty alleviation.
- Turkey has taken steps to establish public social security schemes for agricultural workers. A voluntary programme was established in 1983. Those who contribute at a prescribed level for at least 15 working days each month are entitled to old-age, invalidity or survivor's pensions.
- In Argentina, Guatemala and Nicaragua, in response to pressure from workers' organizations, social protection programmes have been developed and formalized in national legislations.
- In India, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), implemented in 2005, created a safety net of a guaranteed minimum rural wage for the poorest households in rural India.

It is also important to create and/or support the implementing institutions (including through laws, services and budgets) to encourage women to engage in paid rural work. These may include access to knowledge and training, agricultural advisory services, credit and land tenure systems, child care and social services, targeted social protection and retirement schemes and measures for return migrants.

5.2.4. Social dialogue

Employees and employers must both be involved in planning a sound approach that assures decent work. Consultation and the freedom to express one's concerns contribute to decent work at all levels.

The organization and unionization of rural people is weak in general, but gender inequalities are further reflected in workers' and producers' representation, especially in organized labour institutions, such as trade unions and traditional forms of collective action, where women and women's interests are largely underrepresented. Women in rural areas often face difficulties in access to institutions, organizations and power. Therefore, they have less ability to translate work/effort into income and well-being, and limited participation in decision-making processes. On the contrary, when they manage to get organized in groups (see Box II-18), women can fully benefit.

To achieve women's participation in social dialogue, there was a consensus on the following options:

1. Support the organization and representation of women in rural communities (including through trade unions, cooperatives and grassroots associations) and stimulate women's participation in rural workers' and farmers' organizations.
 - Ensure freedom of association and promote rural women's participation in rural mixed workers' organizations to improve their legal and social protection and bargaining power, and to increase work security and wage rates.
 - Women may have difficulty joining and becoming active members of rural producers' organizations (RPOs), because often men are considered as the "active farmers" in the households and they therefore take part in RPO activities. To combat their lack of effective representation in RPOs and the fact that they cannot articulate their gender-related needs, women are more frequently setting up their

BOX II-18**Benefits of belonging to a group****In Java, joining a group helps accessing financial support**

Ibu Cacih is a 31-year-old woman who lives in Cingambul, Java. She tells, in her own words, how joining a group provided her with an entrée to credit, which in turn improved her financial situation.

“Before joining the group, I had to borrow money from a middleman and he was the one who set the prices for the items I made. Most of the time, once I’d paid back the loan, I didn’t have enough money left over and I’d have to borrow again. Since I joined the group, I sell my products for a good price and to whomever I want. I no longer depend on middlemen and I don’t have to borrow money. I feel better now because my children have shoes to wear to school and I have some savings. I also can associate with others in the community, and I can voice my opinion at meetings. I’m not poor anymore. I see my future much better.”

In rural India, a small loan opens up opportunities

For several years, Sarasu, a single mother of seven children in rural India struggled to feed her family on just 20 rupees a day (which is less than one Euro). Saving money was impossible, and without collateral, she could not qualify for a bank loan. The IFAD Tamil Nadu Women’s Development Project promoted what was at the time an innovative informal group-based system of lending and saving. The premise was simple – after women had paid into a communal account, they could access loans from local commercial banks, participating in the scheme.

Determined to improve the life of her family, Sarasu managed to save the required initial amount and took out a loan to buy two dairy cows. Sales from the milk raised her income to 100 rupees a day. Another loan helped her start a fuelwood business. Now, many years later, both loans have been repaid and two of Sarasu’s children have graduated from university.

Source: IFAD internal working document 2006 “From micro to small business: meeting the growth challenges faced by rural women”.

own organizations. In the last decade, new “women only” agricultural and rural organizations have grown significantly, along with women’s participation in existing cooperatives. The examples of “Las Hermanas”, a fair trade and organically certified coffee growers’ cooperative in Nicaragua, or “Café Feminino”, a Peruvian women’s coffee production cooperative, are self-explicit: aside from helping the women strengthen self-esteem and develop their technical and leadership capacities in all aspect of coffee production, the programme has helped them acquire land titles, thus ensuring their control over fundamental productive assets.

- Women’s organizations outside the agricultural sector, such as Self-Employed Women’s Association (“SEWA”) in India (see Box II-19), also have broadened their mandate to include support for agricultural income-generating activities, mainly through skills training and credit.
- In the case of mixed-gender cooperatives or organizations, particular attention needs to be paid to strengthening women’s self-confidence and voice since, in many cases, women are members merely on paper (to help the family access more credit from the cooperative or increase voting rights), while their male counterparts are the active members leading discussions and decision processes in the organizations. Strengthening women’s voice requires more than just ensuring that women are represented in mixed-gender organizations (which tells us little about their levels of participation and influence): women should actively learn and participate, bringing in specific objectives in the interests of the women’s membership, and have equal voting rights and influence with men in the organization.
- Promote women’s membership and leadership roles in farmers’ organizations and cooperatives that bring financial and marketing services, training and social and psychological support in the face of opposition.

