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GUIDELINES ON GENDER IN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES



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Information Resource Book

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Preface

The idea of this publication grew out of an Employment Policy Department retreat lead by Azita Berar during the summer of 2006. At the time, the authors used the “policy checklist” developed in the document *Implementing the Global Employment Agenda: Employment Strategies in support of Decent Work*, or what is referred to as the “Vision document” to demonstrate the importance of adding a gender lens to each and every policy area which was identified. This revealed a myriad of issues that we need to undertake in order to ensure that gender equality in employment is realized at the national levels. The questions then became do we have the knowledge and capacity related to each and every policy area of the Checklist? How can we assist our colleagues (and constituents) in improving their contribution towards gender equality in their specific technical areas of work? The current document was subsequently developed as a response to this felt need.

The goal of this document is to provide concrete and operational guidelines on how to mainstream gender equality in specific employment policy areas. This comes as part of a larger effort to build capacity for gender mainstreaming in the work of the ILO and that of its constituents.

It is a fact that labour markets are usually gendered in nature. Gender relations play an important role in the division of labour, access to assets and the distribution of work, income, and wealth. As such, if employment policies and programmes are to be inclusive and succeed, they need to be linked to the household, the family and the welfare system. The under-pinning of these guidelines is therefore that gender equality is at the centre of the ILO mission to promote productive employment and decent work for men and women. This translates into two main objectives: Improving women’s position in the labour market and promoting a more effective and holistic approach to employment policies and programmes.

Indeed, ILO’s commitment to gender mainstreaming has been repeatedly reiterated. The latest demonstration of this is the *ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming (2008-2009)*. This Office-wide Action Plan was overwhelmingly approved by the ILO Governing Body in November 2007. To ensure the implementation of this the Employment Sector has developed a sector-specific strategy. We are nevertheless aware that the achievement of gender equality requires not only political commitment and institutional measures but also concrete actions at the technical level. These guidelines aim to provide the information which will support these actions under the variety of technical areas which we address in the Employment Sector.

The framework of ILO work on employment is based on the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) as the employment pillar of the Decent Work Agenda. There are two principles that underlie all of the GEA agenda. These are: decent work as a productive factor and ending discrimination in the labour market. At the action level these guidelines provide a new tool to support policy formulation and programme development monitoring and evaluation. Simultaneous to employment promotion, this tool will strengthen the impact of the role of labour standards particularly with regards to the four core ILO Conventions which promote gender equality.*

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs

Executive Director

Employment Sector

* These are: Equal Remuneration C100, Discrimination in Employment C 111, maternity protection, C103 and workers with family responsibilities C 156.

Contents at a glance

These guidelines are aimed at ILO staff and constituents. They intend to inform the process of building gender issues into Employment policies and programmes. The conceptual base of these Guidelines is the ILO framework on employment which is the Global Agenda and the subsequent “Vision document.”** Basically these guidelines provide gender lens to the GEA’s “policy checklist.” These Guidelines are by no means comprehensive in addressing each and every policy area related to employment. Therefore, they should be viewed as a living document which is updated on periodic basis.

This page serves as an introduction to the guidelines by outlining the ‘**contents at a glance**’. This is immediately followed by several pages of ‘**contents in detail**’. These offer a summary of the contents and will help the reader to quickly identify and focus on topics that are of particular interest.

Section One provides answers to the question: “Why is it important to address gender inequality in employment?” The section considers the gender issue from the ‘equity’ and then from the ‘efficiency points’ of view. This is followed by a review of a number of international policy instruments and frameworks that oblige countries to mainstream gender within their poverty reduction and development strategies. The section ends with an examination of some key challenges and misconceptions that policy makers face regarding gender.

Section Two provides an Employment Policies Checklist in a table format. The section is built around the first five of the six policy options that are listed in the ‘Vision Document’ (see below). Each policy option is dealt with in turn by listing some key gender issues in one column and then some thoughts about what might be involved in gender responsive policy making in another column.

The **Annexes** help the reader to dig deeper. The first three annexes present key lists relating to the context of the GEA and the “Vision Document” which base much of the conceptual approach of these guidelines. This is followed by a **glossary** that offers short definitions of some key concepts and jargon terms. Many of the glossary items have web links so that readers can easily dig deeper. Note that sections one and two also have many footnotes to assist with digging deeper.

The guidelines have two **inserted documents**. These are key to understanding the ILO’s interests and activities in employment policy. They are (a) ILO (March 2003) “Review of the core elements of the Global Employment Agenda” and (b) ILO (2006) “Implementing the Global Employment Agenda: Employment strategies in support of decent work – “Vision” document”.

Finally twelve **Policy Briefs** are presented as self contained documents. Each brief outlines a set of key gender issues for a particular topic and then considers some of the factors that need to be addressed to support gender responsive policy making.

** The Global Employment Agenda <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/empframe/practice/> and ILO: *Implementing the Global Employment Agenda: Employment strategies in support of decent work, “Vision” document*, Geneva, 2006.

The policy briefs deal with:

- 1 Economic Policies
- 2 International Trade Policies
- 3 Employment intensity of growth
- 4 Labour Migration and Mobility
- 5 Skills and Employability
- 6 Enterprise Development
- 7 Access to Micro Finance Services
- 8 Value Chain Analysis
- 9 Local Economic Development
- 10 Good Workplace Practices
- 11 Labour Market Institutions and Policies
- 12 Crisis Response and Reconstruction

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SECTION ONE THE CONTEXT

This section provides answers to the question “**Why is it important to address gender inequality in employment?**”

After a brief introduction this section considers the gender issue from the **equity** and then from the efficiency points of view. The rights-based equity arguments are grounded in the need to address the vulnerability, discrimination and disadvantage that women or men face in economic life as a matter of basic rights and justice. The economics-based **efficiency** arguments recognise that both women and men can play a critical role as economic agents capable of transforming societies and economies and in breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next.

