

Master in Applied Labour Economics for Development
Module E: Seminars on Contemporary Global Labour Market Challenges

ILO-ITC Turin, 4 May 2011

Decent work deficits in rural areas



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Outline – Session 2

- I. Review of the Four Pillars of Decent Work in rural areas
- II. Decent work deficits in rural areas, main causes and how they can be reduced

1

Group work

Challenges of addressing decent work in rural areas...

2

The Four Pillars of Decent Work

DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.

Pillar 1

Employment & enterprise dev.

Availability of an adequate number of productive, **quality** jobs, which provide **income** to cover at least basic needs

Pillar 2

Social protection

Protection from work-related injury and from lack of income due to unemployment, illness or age

Pillar 3

Standards & rights at work

Fundamental rights: freedom of choice & equality of treatment, freedom of association & opportunity at work

Pillar 4

Governance & social dialogue

Participation to decision making about work conditions and **representation** of interests in negotiations

Challenges of addressing decent work in rural areas

- Prevalence of self-employment and informality
- Poverty and low productivity, marginal operations that provide little room for improvement and investment
- Limited coverage and enforcement of labour laws
- Blurred employment relationships (family)
- Very hazardous sector
- Seasonal migration, mobility
- Regulations and institutions developed for urban and formal employment
- Pervasive unemployment and underemployment
- Limited capacity of representation and voice

4

Decent work deficits in rural employment

- Decent work deficits are gaps and constraints in achieving decent work outcomes, under the categories of each of the 4 Pillars.
- They can be used to assess progress towards DW, or to measure relative position in terms of DW achievements of sectors, countries, or segments of the workforce
- We will look at the common decent work deficits faced by people in rural areas, their causes and the intervention to reduce them and achieve decent work.

5

Decent work deficits – Pillar 1

Employment and enterprise development

- Underemployment (not just unemployment)
- Low quality and low productivity jobs
- Low and insecure incomes: may not earn enough income to break out of the cycle of poverty - working poor
- Specific categories vulnerable to exploitation of labour
- Lack of access to finance and credit

6

Main causes of decent work deficits – Pillar 1

Employment and enterprise development

- Lack of investment in agriculture
- Poorly functioning rural labour markets
- Weak governance & institutions
- Poor organization & regulation
- Workers may have casual, temporary, seasonal arrangements (migrant workers and families)
- Rare written employment contracts
- Labour is often hired and / or supplied by contractors

7

Reducing decent work deficits – Pillar 1

Employment and enterprise development

- Employment-centred agricultural and rural development policies and strategies
 - Pro-poor
 - Gender-sensitive
 - Targeted to youth, migrants, all agricultural sub-sectors
- Entrepreneurship promotion in rural areas
 - Supporting micro, small and medium enterprises and rural services including in agriculture
- Livelihoods diversification for decreasing risks and vulnerability emerging from and based in agriculture
- Enhance employability through knowledge and skills interventions

8

Decent work deficits – Pillar 2

Social protection

- Limited access to pensions in informal and self-employment
- Low occupational safety and health and measures to reduce risk of hazards
- Limited / non existent health care insurance and maternity benefits
- Poor living and housing conditions

9

Main causes of decent work deficits – Pillar 2

Social protection

- Social protection systems not in place
 - Social protection (pension etc) usually linked to employment and workplace
 - Lack of occupational safety & health enforcement and focus in rural and informal employment
- The poor lack access to essential public services
 - Lack of education, information and knowledge
 - Poor nutrition and health
- Agriculture one of most hazardous sectors but often exempt from OSH legislation

10

Reducing decent work deficits – Pillar 2

Social protection

- Universal pension schemes (e.g. South Africa)
 - Reduced poverty and inequality
 - Increased investment in education and health of children
- Conditional cash transfer programmes (e.g. Mexico)
 - Reduced number of work days lost to illness thanks to better health clinic attendance
- Agricultural extension services promote safer technology
 - Reduced use of pesticides through Integrated Production and Pest Management

11

Decent work deficits – Pillar 3

Standards and rights at work

- Gender inequalities and marked division of labour and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation
- Women less likely than men to earn a wage in rural work; but more likely than men to be employed seasonally and / or in part-time employment
- In rural areas as elsewhere women are paid less than men for equivalent jobs and comparable levels of education
- Very high prevalence of child labour (60%) and hazardous child labour in agriculture
- Children work long hours, use sharp tools, carry loads, operate dangerous machinery, risk exposure to toxic pesticides, and other hazards

12

Decent work deficits – Pillar 3 (b)

