



Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty

Status, trends and gaps

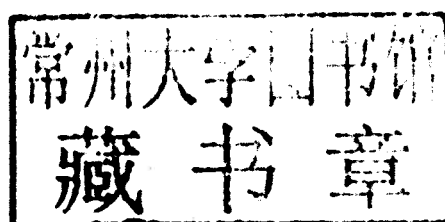
Gender

PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

Rural Employment

Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty

Status, trends and gaps



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Foreword

There's no debate about the importance of women for rural economic growth and poverty reduction. They fill many crucial roles, as farmers, wage labourers and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as caretakers of children and the elderly. Rural women have the potential to lift their households and communities out of poverty. But they are hampered by persistent gender inequities that limit their access to decent work, which they need as a vehicle for economic empowerment, social advancement and political participation.

Policymakers and researchers seeking to respond to this situation are hindered by gaps in data and analysis. To tap rural women's potential contributions and channel investments appropriately requires an understanding of the complex and dynamic challenges women face. Without that knowledge it is impossible to analyse these fundamental issues or propose appropriate responses. This report is a contribution to that knowledge.

Rural women and men have long had very different work experiences, often to the detriment of women. They lag behind men in access to land, credit, a broad range of technologies, information, advisory services and training. They are frequently shut out of 'social capital', such as farmers' organizations, workers' unions and community networks that can enhance productivity and growth. Yet despite these limitations and the enormous burden of unpaid and mostly invisible work they provide at home and in family businesses every day, women make substantial contributions to feeding their families and their nations.

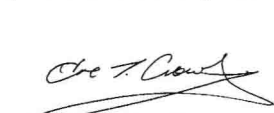
Further complicating the response by policymakers are the variations in the inequities women face, which differ by country and are influenced by social, cultural and religious values and practices.

Also affecting their ability to compete are distant events, such as changes in international trade and migration, financial crises and diversification of the rural economy. This complexity underscores the urgent need for data.


Recognition of this need led our three agencies to organize a technical workshop on the gender dimensions of rural employment, held 31 March to 2 April 2009. It sought answers to important but rarely addressed questions: What do we know exactly about the gender dimensions of agricultural and non-farm rural employment? What are the gaps in data and research? Are there examples of good practices that could be used to address gender inequalities through national policies? This report on the outcomes of the workshop is a first step in providing guidance to policy makers, researchers and development practitioners in developing countries and the international community.

The report reflects the latest thinking on the gender dimensions of rural poverty. The cornerstone of its analysis is the United Nation's Decent Work Agenda, which calls for creating better jobs for both women and men, obtaining social protection for all rural workers, ensuring that labour standards apply to all rural workers and promoting rural institutions that equally represent women's and men's interests.

The workshop and report also highlight collaboration among the three agencies on a topic that is central not only to our mandates but also to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Almost half the world's people and three quarters of the poor live in rural areas. Addressing gender and rural employment is therefore central to achieving all the Millennium Development Goals – not just the one on gender equality.



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Introduction

Gender equality is an essential component of sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Equitable access to more and better jobs in rural areas enable rural women to become effective economic actors and engines of growth; as well as to produce or acquire the food, water, fuel and social services their families need. Indeed, the quality of the care mothers are able to give to their children and other household members contributes to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and improves prospects for future generations. The important gaps in data availability and analytical work in many key areas handicap policy makers' efforts to address these crucial issues adequately when designing poverty alleviation and growth strategies.

With the aim of promoting gender equitable rural employment strategies, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Labour Office (ILO), partnered to carry out an assessment of the latest thinking on the gender dimension of rural and agricultural employment. The three organizations are committed to improving gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and rural areas, and to strengthening women's leadership and decision-making participation.

To ensure that reliable statistical data, field-based evidence and good practices highlighting innovative policy solutions would be made available, FAO, IFAD and ILO issued a call for papers to which almost 200 authors responded. Forty papers were then selected for presentation and discussion at a technical workshop on gender and rural employment organized in Rome, from 31 March to 2 April 2009. The main selection criteria for the papers presented were academic rigour and originality of the data and analysis, rather than geographical coverage, even though efforts were made to ensure as balanced

a geographical coverage as possible (72 percent of the papers related to Asia and Africa). Most of the papers selected had been prepared and elaborated by academics (45 percent) and research institutes (19 percent) but also by UN organizations (24 percent), national administrations (7 percent) and civil society (5 percent). The workshop gathered 120 technical experts and development agency representatives, to discuss issues presented in the forty papers and to share their knowledge, questions and experiences.