This is followed by a review of some international policy instruments and frameworks that oblige countries to mainstream gender within their poverty reduction and development strategies. The section ends with an examination of some of the key challenges and misconceptions that policy makers face regarding gender and employment.

Introduction

'All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity.' [Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944]

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. At the same time it also makes good economic sense because it means using the country's human capital more efficiently. It can have profound benefits not just for women themselves but also for families, communities and national economies.

Although policy frameworks often posit trade-offs and dichotomies between equity and efficiency and between the economic and the social, there is mounting evidence that equitable employment policies have a strong symbiotic relationship with economic efficiency. The separation of the economic and the social has had many negative effects on women within the policy arena, with women's issues often relegated to under-resourced and under-prioritised social policy.

The implicit assumption is that women are not dynamic economic agents but rather are passive recipients in need of assistance. Separating the economic and the social lends itself easily to perceptions that equality is a luxury of higher income economies or even that equality can be counter-productive because of short term costs.

The separation of the 'economic' and the 'social' has had many negative effects on women during the development of policy. The implicit assumption is that women are passive recipients in need of assistance rather than being dynamic economic agents in their own right.

Empirical evidence and theoretical discussions emerging from capabilities analyses are now however, increasingly recognising that gender equality is not only an end in itself but also a key **means** of achieving wider development goals, ranging from poverty reduction, increased productivity and aggregate output, reduced fertility, lower infant mortality, and less child labour to greater decision making and bargaining power for women within households. All these factors contribute to economic growth either directly or indirectly. Conversely, gender inequality can be a significant drag on economic growth, with some countries with the highest levels of inequality often being those with some of the lowest levels of per capita income.

The ILO has long recognised the importance of equality within work and the principle is enshrined within the ILO Constitution (see box).

Gender equality is not only an end in itself but also a key means of achieving wider development goals that include:

- *poverty reduction;*
- *increased productivity and aggregate output;*
- *reduced fertility, infant mortality, and child labour; and*
- *greater decision making and bargaining power for women within households.*

Gender equality cuts across the four pillars of Decent Work¹ and recognises that men and women must have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for work that guarantees an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, ensures basic security in adversity, respects human rights and allows for creativity and fulfilment.

The weight that the ILO gives to the issue is shown by the fact that two of its core Conventions specifically relate to gender equality. The Global Employment Agenda² (GEA) is the ILO's main pillar for the global Decent Work programme. It firmly establishes the principles that decent work is a productive factor and that discrimination in the labour market and in employment must be eliminated both as a means of generating greater productivity as well as enabling men and women to enjoy equal rights at work.

1.1 Gender Equality in Employment as a Fundamental Human Right: The Equity Rationale

One should not assume that all women want to work, but it is safe to say that women want to be given the same freedom as men to choose to work if they want to; and if they do choose to work, they should have the same chance of finding decent jobs as men.

Despite some progress over the last few decades, gender equality in employment remains an elusive goal in all societies. Women continue to face disadvantage and discrimination in all areas of economic life. Nevertheless, while one should not assume that all women want to work, it is safe to say that women want to be given the same freedom as men to choose to work if they want to; and if they do choose to work, they should have the same chance of finding decent jobs as men.

In 2008, some 1.3 billion women were either employed or looking for work³, yet many millions of them face discrimination in access to training and jobs, are confined to certain occupations with little chance of mobility, are offered lower pay for work of equal value or are unable to earn enough income to support themselves and their families.

These types of inequalities deprive women of choices and opportunities in employment and inimical to normative considerations of fairness and justice.

The elimination of discrimination is at the heart of the ILO's mandate for Decent Work as a matter of social justice and human rights. The following 15 points give evidence on women's position in the labour market. The points demonstrate why promoting gender equality forms a core principle in line with the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.⁴

- 1. Women face a double burden of paid work and reproductive work in the household.** The gender division of labour within the household means that women bear the greatest burden of tasks. Unpaid work in the household and in society is not recognised as being of economic value and is not usually counted in systems of national accounts. Unpaid work in the household underpins much labour market inequality. Studies from around the world indicate that family care responsibilities and lack of childcare options severely constrain women's choices in employment. Public expenditure cuts in food subsidies, health, education, transport, infrastructure, childcare and social services affect women to a greater degree than men since it increases their household responsibilities and burdens.
- 2. Poverty is increasingly feminised.** Poverty rates are measured by income and are usually taken from household surveys. Such statistics are hard to disaggregate by sex and are therefore unhelpful in understanding the gender dimensions of poverty. However, the evidence that does exist suggests that women account for a large proportion of the world's poor.⁵

3. **Women make up a large proportion of people working in the informal economy where decent work deficits are most serious.** In many developing countries the proportion of working women in the informal economy represents a larger source of employment for women than formal employment. Over 60 per cent of working women are in informal employment outside agriculture, and when agriculture is taken into account the figures are even higher.⁶ Within the informal economy women tend to be concentrated in the lower end where decent work deficits are the greatest. In general women work in the least protected and most precarious forms of work including domestic work, unpaid contributing family workers and industrial outworkers. Despite these constraints, however, evidence from many regions in the world demonstrate how women working in the informal economy are major contributors to their families' incomes, play an important role as community mobilizers and have managed to organise to improve their voice and bargaining powers.
4. **Labour force participation rates of women have been growing** over the last few decades but still remain below that of men. The smallest gaps being some 82 women to 100 men in many developed countries and the biggest gaps in South Asia with 42 women per 100 men in the labour force, and the Middle East and North Africa with 37 women to 100 men.⁷
5. Women often experience **higher rates of unemployment** even in cases where women may have higher rates of education. In 2007, some 81 million women around the world were actively looking for work. The global unemployment rate for women was 6.3 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent for men.⁸ In times of economic crisis, an inherent male breadwinner bias often results in women being the first to lose their jobs. Unemployment rates also hide the large numbers of women who may be discouraged workers or who are taking a break from the labour market for child rearing.
6. **Serious wage and income differentials exist between men and women throughout the world.** This is one of the most persistent forms of discrimination and there is little evidence that the trend is narrowing. According to the European Commission, where data on wage gaps are reliable, the pay gap in the European Union between men and women has remained virtually unchanged at 15 per cent across all sectors in recent years and has narrowed by only one percentage point since 2000.⁹ Wage gaps are not only characteristic of low-skilled occupations, where they are admittedly the widest, but can also be found in high skilled jobs such as accounting and computer programming¹⁰. Contrary to popular belief women's lower educational qualifications and intermittent labour market participation are not the main reason for the gender wage gap. Other factors such as occupational segregation, job classification systems, biased pay structures and weak collective bargaining are important contributors to unequal pay.¹¹
7. Varying levels of **direct and indirect forms of discrimination** in different countries limit women's access to productive resources including land, credit, information, technology, markets, skills and networks.

