

# Introduction

## 1. Frame of reference and rationale

Vocational and technical training policies can contribute substantively to the process of expanding opportunities and of overcoming the various manifestations of inequity, poverty and social exclusion, for which purpose the simultaneous challenge of strengthening employability of individuals, improving gender equity and increasing productivity and competitiveness of enterprises must be faced. Convinced of this, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection of Argentina, the INFOCAL Foundation of Bolivia, the National Training Institute (INA) of Costa Rica, Cinterfor/ILO and the Inter-American Development Bank have joined forces and potentialities in the execution of the Programme to Strengthen the Technical and Vocational Training of Low Income Women in Latin America (FORMUJER). The aim of this joint initiative is to promote and strengthen the capacities of the institutions of the region to enhance the quality, relevance and equity of training for work and to improve the employability of women and men, paying special attention to the skills development and labour insertion needs of low income women.

To fulfil these purposes, FORMUJER has developed an intervention model with common conceptual and methodological criteria at the regional level, and start-up and development procedures and strategies differentiated according to national and institutional realities. This has made it possible for it to become a privileged learning and experimentation platform in order to systematise and identify experiences and lessons that can be transferred to programmes, institutions, governments and agencies interested in supporting the development of training and gender policies, and in addressing the skills development and employment problems of populations affected by inequities and risks of exclusion.

The intervention model proposed is a response to the following conceptual axes:

- *lifelong education* that conceives individuals as active subjects of a permanent teaching/ learning process and supports the coordination between the supply and demand of labour, placing the focus on strengthening employability and on the acknowledgment of diversity and of the learning and competencies acquired in different contexts;

- *expansion of opportunities and enhancement of equity*, understanding gender to be a base variable on which other conditions of discrimination and social exclusion act and are empowered. This justifies performance in a double logic:
  - ➔ *mainstreaming* the gender perspective so that considerations of women's and men's needs and specificities become a comprehensive and permanent dimension of policy and institutional business;
  - ➔ *focalising methodologies and actions for the attention of the target population*, which implies defining specific supports and strategies to resolve the initial disadvantages of the female collective and, especially, of poor women. It includes a wide spectrum of interventions both of a teaching nature and of a methodological and strategic nature.

From the methodological point of view, FORMUJER has adopted:

- a *comprehensive and systemic conception* to globally and jointly address the various areas of a training policy and the different spaces and dimensions where exclusion and inequity operates and feeds backwards;
- a *process logic* to visualise the cumulative effect of the construction of knowledge that redesigns itself and adjusts itself in practice;
- a *management model that is flexible, participative, multiple player and interinstitutional*, that promotes social dialogue on training, co-ordinations understood as management mechanisms, and joint construction and feedback among countries and institutions;

On the basis of this frame of reference, FORMUJER understands **quality training** to be training that:

- promotes the **full participation of individuals** in the working world, alongside their processes of acknowledgement and acquisition of learning and skills;
- seeks to **remove inequities** that arise from stereotyped views of the role played by different persons according to their sex, origin, social situation, knowledge, etc. These views are the expression of power relations that impede free access to training and labour options;

- ➔ is built like **a sensitive tool and, therefore, is relevant** to the requirements of the labour and social context as well as its various players;
- ➔ seeks to improve the impact of its interventions, co-ordinating itself in wider strategies of **local or collective development**.

From this conviction, FORMUJER addressed the exploration, development and experimentation of approaches and methodologies that provided an answer to this conception, and **identified in the labour competency approach**– incorporated into training for work – **and in the gender approach** – as a perspective and methodology of analysis of social relations – **common and supplementary conceptual and methodological features that can enrich institutional practices, improving their quality in response to equity and relevance criteria**.

Reflection on the **intersection of the gender and competency approaches** became, therefore, a strategic axis guiding FORMUJER's actions and providing a basis for its efforts to :

- ➔ promote the incorporation of the gender perspective into the analysis of the socio-occupational problems of the population targeted by training actions;
- ➔ progress in the construction of occupational profiles and curriculum development, as well as in the revision of teaching practices from a competency and gender approach;
- ➔ provide instruments for the sensitisation and transfer of executive, planning and teaching teams involved in curriculum design and its implementation, with regard to these cross-cutting axes of training.