Designed to encourage maximum interaction among participants, three main topics were discussed: key gender issues, gaps in knowledge, data and approach, and policy implications. From the rich group discussions, the most important conclusions include the following:

- Gender inequalities in rural employment exist everywhere, regardless of the level of economic development in the country/region, but exhibit different patterns according to social, cultural, religious and economic factors. Some of them – such as the burden of unpaid work at home, lack of education and bargaining power, and limited access to assets – clearly constitute significant economic disadvantages for women compared to men. In this context, it is interesting to observe that 90 percent of the wage gap between men and women in developed or developing countries is unexplained: in other words, it is attributed to gender discrimination.
- Women tend to be more risk adverse than men when engaging in rural employment and women's heavy burden of unpaid work is one of the most important factors constraining their access to paid work in rural settings.
- Gender patterns of rural employment change over time and differ across countries, in response to new trends, shocks and opportunities but some

deep set gender inequalities remain. Changes in international trade, migration, financial crises, diversification of the rural economy are a few of the many phenomena that play an important role in changing men and women's rural employment opportunities and roles.

- It is not enough to create more jobs for rural men and women. The quality or decency of those jobs also matter.
- Financial services must be linked to wider sustainable development processes, so that increased access to financial services also contributes to the development of markets, value chains and the strengthening of local and national economies. Both the opportunities and the challenges have gender dimensions that need to be taken into account in the current process of innovation and expansion.
- Sex-disaggregated data are needed to fill critical gaps in knowledge and improve policy decision-making processes.
- Since gender differences in rural employment are many and often inter-related, a package of complementary policy measures are needed, including legal reforms that promote gender equalities, social safety nets, support to the creation of farmers, women and youths' organizations, child care programmes, female education, instruments to improve access to information and labour markets.

The main objective of this publication was to gather the most important data and issues presented and discussed at the workshop to share them with the community of practice in rural development. It combines empirical data and good practices based on national and international experiences on the gender dimension of rural and agricultural employment. The publication presents an update

analysis of current development issues that are crucial for addressing rural poverty and achieving the Millenium Development Goals.

The publication is structured into three main parts: Part 1 is an overview provided by Marzia Fontana (Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex) with Cristina Paciello (University of Rome "La Sapienza") presenting issues related to gender equality and rural employment for poverty reduction, that includes the construction of a gender analytical framework across regions and contexts. This section also identifies appropriate policy responses and gender based constraints to the achievement of decent work for all. Part 2 outlines and analyses key issues from the forty papers presented at the workshop, and provides abstracts of all those papers. Finally Part 3 offers a selection of six workshop papers that cover thematic areas of particular relevance to discussions about gender and rural employment.

Acknowledgement

This report is the result of a collaborative effort of the FAO, IFAD and the ILO team working on the Gender Dimension of Rural Employment, and has benefited from the many contributions made by the authors who presented their paper in the technical workshop, and by the technical reviewers:

- Part I was written by Marzia Fontana with Cristina Paciello, who benefited from the support, patience and incisive comments of Jennie Dey de Pryck throughout the development of this chapter, as well as constructive inputs from Sriani Ameratunga, Andre Croppenstedt, Eve Crowley, Miet Maertens, Mieke Meurs, Eva Rathgeber, Sherin Al Shaikhahmed, Ravi Srivastava, Paola Termine, Rosemary Vargas-Lundius, Annina Lubbock, Maria Hartl, and many FAO-IFAD-ILO workshop participants. Vivienne Benson, Tinyan Otuomagie and Rehab Osman provided valuable research assistance.
- Part II was written by Soline de Villard who consolidated the workshop contributions with David Suttie and Brett Shapiro, under the guidance of Jennie Dey de Pryck, Peter Wobst, Eve Crowley, Loretta de Luca and Rosemary Vargas-Lundius and in collaboration with the 40 authors (and their co-authors) who presented their papers at the FAO-ILO-IFAD Workshop “Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty” held in Casa San Bernardo, Rome, 31 March – 2 April 2009: Dinara Alimdjanova; Leigh Anderson (and Diana Fletschner); Kirsten Appendini; Hedayatullah Ashrafi; Jahangir Alam Chowdhury; Albertine De Lange; Cheryl Doss; Simel Esim (and Mansour Omeira); Nelly Figueiredo; Christy George; Ceren Gürkan (and Issa Sanogo); Maria Teresa Gutierrez; Helen Hambly (and Silvia Sarapura); Maria Hartl; Tom Hertz (and Ana Paula de la O); Johannes Jütting; Govind Kelkar; Ayal Kimhi; Amelita King Dejardin; Miet Maertens; Mac Mashiri