8. **Occupational segregation and segmentation is common in labour markets** around the world. Approximately half of all workers in the world are in occupations where at least 80 per cent of workers are of the same sex.¹² This has significant costs including rigidities in the labour market, higher male-female wage gaps, underutilization of women's labour and lower levels of output and future growth rates. At the higher end of the labour market, there are fewer women in management positions and women are less likely to be in occupations that require science and technology. At the lower end of the labour market women make up the majority of those in the low-skilled, low paid occupations including domestic work, home work, agricultural work and the service sectors. Though incomplete, the data that is available suggests that women make up 80 per cent or more of home workers¹³, one of the least protected and most vulnerable segments of the labour market.
9. **Women are migrating in greater numbers.** Faced with few opportunities in their home labour markets, increasing numbers of women are searching for temporary work beyond their borders. While both men and women may face vulnerability in the migration process, women tend to be concentrated in the 3D jobs: dirty difficult, dangerous. Some women, nevertheless, can become empowered through the migration process and have improved status once back in their home country.
10. Women often face **greater barriers to starting a business** because of limited access to entrepreneurship training and capital, and lack of mentoring and network support. Women's businesses are often smaller than men's for the same reasons of limited access to productive resources. Market saturation and low productivity make for high failure rates of women's micro-enterprises – particularly in enterprises that use only women's traditional skills such as cooking, sewing and hairdressing.
11. **Information gaps reinforce skills gaps** thus hampering employment opportunities. Not only do women face limited access to labour market information systems, they also suffer from lower rates of literacy and skills due to uneven access to education and training systems. Some 64 per cent of the world's non-literate population are women.¹⁴
12. **Increased 'flexibility' in the labour market may have a negative impact on women in particular.** Women are often concentrated in part-time, temporary and casual work. On the one hand this may offer advantages by being able to be combined with family responsibilities, but may on the other hand be without the attendant benefits and protections of permanent status. For example, with less flexibility and possibility to work part time more women would probably be totally excluded from the labour market. The problem is therefore the lack of security which is usually associated with flexibility.
13. Women from every strata of the labour market often have **less access to social security** (especially pensions) particularly due to breaks from the labour market for childrearing.

- 14. Age discrimination** constrains the choices of women in employment at both ends of the age spectrum. Young women are amongst the most vulnerable to unemployment and labour market discrimination and older women are vulnerable to poverty due to inadequate pensions and breaks in their employment history. Rates of unemployment for young women are higher overall than for young men in a number of regions, with the most pronounced differences in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁵
- 15. Few women have been able to break the glass ceiling.** Family responsibilities, child rearing and fewer promotional opportunities have hampered many women's career development. In 2000-2002 women's overall share of managerial jobs was between 20-40 per cent in 48 out of 63 countries for which data was available. Regional variations were marked with North America, South America and Eastern Europe having a higher share of women in managerial jobs than in East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East.¹⁶ Only 10 Fortune 500 companies were run by women in 2006. One study by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in the UK, suggested that it would take 60 years for women to be equally represented in City boardrooms. It is important to note that it is not in only management positions in the public and private sector that women are under-represented. There are also fewer women in trade unions than men, and particularly in leadership positions.

Inequality in employment wastes human talent and innovation at an individual level and violates basic human rights.

The range and level of gaps and disadvantages in the labour market described above is broad.

Various types of discrimination impair the freedom of women to develop their capabilities and choose and pursue employment aspirations. Inequality in employment wastes human talent and creativity at an individual level and violates basic human rights.

But the rights based perspective forms only part of the picture. Focusing only on the vulnerability and discrimination that women face in employment can lend itself to views that women are only in need of assistance.

A broader view taking into account the major benefits to economies and societies when women are able to seize economic opportunities is needed. The following literature from empirical studies and theoretical discussions gives weight to the efficiency rationale for gender equality.

1.2 Gender Equality in Employment as a Means of Enhancing Economic Efficiency: The Efficiency Rationale

The benefits of equality reach beyond the level of individual empowerment. Equality is not only a value and a right in itself but it is also a key to achieving many other goals ranging from economic growth to poverty reduction.

After a brief introduction this sub-section looks at how equality combats the multiple dimensions of poverty, increases productivity and growth and, briefly, at how it is good for governance.

The benefits of equality transcend the level of individual empowerment. Equality is not just an intrinsic value and a right in itself but it is **instrumental** in achieving a wide range of goals from economic growth to poverty reduction. Opening economic opportunities for women can unleash their socio-economic potential and catalyse development. Indeed historical evidence has shown that women hold the key to breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next.

The literature is rich with accumulated evidence that the economic empowerment of women has considerable benefits for their children and families. Increased bargaining power and decision making ability in the household as well as increased status and income of women has led to a number of 'positive externalities' such as enhanced nutritional status of families, lowered infant mortality rates and less child labour, increased educational access for children, and lowered fertility for women. But it is not just at the household that such changes can be seen. Supporting gender equality can lead to profound changes in social and economic life of a community by tapping into the productive power and creativity of at least half of the population. At a higher level equality is essential to achieving national and global development goals such as pro-poor economic growth strategies and the Millennium Development Goals. Below are some examples from the theoretical literature as well as empirical evidence of the impact that gender equality can play in poverty reduction and strengthening economies.