The experience gathered is showing that this approach can be a frame of reference to work on the different components of any intervention in the vocational training area. The intention of this publication is to join these construction efforts, sharing reflections and experiences.

## 2. Modality, genesis and composition

Among other expressions, FORMUJER makes its intervention model operational by:

- acting in a double scenario
  - *the national scenario, by executing National Pilot Programmes in Argentina, Bolivia and Costa Rica* to design, adapt and experiment with its methodological and strategic proposals in various contexts. The proposals are totally or partially developed by the Co-ordinating Units, the executor institutions of each country, common international consultancies or those specific to each country or by regional co-ordination. They are transferred and shared, being adapted, supplemented and enriched by the various experiences in which they are applied, generating collective construction and incremental development of knowledge and validation.
  - *the regional scenario, expressed in Cinterfor/ILO co-ordination and technical supervision* This agency is in charge of identifying, recovering and disseminating developments already tested in other countries or internationally, and guiding actions according to the most suitable or innovative proposals, thus avoiding a duplication of efforts, and maximising and sharing resources. Co-ordination with the technical team, the network of specialists, the entities that are members of the Centre and with the different services of the ILO, the IDB, as well as other agencies devoted to the subject, sources the proposals of the programme and, in turn, the lessons learned from FORMUJER are transferred and gradually source the modus operandi of the entire operation.
- defining the systematisation, dissemination and transfer of developments, results and lessons learned, not only as a general methodological outline, but as targets in and of themselves that are expressed in components and specific products.

This paper is in many senses a consequence and concrete expression of this intervention model.

→ In its purpose:

- to endeavour to contribute to the design and development of policies and methodologies that improve the quality and gender equity of training policies, by exchanging and making available the methodologies, experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of the FORMUJER Programme;
- to order and recover critically the developments and instruments applied to assemble a “tool kit” that will help to speed up progress and lessen costs in the continuous improvement of its supply to the teams involved in the design and implementation of training actions.

→ In its genesis:

- it is the result of the integration and complementation of documents, products and experiences of various kinds, done in different countries and institutions and by different players, both at the same time and at alternate times, while having in common that they contribute to the conceptual and instrumental development of the intersection between gender and competency approaches, especially for the diagnosis and design phases of curriculum planning;
- it responds to a feedback process between conceptualisation and experimentation, of trial and revision, in which both instances have strengthened and enriched each other mutually. Because it was a matter of novel concepts that were just emerging, a first stage was needed for exploring and promoting the theoretical principles of the competency movement. For this purpose, the materials and experiences that Cinterfor/ILO and other entities were developing were being reprocessed and adapted. Moreover, opportunities for exchange and discussion between the teams of the Co-ordinating Units were organised. Once a consensus had been reached on the potential of the intersection of competency and gender approaches to achieve the objectives of the Programme, involvement with and transfer to the technical and teaching staff of the executing institutions was sought, through workshops held by specialists in the subject. International consultancies were also hired to strengthen institutional capacities. To the extent that progress was achieved and experiences were generated regarding how to visualise

and incorporate the gender perspective in the competencies and, later, how a didactic transposition could be obtained, both by the teams directly involved in the execution of FORMUJER and by other instances and programmes of the co-executing institutions, these examples and lessons became inputs for new developments.

→ In its composition and management:

- it demonstrates the relevance and potential of the mechanisms of alliances and co-ordinations among players: besides the synergies among the countries and entities that make up FORMUJER, contributions and resources have been added by the Bi-National Chile-Uruguay Co-operation Project, executed by German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), the SENCE in Chile, the DINAIE of Uruguay and Swiss Co-operation (Swisscontact) in Bolivia, both in building up knowledge and in the delivery of products for this publication.