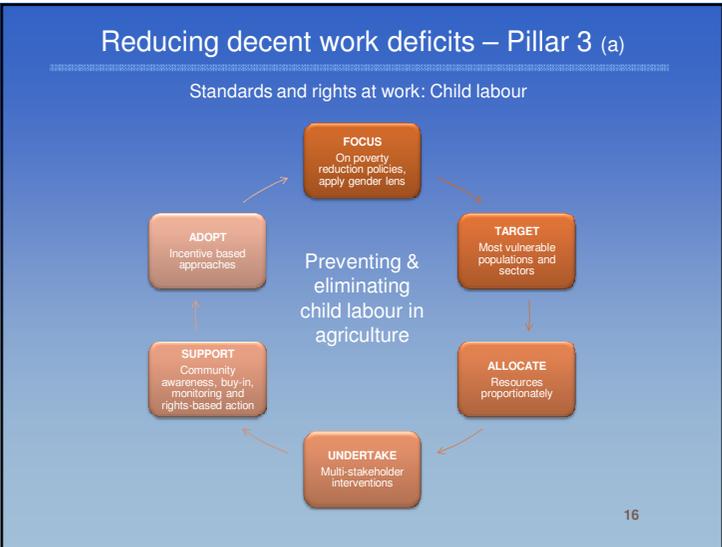
Standards and rights at work: Gender inequalities

Region	Agri. employment share on total employment (%)	Working poor (under 2 USD per day) share on total employment (%)	Vulnerable employment shares on total employment (%)		
			Total	Male	Female
Developed economies & EU	3.9	...	10.1	11.4	8.6
East Asia	38.6	33.0	55.5	50.8	61
South Asia	48.2	80.9	77.5	74.3	85.1
SSA	62.5	40.6	50.6	49.1	52.7
World	34.4	40.6	50.6	49.1	52.7

13

- ### Main causes of decent work deficits – Pillar 3 (a)
- Standards and rights at work
- Gender inequalities in rural employment
 - Social norms limit opportunities for women
 - Double burden of productive and reproductive work, less time to invest in skills development or in full-time employment
 - High prevalence of vulnerable employment means also reduced bargaining power which reinforces the deficit
 - Child labour in agriculture
 - Poverty and lack of decent work opportunities for adults
 - Low awareness of risks and long term costs of child labour
 - Absence of appropriate national policies,
 - Inadequate labour laws, weak capacities to inspect & enforce and few channels for legal assistance / appeal
- 14

- ### Reducing decent work deficits – Pillar 3 (b)
- Standards and rights at work: Gender inequalities
- Advocate & inform women of their employment rights
 - Reduce entry barriers for women in labour markets and employment opportunities (i.e. access to land, mobility)
 - Promote gender-sensitive working environment through normative actions, policies, strategies
 - Promote gender equality in rural employment especially within public works programmes
- 15



Decent work deficits – Pillar 4

Social dialogue

- Limited unionization and organization of rural workers and producers
- Weak level of trade union representation among agricultural workers
- Women agricultural laborers' level of trade union representation generally low
- Seasonal and part-time agricultural workers have a weak level of unionization

17

Main causes of decent work deficits – Pillar 4

Social dialogue

- Weak farmers' organizations, agricultural trade unions, cooperatives
- Difficulties of organizing over large geographical areas and fragmented workforce
- Informal workers and self-employed often neglected by traditional social partners
- Limited financial resources through membership dues
- Legal and administrative barriers – right of freedom of association and collective bargaining is often denied
- Difficulties of waged workers hired by labour contractors to register as a union member

18

Reducing decent work deficits – Pillar 4

Social dialogue

- Strengthen small producers' organizations and cooperatives
- Encourage participation of women and youth within the member-based organizations
- Encourage association of women, youth, migrants to complement formal unions to give voice to specific categories of workforce
- Create producers-to-producers learning opportunities related to governance and social dialogue
- Support formal unions in opening up to self-employed farmers and agricultural workers (e.g. General Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana)

19

Key messages

- Addressing rural employment through the Four Pillars of Decent Work provides a more just and stable framework for social development in rural areas
- Decent work deficits in rural employment need to be addressed systematically as rural workers in developing countries are the majority of the workforce and continue to grow

Thank you!

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20

Discussion questions

- What strategies can be used to promote employment and sustainable economic growth (both farm and non-farm), and to reduce poverty in rural areas?
- How can rights at work be extended, implemented and enforced in rural areas?
- How can social protection and social inclusion be extended and improved in rural areas?
- How can better governance and social dialogue be promoted in rural areas?
- How can national and local governments, and employers' and workers' organizations best contribute to decent rural employment and poverty reduction?