1.2.1 Equality combats the multiple dimensions of poverty

Where men control income it is more likely that there will be an underinvestment in children, and in girls in particular.

Studies of household consumption and expenditures have shown significant differences depending on whether income is controlled by male or female family members.

Where men control income it is more likely that there will be an underinvestment in children, and in girls in particular. However, where women have greater access to education and income, it is primarily the children who benefit.

Accumulated evidence suggests that increased earning power of women has a greater and more immediate effect on family welfare than increased earnings for men. Although indirect, these benefits have a very significant impact on economic growth by enhancing human capital formation for the next generation.

The following set of ten examples of empirical studies show how gender equality measures can have an effect on the multiple dimensions of poverty:

1. Women who brought more assets into a marriage increased their spending on children's education in Bangladesh and South Africa;¹⁷
2. In the United Kingdom, child support payments made directly to mothers resulted in increased expenditures on children's clothing;¹⁸
3. In the Ivory Coast and Ghana, it was revealed that when women's income increased for whatever reason, they spent the extra on more food for the family, whereas an increase in men's income made no significant difference;¹⁹
4. Children in Brazil experienced improved health when women controlled increased income in households;²⁰
5. According to projections by UNICEF, gender equality in family decision-making in South Asia would lead to 13.4m fewer malnourished children, a 13 per cent reduction;²¹
6. A study of pensions in South Africa showed that when grandmothers received pensions, the nutritional status of grandchildren living with them improved in ways that were not evident for grandfathers;²²
7. A study of women who had access to free child care in the shanty towns of Rio de Janeiro showed that they increased their incomes by as much as 20 per cent;²³
8. One study estimated that one year of extra education nationally reduces child mortality rates by 8 per cent, with female education being particularly powerful;²⁴
9. In Kenya, reducing the price of childcare significantly increased mother's wage employment and older girl's schooling;²⁵
10. The links between girl's education and reduced fertility are strong. The economic benefits of having fewer children are considerable. It lowers the dependency burden and increases the labour force as a proportion of the population; this in turn boosts per capita income. The estimates of the positive effect on economic growth can be significant. For example some estimates suggest that up to 2 per cent in annual per capital income growth in East and South-East Asian countries was due to the effect of this declining fertility.²⁶

1.2.2 Equality increases productivity and growth

It is surprising that the perceptions of women's economic capabilities are so limited given the profound impact that women's labour has on economies.

It is surprising that the perceptions of women's economic capabilities are so limited given the profound impact that women's labour has on economies.

Women have been playing a major role in their countries' economic development whether through export-led industrialisation, migrant remittances, pro-poor growth strategies, increased productivity and income in agriculture and the informal economy or their non-market contribution to the reproduction of the labour force and human capital investment. Enhancing women's economic capabilities has major economic benefits in terms of productivity, labour supply and human capital allocation, enhanced tax base and the growth of an economy. Some effects are direct while others are longer term. Examples of projections and empirical evidence show that:

- **Industrialization of many newly industrialized nations has often been female led as well as export led.** Many East Asian economies for example have been able to compete in the world market by relying heavily on the female labour force in export industries. This accounted for a significant share of their high growth rates.²⁷
- **Reducing women's non-market work enhances their ability to earn a remunerative income.** Women's time burdens are an important constraint on growth and development. Women's burdens in the household hamper their ability to earn a remunerative income. Changing the gender division of labour in the household to a more equitable division of tasks, and investing in labour saving technology has significant benefits for productivity. A study from Tanzania showed that when efforts were made to lessen gender constraints in the household this resulted in increases in household income by 10 per cent, labour productivity by 15 per cent and capital productivity by 44 per cent among smallholder coffee and banana growers.²⁸

Calculating women's contribution to GDP through unpaid work: an example from South Korea

South Korea used three valuation methods to measure housework performed by fulltime housewives. Calculations based on the results estimated that women's unpaid work amounted to between 13-23 per cent of GDP in 1999.

South Korea developed policy recommendations based on these results including (a) the need for insurance for full time housewives, (b) family friendly policies in the areas of family support, childcare, after-school care and equality of opportunity at work and (c) sharing of conjugal assets in cases of marital divorce.

Source: United Nations: Integrating Unpaid Work into National Policies, ESCAP and UNDP, New York, 2003, pp. 174-184.

- **Women's household work is invisible and under-valued yet it is a vital economic resource.** Estimates of women's reproductive labour suggest that it accounts for about one third of world economic production. Women in all countries do more unpaid work than men. In developing countries, when unpaid agricultural work and housework are considered along with wage labour, women's work hours are estimated to exceed men's by 30 per cent.²⁹ A number of international policy instruments such as the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)³⁰ and the Beijing Platform of Action³¹ have called for the recognition of women's unpaid work and that it be given values in economic accounting, particularly in Systems of National Accounts. A key tool for capturing such information is Time-Use Surveys³² that can complement labour force surveys and have been used by a number of countries to design more equitable policies.
- **Women make a significant contribution to GDP through the informal economy.** In the same way that reproductive work is unvalued, much work in the informal economy, where women are often concentrated, is often not captured by national accounts. In West Africa, the Caribbean and Asia, between 70-90 per cent of all farm and marine produce is traded by women. Street and market stands are estimated to generate around 30 per cent of all urban wealth.³³ Some estimates suggest that the informal economy contributes around 41 per cent of non-agricultural GDP in Sub Saharan Africa. Country data suggests that in Burkina Faso, of a 36 per cent overall GDP contribution of the informal economy, 29 per cent comes from women while 7 per cent comes from men, while in Mali 26 per cent comes from women and 14 per cent from men.³⁴
- **Access to credit and other resources such as land, physical capital and skills can yield major benefits in terms of increased output.** Research has shown that measures to redistribute income and enhance access to resources can significantly raise productivity for women. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Kenya projections have estimated that more equal control of inputs and farm income by women and men could raise farm yields by as much as 20 per cent of current output.³⁵ Increasing women's productivity by improving the circumstances of women farmers could substantially increase food production in Sub Saharan Africa, and at the same time reduce the level of food insecurity in the region. If the results from the above countries were to hold true in other parts of Sub Saharan Africa as a whole, simply raising the productivity of women to the same level as men could increase total production by 10 to 15 per cent.³⁶
- **Where women have land and property ownership rights, they are able to generate higher income.** Land ownership for women leads to higher production from crops, trees and vegetable gardens. Women who are able to use land or houses for credit collateral are able to invest in productive income generation. In turn increased income leads to greater bargaining power within the household. Studies have shown that women with land generate much higher rural non-farm earnings than those without land.³⁷