BOX II-19**Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) - Farmers of Sabarkantha, India**

SEWA, a member-based organization with over one million poor informal-sector women workers, started a project, with the help of the World Bank and the Gujarat Land Development Corporation, in the semi-arid district of Sabarkantha to solve drinking water problems in villages. *"The striking feature of the Sabarkantha experience is the way trust was built among the local farmers by addressing their immediate problem (of drinking water) first."*

Gaining confidence among villagers, SEWA expanded its activities to creating savings groups, providing agricultural training (winter crops), securing the license to sell seeds in the local market, providing credit and market outlets and helping to access services (e.g. health and child care, insurance, legal aid, capacity building and communication). With the various activities, agricultural productivity improved: marginal women farmers (who were barely surviving on their own produce) could plant two or three crops a year instead of only one, which increased their income from Rs. 5 000 to Rs. 15 000 a year in less than three years. The higher income made it easier for women to borrow money to purchase cattle that can produce enough milk to earn Rs. 30 a day, comfortably helping the household out of poverty. In addition, the process of organizing these productive activities and supporting services for and by poor women, in a decentralized and affordable manner, has generated a solid bond of self-help.

Source: Elaborated from SEWA website (<http://www.sewa.org>).

- The Tamil Nadu Empowerment and Poverty Reduction project gives a good example of the empowerment of women and gender equity in a local project: at least one of the two leaders of the economic activity groups has to be a woman, and a quorum can be achieved at meetings only if 50 percent of the attendees are women. To ensure that project activities aimed at securing livelihoods and promoting activities are relevant to women, a special focus is given to providing women with access to skills, information, resources and assets.
- Provide entrepreneurship skills training in how to start a business and prepare business plans, perform basic accounting and record keeping, access and use loans and conduct management and marketing.
 - To start managing value chains at local levels, producers need to understand the requirements of processors, traders and retailers. Members need to commit

BOX II-20**Empowering women in Bosnia and Herzegovina through rural producers' organizations**

A women's producer association, established in 2003 in Tesanj, Bosnia and Herzegovina, provides members with a milk collection network to help them market surplus milk and increase members' household incomes. Subsequently, the producer organization started to assist members in accessing credit and equipment. The women purchased more animals from the Livestock and Rural Finance Development Project credit line to increase their production.

The project empowered these traditional milk producers to become more active within their communities, make greater contributions to their households, and thus improve the positions of their families and communities. Women's active membership in the producer association enabled them to improve their knowledge and skills about livestock production and marketing. Marketing of the milk created new jobs, increased incomes for rural men and women and improved livestock production. The producers' association is now thinking about expanding this positive experience to vegetable production and processing, thus providing services to a large number of agricultural producers.

Source: IFAD, n.d.

to continuous improvement in farm production, keep farm records, have access to independent information on market prices and trends, obtain a good understanding of the value chain, identify good commercial partners and develop trust. The example given by the IFAD project in Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrates how social capital can be built among farmers through the creation of a women's producer association.

- Support women's organizations in exploring and promoting opportunities for women to gain from simple value-adding strategies.
 - More than ever, because of increased competition and uncertainty in the export and domestic markets, female producers need to engage in collective processes to better manage their assets; access services, inputs, credit and markets; and contribute more effectively to decisions made with value-chain partners. The development of strong economic organizations can enable poor women to overcome high transaction costs, limited scales of production, poor access to a variety of resources and lack of political and bargaining power as individuals.
 - Producers' organizations can develop innovative approaches to product development, processing and marketing, which can help poor women without key productive assets (such as land) to enter value chains. In addition to the obvious economic advantages of such strategies, members of these creative groups, particularly women, improve self-confidence and their status in the community.
2. Raise gender awareness and promote inter-institutional collaboration when designing rural employment strategies and development policies.
- Ensure that dialogue mechanisms are established in policy formulation at community, provincial and national levels. Many different layers of dialogues can be established at different levels, for example:
 - the Dimitra project,²⁴ which is a participatory information and communication project contributing to improving the visibility of rural populations, women in particular. The goal of Dimitra is to highlight the role of women and men as producers, so that their respective interests are better taken into consideration and they can fully participate in the rural development of their communities and countries. Dimitra builds the capacities of rural populations, women in particular, through information dissemination and the exchange of experiences. It aims to help rural women and their organizations make their voices heard at national and international levels. In this way, it contributes to improving their living conditions and status by highlighting the importance and value of their contributions to food security and sustainable development. Dimitra also strives to make development actors more gender sensitive and to promote gender equality. Dimitra's work is guided by three important principles: (i) partnership – working closely with local partner organizations to highlight local knowledge; (ii) participation – active participation of civil society organizations; and (iii) networking – supporting the exchange of good practices, ideas and experiences.
 - the Farmers' Forum launched by IFAD, a bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue among small farmers' and rural producers' organizations, IFAD and governments, focused on rural development and poverty reduction. The Forum

²⁴ Launched in 1994, it has been an FAO project since 1998 and receives financial support from the European Commission, as well as from other bi- or multilateral funding agencies in the framework of its field activities. <http://www.fao.org/sd/dimitra>.

is rooted in concrete partnership and collaboration at the country and regional levels. Engagement with rural organizations at the field level and dialogue at the regional and international levels are articulated as mutually reinforcing processes. Following consultations at the national and regional levels, the Farmers' Forum has met every two years, since February 2006, for a global consultation, in conjunction with the Governing Council of IFAD. The last forum in February 2010 had a special focus on women's organizations.