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Last but not least, we are particularly thankful to the International Fund for Agricultural Development for providing substantial financing to the project, as well as to the government of France, member countries of FAO and IFAD, and ILO constituents, who offered expertise and financial support to our work programme.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS	Advanced Immune Deficiency Disorder
CBO	community-based organization
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Applications (ILO)
CRC	Convention on Rights of the Child
DDS	Deccan Development Society
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ETI	Ethical Training Initiative (Kenya)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHH	female-headed household
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEBI	Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IATP	Integrated Agricultural Training Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILC	International Law Commission
ILO	International Labour Office
INPC	National Consumer Price Index (Brazil)
INSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IUF	International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (FAO)
LDC	least-developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Associates
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHH	male-headed households
NGO	non-governmental organization
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
NSS	national sample surveys
NTAE	non-traditional agricultural exports
NUPAWU	National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (Uganda)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNAD	National Research by Sample of Dwelling (Brazil)
PROGRESA	Programa de Educacion, Salud y Alimentacion
RIGA	rural income generating activities
RPO	Rural Producers' Association
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SHG	self-help group
SNA	System of National Accounts (UN)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIPO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WIETA	Wine Industry and Agriculture Ethical Trading

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PART I

Gender dimensions of rural and agricultural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty

A global perspective

Marzia Fontana with Cristina Paciello

Introduction

This paper examines the links between gender equality and rural employment for poverty reduction by constructing a gender analytical framework to interpret differentiated patterns and conditions of work across regions, socio-economic contexts and policy environments. The main objective of the study is to identify adequate policy responses to key gender-based constraints to the achievement of decent work for all. Decent work, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is employment that takes place under conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity, in which rights are protected and adequate remuneration and social coverage are provided (ILO, 2000).

Gender norms and patterns are rigid, and very often put women in disadvantaged positions relative to men – including limiting women’s equal access to decent work. But gender norms can and do change. Economic policies – at the macro, meso and micro levels – can be designed in ways that are transformative and that enhance gender equity.

The ability of paid employment to expand women’s range of choices – hence contributing to closing persistent gender gaps in labour markets and within households – is related to the type of jobs women have access to, the level and regularity of their earnings, the opportunities for mobilizing and organizing, and the ways in which women’s and men’s productive and reproductive roles are coordinated and protected through policies. ILO statistics (for early studies see Maijd, 2001; for recent updates ILO, 2009a) point to a large number of ‘working poor’ in many developing countries. This is worrying. The poverty reduction and empowerment potential of paid employment depends not just on the quantity of jobs that are created, but also on the quality of such jobs, including whether the rights, protection and voice of both female and male workers are respected.

Rural employment generation has been uneven across the world and in the last few decades appears to be frequently confined to irregular forms of work which do not always provide security of livelihoods and protection of labour rights. The flows of trade, capital, labour, technology and information across countries have accelerated. These processes of globalization provide a strong potential for a reduction in rural poverty, but they have risks and costs. Investments in agriculture also matter: an FAO study of investment trends in agriculture since the 1970s found that countries that reduced hunger more effectively were those with higher net investment rates per agricultural worker (FAO, 2009a: 17). The downside of globalization is most vividly illustrated during times of financial and economic crises, such as the current crisis. The costs of economic and financial liberalization are often borne disproportionately by the poor, and particularly by vulnerable women. This calls for a fuller understanding of key determinants of gender biases in rural labour markets and how the gendered structure of employment is evolving in response to the emerging trends.

The reasons for gender differences in rural employment and pay are many, and are often intertwined. Unequal access to decent work can be noted not only between women and men but also by ethnicity, age and education. Policies that can redress these inequalities include: measures to support education and training; policies to improve access to various markets (including land and credit); active labour market policies and labour legislation; policies to strengthen frameworks for rights; welfare policies; and broader macroeconomic reforms. To be effective, such policies need to be designed as a package of reinforcing measures, as emphasized in the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The decent work policy framework offers an integrated approach to pursuing the objectives of equitable and productive employment for women and men in rural areas. The approach addresses

four pillars simultaneously: (1) generating better jobs for both women and men through sustainable rural growth; (2) extending the coverage of social protection to all categories of rural workers; (3) closing the gap in labour standards for rural workers, paying particular attention to awareness of rights among government institutions, employers' and workers' organizations and individual women and men workers, and to gender bias in enforcement; and (4) fostering social dialogue by promoting rural institutions that equally represent women's and men's interests.

Importantly, any measure aiming at gender equality and poverty reduction must acknowledge that rural women do most of the work of caring for their children and families. The burden of combining productive and reproductive responsibilities inevitably affects their access to paid employment, often increases their stress levels and has an impact on power dynamics within households. These effects are not accounted for in conventional notions of decent work, which tend to focus only on paid employment outcomes. Policies need to be formulated in ways that address all dimensions of work life and do not disadvantage women because of their multiple productive and reproductive roles.