A study in Latin America estimated that ending gender inequality in the labour market could increase women's wages by 50 per cent while increasing national output by 5 per cent.

- **Eliminating discrimination would increase national income as well as the income of women.** A study in Latin America estimated that ending gender inequality in the labour market could increase women's wages by 50 per cent while increasing national output by 5 per cent.³⁸
- **Closing the gender gap in education results in long term per capita growth increases.** One study estimates that if (a) the countries in South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa had started with the gender gap in average years of schooling that East Asia had in 1960 and had (b) closed that gender gap at the rate achieved by East Asia from 1960-1992, their per capita income could have grown by 0.5-0.9 percentage points per year – substantial increases over actual growth figures. Another study estimates that even for middle and high-income countries with higher initial education levels, an increase of 1 percentage point in the share of women with secondary education is associated with an increase in per capita income of 0.3 percentage point. Both studies control for other variables commonly found in growth literature.³⁹
- **Women entrepreneurs are making in-roads in the growing services sector in both developing and developed economies.** There are large numbers of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) owned by women in the sector, with over half of them operating as a home-based business. Women-owned businesses also appear to be as likely, or even more likely than men-owned businesses, to export services.⁴⁰

Operationalising Pro-Poor Growth in India (OPPG) – the importance of gender

Individual case studies from the World Bank's Operationalising Pro-poor Growth⁴¹ research reveal rich information about the role of gender equality in contributing to economic growth. For example in India, those states that had high investments in education managed to reduce gender gaps which in turn resulted in higher poverty elasticity. The short term costs of education were paid off in terms of reduced poverty.

A reservation of seats for women in political office in India also resulted in increased spending on labour saving technology and human capital investment which reaped benefits in reducing women's time burdens and enabling them to participate more fully in economic growth.

Another important element was women in managerial positions. Cross regional data from India on gender gaps in access to managerial positions has been projected to have a significant effect on per capita income. By analysing the comparative growth rates of an Indian state between 1961 and 1991 researchers estimate that a 10 per cent increase in female-male ratio of managers would increase output of the State by 2 per cent. A 10 per cent increase in the female-male ratio would increase output by 8 per cent. The latter effect can be observed in both the agricultural as well as the non-agricultural sector, while the former effect is only apparent in the non-agricultural sector.

Source: S. Klasen: Pro Poor Growth and Gender: What can we learn from the Literature and the OPPG Case Studies?, Discussion Paper to the OPPG Working Group of AFD, DFID, BMZ (GTZ/KfW) and the World Bank, 2005, p.9.

- **Migrant remittances are becoming the largest source of foreign revenue for developing countries with women migrants playing a major role in contributing to their country's development.** Their contribution to their communities and the national economy cannot be overstated since they provide valuable funds for regeneration of rural communities, small scale building projects and education of siblings and children. In Sri Lanka for example in 1999, 62 per cent of remittances were from women, accounting for 50 per cent of the trade balance. Additionally, **female migrants have a positive effect on the labour market in destination countries** and contribute towards economic growth, for example by enabling other women to seek productive and remunerative employment outside the home.
- **Access to capital can have major empowering effects on women when they are able to maintain control over the funds.** Women's ability to use credit increases their household bargaining power and household income, while changing expenditure and household consumption patterns. Microfinance has become a gateway for millions of women to enter economic activities for the first time or to allow their businesses to grow. Where financial providers have targeted women, women have become visible and prominent in many communities as important income earners. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that default rates by women may be lower than men in some countries.
- The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap research suggests that **countries that do not capitalize on the full potential of half of their societies are misallocating their resources and undermining their competitiveness potential.**⁴²
- Research on economic growth and education shows that **failing to invest in education can lower the GDP.** All other things being equal, countries in which the ratio of female to male enrolment in primary and secondary schools is less than .75 can expect levels of GDP that are roughly 25 per cent lower than countries in which there is less gender disparity in education.⁴³
- **There are clear and strong links between equality and pro-poor growth.** Country level studies which looked at pro-poor growth have shown that women can make a significant contribution to economic growth and poverty reduction when opportunities are opened up for them.⁴⁴ The case studies from different income level countries show that reducing education and employment gaps for women result in higher rates of pro-poor growth. Key factors include education and skills development for girls and women as well as increased access to productive resources. The impacts can be seen in reduced fertility, export-oriented employment and access to formal employment for women.

1.2.3 Equality is good for governance

Although fragmented, there is evidence that enhancing women's rights and greater **women's participation in public life is linked to better governance in business and government**. According to the World Bank, when the influence of women in public life is greater, the level of corruption is lower. This holds true even when comparing countries with the same income.

One study of 350 businesses in the Republic of Georgia concludes that firms owned or managed by men are 10 per cent more likely to make unofficial payments to government officials than those owned or managed by women. This result was irrespective of the size of the firm, the sector, or the education level of the owner/ manager. Without controlling for these factors, firms managed by men are twice as likely to pay bribes.⁴⁵

1.3 International Instruments and National Commitments to Equality

The goal of gender equality has been well established in the international policy arena.