- Elaborate gender-sensitive rural policies; the case of irrigation programmes is illustrative. Failure to take prevailing gender inequalities and discrimination into consideration when designing irrigation schemes creates the risk that these schemes will accelerate processes of social and economic marginalization, including landlessness, of poor rural women who mainly use irrigated land for subsistence production.
- Encourage grassroots participation in policy and programme design and legislate a role for local groups. Gender relations can be mediated through the empowerment of both men and women in rural society. Governments should seek to involve communities in decision-making processes, develop and strengthen women's own organizations and improve the coordination between horizontal and vertical farmers' organizations (in order to minimize risks and consolidate farming futures). A good example of grassroots participation in the elaboration of national policy is given in the organization of the post-harvest fisheries operators in the Gambia (see Box II-21).

BOX II-21

Post-harvest fishery activities in the Gambia

The post-harvest sector is a critical entry point for poverty alleviation in fisheries in the Gambia. It is largely dominated by women (more than 80 percent of the workforce), while the supply of fresh fish and raw material is dominated by men. Lacking viable organizations, the post-harvest operators had traditionally little potential of improving their livelihoods, particularly in terms of accessing credit and informational services and participating in decision making and the implementation of policies that have an impact on livelihoods. The poorest, often the women and the youth, were rarely involved in organizations. High illiteracy rates also contributed to the poor functioning of organizations.

When community-based organizations (CBOs) organized post-harvest fishery communities, and the National Fisheries Post-harvest Operators Platform was created, operators were able to articulate and advocate their concerns and participate in decision making at the policy level. The Fisheries Act was formulated in 2007.

Membership in the CBOs made a difference at the individual and collective levels. The CBOs helped by developing mutual understanding, trust and confidence among the members, providing a venue for socialization and discussion of common problems and issues, and enabling members to organize health and sanitation campaigns, such as beach clean-ups.

A legalized CBO, which became a member of the National Fisheries Post-harvest Operators Platform, helped its members access credit and savings schemes. CBOs can own assets, and in Kartong the village authorities have given the CBO the land where its drying racks will be built. The CBO is now working on the legal transfer of the ownership rights.

Source: FAO, 2007. *Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Project / PP3*.

- Agricultural advisory services need to recognize female farmers (not strictly “head(s) of household”) and use methods that actually reach them (e.g. sending female extension agents out into highly sex-segregated societies, addressing women’s needs in media and using a range of information and communication technologies or using farmer field schools for experiential learning).
- Promote schemes that guarantee the right-to-employment because these can have significant benefits for women, including increased food security and a better ability to avoid hazardous work.
- Stimulate the legal reforms that are necessary to promote women’s economic and social empowerment (e.g. institutional reforms on land acquisition and inheritance and market reforms for accessing productive inputs and creating a policy environment conducive to entrepreneurship and private sector growth).
- Improve policy design to support equal market access for rural men and women who are:
 - agricultural producers: this would include providing better market contacts and information on prices (i.e. developing “vertical linkages” between production sites and market places); strengthening property rights for both men and women, especially women who face considerably more discrimination; providing better access to credit, technical assistance and capacity development; and creating efficiently managed producer organizations;
 - wage workers: this means that government and private partners should guarantee freedom of association; the design of national labour legislation in agriculture and agro-industries in compliance with international labour standards; appropriate labour inspections in rural areas; information campaigns about legal rights of the workers; and training and systems that value women’s skills and experience.

Conclusion

To conclude this second section of the publication, we have to remind the reader that its main objective was to highlight the richness and diversity of inputs shared and discussed at the workshop held in Rome in April 2009. All the workshop papers and abstracts can be found in their original forms at <http://www.fao-ilo.org>.

Many gaps in available data and lack of analytical approaches and rigour frequently handicap the efforts of policy-makers to address these crucial issues adequately when designing poverty alleviation strategies. Through this workshop, which gathered specialists from all over the world to share their knowledge, questions, experiences and understanding of these very complex issues, FAO, IFAD and ILO aimed to gain more statistical data, field-based evidence and insights into the gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment, in order to strengthen policy design.

However, the policy suggestions that are explored in this section which emanated from the workshop discussions are by no means exhaustive. They should be seen to complement existing policy recommendations. The three agencies have committed to consider these policy discussions in their development of policy briefs on selected topics.

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