The contribution of the Bi-National Chile/Uruguay Co-operation Project is the result of Cinterfor/ILO participation and the FORMUJER regional co-ordination in the Occupational Competencies and Gender Interdisciplinary Group, promoted by the GTZ PRONAFOD Programme in Uruguay, that brought together specialists and representatives of organisations and entities involved in matters of gender. The purpose of the Group was to reflect on the relations and implications that the competency movement might have for gender equity in employment and training. On this basis, the need to generate well-founded information arose, for which the GTZ financed and implemented the Project mentioned. In keeping with pronouncements on joining forces, Cinterfor/ILO and FORMUJER supported its implementation technically and the GTZ agreed to the use and inclusion in this publication of the materials produced.

The presence of SWISSCONTACT comes from the joint work undertaken with FORMUJER and INFOCAL within the framework of their co-operation in the development of dual training in Bolivia.

Thus, this document is an essentially collective product by multiple authors, both institutional and individual, and by teamwork. As all synergic processes, it is more than its elements, without which this work would not have been possible.

Representing each and every person and instance involved in its construction, the base documents and products listed below have been reproduced textually or conceptually and as a whole or a fraction thereof. Information on original publication and authorship data, that surely are also of a representative nature, are mentioned when in order. Unless otherwise stated, all the documents are available through the Woman, Training and Work website in the Cinterfor/ILO web page. The chapter or section in which they are included and/or that have been sourced by them in a substantive manner, appear in a second column.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Competency-based training and gender</b><br/>FORMUJER/Ministry of Labour, Employment and Training of Human Resources, Argentina, 2001. Produced by the Co-ordinating Unit team as systematisation of the Competencies and Gender Workshop, co-ordinated by Marianne Braig. Buenos Aires, March 2001.</p> | <p>Chapters I y III<br/>Point 3</p>                                    |
| <p><b>Guide and checklists for incorporating the gender approach in the INA planning phases</b><br/>FORMUJER INA/IDB, Costa Rica, 2001. Rebeca Quirós. Adapted by FORMUJER/Argentina</p>   | <p>Chapter I<br/>Working<br/>Materials<br/>Points A and B</p>          |
| <p><b>Guide for incorporating the gender approach in curriculum development</b><br/>FORMUJER/ INFOCAL, Bolivia, 2002. Eliana Gallardo</p>  | <p>Chapter I<br/>Working<br/>Materials<br/>Point A<br/>Chapter III</p> |
| <p><b>Strategies implemented for formulating profiles and training offers with a competency and gender approach</b><br/>FORMUJER/Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection, Argentina, 2002. Estela Barba</p>   | <p>Chapter III</p>   |

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <p><b>Recommendations for incorporating the gender equity approach in the identification of labour competencies</b></p> <p>Bi-national Chile-Uruguay Co-operation Project, Ministry of Labour and Social Security /National Employment Bureau, Uruguay; Government of Chile: Ministry of Education, and SENCE, GTZ, Uruguay, 2001. Officers in charge of the publication: Nina Billorou (DINAE/Uruguay), Silvia Galilea (SENCE/Chile), Malena Laucero (GTZ). Systematisation: Iliana Pereyra/ Uruguay. General Co-ordination: Nina Billorou</p> | Chapter II                 |
| <p><b>The competencies identification workshop in the Graphics Industry Core of INA</b></p> <p>FORMUJER-INA/IDB, Costa Rica, 2000. Nina Billorou, activity co-ordinated by the Curriculum Development and Liaison components</p>  | Chapter II<br>Experience A |
| <p><b>Competency profile for technicians in Manual and Semi-automated silk screening</b></p> <p>FORMUJER – INA/IDB, Costa Rica, 2002. Nina Billorou, activity co-ordinated by the Curriculum Development and Liaison components</p>   | Chapter II<br>Experience A |
| <p><b>Validation process. Competency profile for technicians in Manual and Semi-automated silk screening.</b></p> <p>FORMUJER- INA/IDB, Costa Rica, 2002. Nina Billorou and Enrique Jiménez, advised by Rebeca Quirós.</p>  | Chapter II<br>Experience A |
| <p><b>Final report on the competency profile (Vegetable Micropropagation) from a gender perspective</b></p> <p>Programme for Vocational Training – National University of Quilmes-UNQ-Fundemos, FORMUJER/MTEySS, Argentina, 2001. Directors: Horacio Vitale, Juan Soñez. Coordinator: Patricia Gariglio. Technical Team: Socio-labour area CEI-UNQ, Daniela Rúfelo, Marcelo Gómez. Profile specialist: Mercedes Rivero (not available on the web page)</p>  | Chapter II<br>Experience B |