Through their international instruments and agreements, most international organisations have developed frameworks and goals that stress the importance of gender equality as a key means of achieving poverty reduction and development.

As members and parties to these agreements, nation states have made broad ranging commitments to promote and respect equality not only for its fundamental value but also because it is a pathway to achieving national development goals.

This section outlines a number of important international policy instruments and agreements that oblige governments to promote gender equality.

1.3.1 The ILO's Decent Work Agenda

Gender Equality cuts across the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and provides a framework for promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in the world of work.

The goal of Decent Work is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.⁴⁶ The ILO offers a range of international standards to promote equality in economic life.⁴⁷

The ILO has placed particular emphasis on gender equality. This is shown by the fact that two of the eight core Conventions⁴⁸, which all members states are required to respect and work towards, are

- **Convention No.100 on the Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value 1951** and
- **Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupations, 1958.** The latter is particularly broad ranging and covers many aspects of discrimination in working life.

These conventions are part of the ILO's 'Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work' and the other 6 core Conventions also deal with enhancing the rights of women.

All ILO Conventions and Recommendations are applicable to both men and women, however there are several that also specifically refer to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in employment. Some of the main ones are listed in the following box.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Work and family | C103 Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 C183 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 C156 Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 |
| Employment Promotion | C122 Employment Policy Convention, 1964 C142 Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 C158 Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 |
| Working conditions | C089 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 C177 Home Work Convention, 1996 C175 Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 C097 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 |

1.3.2 The Global Employment Agenda (GEA)

The Global Employment Agenda (GEA) is the ILO's strategy for operationalising decent work in employment within the Decent Work Agenda.⁴⁹ The GEA establishes Decent Work as a productive factor in itself and as a key strategy for productive job creation, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Within the GEA, employment is placed at the heart of economic and social policies. There is a firm principle that there can be no trade offs between the quantity and quality of employment. The GEA seeks to show that discrimination is a violation of human rights. It also has macro economic implications (i.e. where female labour is not appropriately used or rewarded there will be less productivity and more poverty than there might otherwise be).

The GEA is composed of ten core elements⁵⁰ each with implications for the position of women in the labour force. It recognises that 'poverty is not merely income deprivation, but (includes) vulnerability arising from the absence of social protection, discrimination in labour markets, and the absence of empowerment'.

1.3.3 The Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. Often described as an international bill of rights for women, it is a single instrument which provides for the enjoyment of a full range of rights for all women, covering civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The Convention defines discrimination against women as

“... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

The majority of States in the world have committed themselves to CEDAW and to taking steps to end discrimination. These include:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

Each participating state must provide progress reports to the Convention at least every four years.

The Convention has had a positive impact on legal, constitutional and other developments in many countries and on a global level.

The Millennium Development Goals builds upon the framework of rights provided by CEDAW and provide effective benchmarks for monitoring progress and achieving concrete results.

1.3.4 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Gender Equality is at the heart of the eight Millennium Development Goals.⁵¹ While it is specifically listed as MDG3, it is now well established that achieving the other seven MDGs will not be possible without strong commitment to addressing gender equality (MDG3) in all areas of life. There is now a shared understanding within the development community that development policies and actions that fail to take gender inequality into account and fail to address the disparities between males and female will have limited effectiveness and cost implications.⁵²

The following table lists some of the ways in which gender equality is critical to achieving all the MDGs.

Gender Equality is Critical to the Achievement of all MDGs

| | |
|--|---|
| MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth; • Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction; • Equal access for women (as primary users) to basic transport and energy infrastructure (e.g. clean cooking fuels) can lead to greater economic activity; • Gender equality in interventions helps increase agricultural production since women farmers form a significant proportion of the rural poor; • Equal investment in women's health and nutrition contributes to reducing hunger and malnourishment. |
| MDG 2: achieve univer- sal primary education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of child labour, including the girl-child, through access to education; • Increasing literacy rates for women increases their potential for economic empowerment. |
| MDG 3: Gender Equality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions to reduce the differential burden of household work on young and adolescent girls are necessary in order to allow them to attend primary and secondary schools. |
| MDG 4&5: Reduce child mortality and improve mater- nal health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers' education, income and empowerment has a significant impact on lowering child and maternal mortality. |
| MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater economic independence for women; • Increased ability to negotiate safe sex; • Awareness about the need to alter traditional norms about sexual relations; • Access to treatment; • Support for the care function that women perform; <p>These are all essential for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics.</p> |
| MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equitable resource ownership policies enable women (as primary users of these resources in many cases) to manage their resources in a more sustainable manner. |
| MDG 8: Develop aglobal partnership for development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater gender equality in the political sphere may lead to higher investments in development cooperation. |

Source: K. Mason: *Presentation to the Millennium Project Task Force on Primary Education and Gender Equality*, Washington, DC., 14-16 Oct. 2003, as quoted in UN Millennium Project: *Task Force 3 Interim Report on Gender Equality*, New York, 1 Feb. 2004.

1.3.5 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

A gender audit of the early phase of 15 Interim PRSPs and 3 PRSPs found that fewer than half discussed gender issues in their poverty analysis, and even fewer incorporated gender analysis into the strategies and resource allocations.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) open up political space in which to include gender issues in national poverty analysis and subsequent strategies, as well as in the process of consultation with civil society. To date the results have been mixed.

While on the one hand there has been the opportunity for greater transparency and democracy in policy making through the consultative process, on the other, the fact that many women are in unorganised sectors in many developing countries means that their voices are still not adequately heard. At the substantive level women's issues have tended to be confined to areas of social policy including health, nutrition, education and population control, with the usual underlying assumptions that women are beneficiaries of change rather than dynamic economic agents.

A gender audit of the early phase of 15 Interim PRSPs and 3 PRSPs found that fewer than half discussed gender issues in their poverty analysis, and even fewer incorporated gender analysis into the strategies and resource allocation. An important restriction on policy making for poverty reduction is that the policy framework is often rooted thinking that includes a male breadwinner bias and lack of analysis of the role of women's unpaid work as a limitation on their economic participation.