Institutional settings and economic structures vary a great deal between countries, and even between regions within a country. One of the goals of the paper is to identify under what contexts and circumstances some policy instruments are more effective than others. This will evidently vary also with the type of employment, whether waged employment or self-employment is concerned: for example, land reform is likely to be a more relevant enabling factor for own-account farmers than for waged workers, except in cases where agricultural workers themselves are beneficiaries of the land reform programme, as in Southern Africa.

1. Facts and figures: gender patterns of work and links with poverty and current trends

1.1. Gender patterns of work

Rural employment includes farming, self-employment working in trade, small enterprises providing goods and services, wage labour in these and wage labour in agriculture. Some of this work involves long hours and is not sufficiently remunerated. Women, in particular, constitute a significant proportion of unpaid family workers. For example, unpaid work on family agricultural enterprises accounts for 34 percent of women's informal employment in India (compared with 11 percent of men's informal employment) and for an astonishing 85 percent in Egypt (compared with 10 percent for men) (UNIFEM, 2005: Table 3.2).¹

Women and men working in rural settings are often involved in multiple activities and different contractual arrangements simultaneously. They may need to change jobs, depending on the season, or may remain unemployed or underemployed for periods of time.

¹ These data, from UNIFEM (2005), are calculated by one of the report's main authors, drawing on a number of national household and living standards surveys. The distinction between informal and formal self-employment is based on the size of an enterprise and whether it is registered with a government. Social protection coverage is the criterion to distinguish formal from informal wage employment. Informal employment overall is a much larger share of total employment in agriculture than in non-agriculture. The number of unpaid family workers in agricultural enterprises was preferred here as an indicator of vulnerability and precariousness of employment over the definition that includes both contributing family workers and own-account workers. This latter category can be rather heterogeneous and may comprise jobs which, in some cases, do not carry a high economic risk. The ILO does indeed provide separate data on contributing family workers but does not distinguish between rural and urban employment. At the country-level, however, most labour surveys usually allow one to disaggregate employment data by location as well as by economic activity and type of employment.

In rural contexts, the domestic sphere and market production appear to be more intertwined than in urban areas (and pressures on households to provide goods and services both for sale and for the home are stronger). Reproduction activities (such as caring for families), which are mostly on women's shoulders, constitute a heavier time burden because of poor infrastructure and lack of facilities and of institutional support. Necessity and survival are more prevalent driving factors than 'choice' in rural women's diversification strategies, as opposed to rural men's.

A wide range of data on many aspects (e.g. employment status, economic sectors, hours of paid and unpaid work, earnings, working conditions) and at many levels (e.g. household, district, region) are necessary to adequately understand the complexity of rural livelihoods and their gender patterns. Some of these data are not systematically collected or easily found in standard statistics. The researcher concerned with gender dimensions of rural work often has to patch together various sources and rely on a combination of specific case studies and anecdotal evidence. This paper is unfortunately no exception. We did undertake a thorough search of both international and country-level data sources, and are reporting some of the key findings in the next pages. We also tried to indicate areas in which data gaps are most severe.

1.2. The gender structure of rural employment by region

Table I-1 provides a breakdown of sex-disaggregated rural employment by sector and by employment status.² Agriculture continues to be the main source of rural employment for both women and men in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. In Latin America, rural female workers appear equally distributed between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (with self-employment more prevalent in agriculture than in manufacturing and services), while rural men work mostly in agriculture, either as self-employed or wage workers. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, rural women work mostly as self-employed in agriculture and rural men work mostly as non-agricultural wage earners. Non-agricultural activities are the main source of employment for both men and women in Central Asia and Europe, where the majority of the rural population works as wage employees. In most regions, rural women seem more likely than rural men to be engaged in self-employment (and thus less likely to be wage earners).

Table I-1 was compiled by a team from the World Bank, by drawing on 66 different country-level household surveys for 2000 (World Bank, 2007a). This effort demonstrates how hard it is to find detailed and easily accessible rural employment data across countries.³ The data in Table I-1 provide a useful snapshot but should be treated with caution as it is not certain that all the national surveys consulted are comparable. The large number of rural women classified as either 'non-active or not reported' (up to 64 percent of the female population in South Asia, and above 50 percent both in Latin America and the MENA region) appears

2 It is important to stress that the data described in Table I-1 refer only to what is reported by the respondents as their main job, and hence does not fully capture the range of employment activities in which individuals may be engaged.

3 The ILO indeed reports up-to-date detailed country-level employment data by status, sex and economic activity (including separate data for agriculture) but does not distinguish by rural and urban location (see <http://laborsta.ilo.org>).