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p>Dual Training Programme for Nursing Aides under a competency approach</p> <p>INFOCAL Foundation, FORMUJER/Bolivia, SWISSCONTACT Yolanda Reynaga and Annette Fleischhauer, with the co-operation of a work team made up of Fausto Baldellón, Francisca Hoffer, Marisol Ríos, Sandra Espada and INFOCAL, La Paz teachers (not available on the web page)</p> | <p>Chapter III<br/>Experience A</p> |
| <p>Gender and employability: challenges and opportunities for a vocational and technical training policy in the twenty-first century in Latin America</p> <p>Technical Bulletin CINTERFOR/ILO No.153, Montevideo, 2002</p> <p>Sara Silveira</p>   | <p>Chapters I and III</p>           |
| <p>Conception of the document, incorporation of texts, technical and editorial co-ordination</p> <p>Sara Silveira and Nina Billorou</p>   |                                     |

### 3. Guidance for reading purposes

As its subtitle shows, the intent of the document is to promote reflection (**conceptual contributions**) concerning one of the main guiding axes of the intervention model proposed: the intersection of competency and gender approaches. Moreover, it aims to share the learning derived from how it was done, i.e., to place at the disposal of stakeholders the methodologies and instruments developed (**tools**) and present examples of the results achieved (**experiences**). In this way, it is expected that samples of a suitable and coherent appropriation and learning will be provided, both of the conceptual and methodological axes of the FORMUJER intervention model and of the postulates of competency-based training.

This intention becomes the framework both of the overall document and of each chapter meant to be a unit in itself. Thus, each chapter contains a first part

involving conceptual contributions and a second part devoted to tools and examples of application.

In this way a “model to be assembled” is proposed with various possible alternatives or routes for reading or use: horizontal, vertical, quick or synthesised, according to the reader’s profile.

- If the horizontal route is chosen, the conceptual rationales of the central theme are found in the first part of Chapter I and the presentation of its context and the ways it is applied are in Chapters II and III (competency identification phase and curriculum design phase).
- If the vertical alternative is explored, the first part of the chapter chosen is dedicated to the technical development of the theme (e.g., competency identification) and the second, to introduce routes and means to carry it out. In turn, inside this second part, a distinction has been made between conceptual and instrumental references and concrete application examples, the latter presented in different font and grey colour.
- If a quick and synthesised reading is needed, it is provided by highlighting and boxes.
- Finally, if the user is a curriculum planning or development person, the thread for this person may be vertical and limited to Chapter III; if the person is a policy designer he or she may combine the vertical, giving priority to Chapter I by reading the synthesis, and so on.

As is true of every assembled text based on various individual and group productions, some repetitions are inevitable. However, their elimination worked against this intent to respect the reader’s choice. The repeated references, be they among chapters or within them, are of an incremental and cumulative nature and aim at generating self-sufficient units.

What remains, therefore, is to trust that everyone, doers or beneficiaries, will find reasons to continue to share.

This book has been published with the support of the project INT/03/M57/UKM “Knowledge Sharing on decent work and the informal economy in the context of poverty reduction” carried out by the Policy Integration Department, ILO Geneva, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID).

# I. Quality training in equity conditions:

## gender and competency approaches

1. The notion of gender. Gender as a social construction
2. The gender perspective
3. Gender and labour market structure
4. Gender and vocational training
5. The competency approach in training for work
6. The intersection of gender and competency approaches
  - **Working materials**
    - A. Key questions for including gender and competency approaches in curriculum planning
    - B. Checklists for incorporating the gender and relevance approaches in curriculum development phases