Unless gender sensitive employment strategies are placed at the heart of PRSPs the means to reduce poverty is limited. With declining employment elasticities of growth in many countries, a strong emphasis on job creation needs to be embedded within growth strategies. And, within the paradigm of the centrality of employment to poverty reduction, gender mainstreaming and affirmative action in employment strategies form a key nexus between growth, employment and poverty reduction.

1.4 Challenging Gender Misconceptions in the Policy Arena

The ILO's work with its constituents has shown that there is strong commitment to promoting gender equality. Yet there are many challenges, misconceptions and obstacles that prevent policy makers' from designing effective, gender-sensitive strategies.

It is worth highlighting some of the issues which policy makers confront in their efforts to promote equality of opportunity and outcomes in decent work for men and women.

1.4.1 The separation of economic and social: An unhelpful split

Policy makers and planners often do not see the poor, vulnerable and marginalised women as agents of social change and economic development. Rather they are often seen as in need of social assistance.

One fundamental obstacle to the design of gender sensitive interventions is the framework within which policy is designed. Policy makers and planners often do not see the poor, vulnerable and marginalised women and men as the agents of social change and economic development. Rather they are often seen as in need of social assistance. This has many implications.

Firstly this is often reflected in the institutional separation of economic and social policy, and a concomitant hierarchy amongst Ministries within a Government. If Ministries of Labour are often weak and under-resourced, Ministries of Gender and Women's Affairs or Social Welfare are often even more marginalised and have little influence over national policy agendas. Yet these institutions are primarily where equality interventions are relegated. The more powerful Ministries such as Trade, Finance or Planning have responsibility for the design of macro-economic policy and rarely are gender equality concerns mainstreamed within these institutions. A lack of capacity to conduct gender analysis within these institutions and Ministries often results in gender blind policies which are not gender neutral in impact. Indeed their effects can be profoundly negative on poverty alleviation and on women's lives in particular.

Within the separation of the economic and social are 'trickle down' assumptions in which policy is targeted to the perceived stronger economic sectors with benefits eventually reaching the more vulnerable segments of society including marginalised women. In contrast, a policy framework embedded within a Decent Work agenda and capabilities approach establishes that rather than being a by-product of growth, equality measures are instrumental in creating new opportunities and growth. Within such a framework policymakers no longer need to grapple with perceived trade offs between equity and efficiency since there are strong synergetic links between the two. (These issues are discussed in more detail in the brief on Economic policies.)

A lack of capacity to conduct gender analysis often results in gender blind policies that do not impact women and men in the same way.

1.4.2 Equality is not a luxury

Within the same paradigm separation of the economic and social, equality can easily be perceived as a luxury of high income economies. Promoting equal employment opportunity interventions is often perceived as being costly and may have to wait until an economy has reached a certain size and income level.

Again an instrumentalist view of equality which acknowledges equality's role in achieving other development goals allows policy makers to promote equality in ways that lead to multiplier effects in terms of poverty reduction and economic growth. Social

provisioning which enhances women's capabilities has not only proven to reap considerable development dividends, it is also relatively cost effective. As Amartya Sen notes in 'Development as Freedom' even low income countries can afford capability enhancing measures for women since the relative costs are less in a low income country than a high income country. Such measures are often also labour intensive with spin-off effects in terms of employment creation.

1.4.3 Equality is not counter-productive

For policy makers the issue is to assess not just the short-term costs but to bear in mind the longer term, harder to measure, but real benefits of equality. These include more efficient labour allocation, full use of human capital, and capital formation for the next generation.

Accompanying the 'equality as a luxury' perception is the view that measures to increase equality in employment may even be counter productive because of short term costs. For example, a common argument is that maternity protection is costly for employers, particularly for smaller businesses; and this may contribute to their reluctance to hire women employees.

However, equality measures are a vital component of the decent work framework as they contribute towards ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women in the world of work.

Equality measures may be costly in the short term, but they create long-term benefits to society and the economy. Through tripartite dialogue many countries have found ways of sharing costs associated with such measures.

For policy makers the issue is to assess not just the short term costs but to bear in mind the longer term, harder to measure, but real benefits of equality such as more efficient labour allocation, full use of human capital and capital formation for the next generation.

1.4.4 Mainstreaming versus gender specific – A false dichotomy

Both mainstreaming and gender specific strategies may be required and the two can support each other.

It is important that equality is mainstreamed through all major policy making Ministries and not just limited to a single Ministry or agency. It is also important to note that adopting a mainstreaming approach does not remove the need for gender specific interventions and to address direct and indirect discrimination through targeted policies and programmes.

Both mainstreaming and gender specific strategies may be required and the two can support each other. This is particularly true in contexts where serious discrimination is rampant and where there are strong socio-cultural barriers to women's economic participation in public life.

An either/or approach is usually inadequate for one of two main reasons: (1) women-specific interventions which are not integrated into the mainstream of policy and programmes may marginalise women, and (2) a purely mainstreaming approach may be unable to address the specific gaps that women face in access to information, services, and productive resources – particularly vulnerable and discriminated groups of women.

1.4.5 Understanding the structural nature of gender inequality

A key issue that touches every policy area is the inter-relationship between women's paid and unpaid work.

Developing gender responsive policy requires more than ensuring women are included in the text of policy documents or that disaggregated data is used, though these are important elements.

It requires a rigorous analysis of existing structural inequalities such as women's reproductive roles and time burdens, limited access to productive resources and employment opportunities and other forms of direct and indirect discrimination. A key issue that touches every policy area is the inter-relationship between women's paid and unpaid work. Policies that do not recognise this relationship result in an intensification of women's work as they struggle to combine care responsibilities with the need to earn an income.

Making non-market work visible and giving it an economic value so that it can be integrated into national accounts is an important step in more gender sensitive policy making.

An analysis of these structural impediments enables an understanding of how policies will impact differently on men and women and moreover can help to identify entry points to enhance gender equality and change policy priorities. This type of analysis requires reliable data that can inform policies, but given the nature of women's work, both paid and unpaid, gaining accurate information is often difficult. Labour market segmentation is apparent in all economies, with many women being concentrated in low paid, low productive 'invisible' sectors, particularly in the informal economy. The non-market activities of women which contribute to the reproduction of the labour force are even less recognised. Making this work visible and giving it an economic value so that it can be integrated into national accounts is an important step in more gender sensitive policy making⁵³. (see Economics brief on time use surveys).

A related issue is that the frameworks within which policies are designed can constrain effective gender responsive strategies. For example, orthodox economic models assume the behaviour of the individual to be rational, self-interested and market oriented. These models do not recognise differences based on sex, gender stereotyping, class, race etc or the unequal power relations that exist within the home, the labour market and wider economy.

Orthodox economic models assume the behaviour of the individual to be rational, self-interested and market oriented. These models do not recognise differences based on sex, gender stereotyping, class, race etc or the unequal power relations that exist within the home, the labour market and wider economy.

Policies based on such models result can have significantly negative consequences for the poorest and most marginalised sectors of society particularly women. Even efforts that target the poor such as pro-poor growth strategies have difficulties in conceptualising gender issues and need to make greater efforts to differentiate the poor, particularly by gender. Although poverty is multidimensional, pro poor growth strategies tend to measure poverty by income level linked to households. This is unhelpful in disaggregating gender dynamics within the household or assessing how women contribute towards economic growth. A broader conception of poverty is required such as one within a capabilities framework.⁵⁴

1.4.6 Developing Indicators for identifying gender disparities and measuring progress

One of the persistent challenges and obstacles that prevent policy makers' from designing effective, gender-sensitive strategies is the issue of development and utilisation of sex disaggregated data and the development of indicators. Indeed, gender-sensitive measurements are critical for building the case for taking gender (in)equality seriously, for enabling better planning and actions.

Measuring change means tracking the degree to which, and in what way, changes take place over time. From a gender perspective, measurements of change might address changes in the relations between men and women, changes in the outcomes of a particular policy, programme or activity for women and men, or changes in the status or situation of men and women with regards to a particular issue such as levels of poverty or economic participation.

If measurement techniques and data remain limited and poorly utilised, it will be difficult to know if current efforts are on track to achieve gender equality goals. Indeed, some aspects of gender (in)equality are difficult to define, such as the gender dimensions of poverty or women's empowerment, and some are sensitive issues such as gender-based violence. To capture the multifaceted and gendered nature of poverty, indicators must move beyond income and consumption. Gender-sensitive indicators at the national, regional and international levels enable comparisons of gender equality across countries and regions through translating complex data into accessible messages about achievements and gaps. The focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 is a milestone with regards to

the importance of gender equality to human development. In addition, there are some important initiatives in adapting international indicators, such as the African Gender and Development Index. The usefulness of such an index lie in its ability to point to changes in the status and roles of African women and men over time.⁵⁵

1.4.7 Cultural relativism versus universal human rights

Cultural relativism is the principle that an individual human's beliefs and activities should be understood in terms of his or her own culture.

The thinking behind the idea of universal human rights is that they are inalienable and that they set universal standards that do not permit violation on the basis of culture, tradition, religion or any other political, economic or social factors. Human rights are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible and there can be no selectivity in implementation.

The argument for cultural relativism is rarely explicitly used given the global acceptance of the importance of gender equality; though the idea makes its appearance in the form of socio-cultural barriers in many communities around the world. It is important to note here that changing traditional views and values that relegate women to lower status (and may even confine many within their homes) takes time and should be carefully and cautiously addressed through policies and programmes. Awareness-raising on the universality of human rights is vital.

The majority of states have set up legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms for implementing and monitoring human rights such as gender equality; but changing cultural practices takes much longer. To change gender relations in the long term it will be vital to have awareness raising campaigns, and also civil rights mobilisation, particularly by social partners.

In some cases it is not the rights based arguments that hold sway among sceptics but more economic arguments based on human capital theories and the benefits that can be reaped by families and communities.

SECTION TWO

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES CHECKLIST

This section is built around the first five of the six⁵⁶ policy options that are listed in the 'Vision Document'.⁵⁷ Each policy option is dealt with in turn by listing in note form some key Gender Issues in one column and then some thoughts about what might be involved in Gender Responsive Policy Making in another column.

The list of Gender Issues gives answers to two questions:

- (a) What are the existing structural inequalities between men and women in relation to each policy item? and
- (b) What are the tools, strategies and responses that can be used to address these issues?

Note that where appropriate, an indication is given of (a) where there are related **Policy Briefs** in (b) the corresponding **Global Employment Agenda (GEA) Core Element Numbers (1-10)**.⁵⁸

(See Annex 2, page 63, for complete list)

Key Policy Areas described in the Global Employment Agenda 'Vision Paper':

A. Economic policies to influence the demand side

1. Macroeconomic policies
2. Financial policies
3. Investment policies and investment climate, including infrastructure
4. Trade and regional integration
5. Sectoral policies:
industrial, services, agriculture, environmental industries and services
6. Labour mobility and migration
7. Employment intensity of growth

B. Skills and employability

1. Training policies and systems
2. Technology
3. Employment services development and reform
4. Improved access to training and employment opportunities

C. Enterprise development

1. An enabling business environment: the national or cross-cutting themes
2. Value chain upgrading and clustering
3. Local economic development
4. Promoting good workplace practices
5. Targeting groups of enterprises and entrepreneurs

D. Labour market institutions and policies

1. Institutions and policies, including wages
2. Labour market adjustment policies and programmes
3. Passive and active labour market policies
4. Employment services
5. Industrial relations

E. Governance, empowerment and organizational capital 1-10

1. Representation, participation and advocacy
2. Freedom of association/Collective bargaining
3. Institution building
4. Social dialogue

F. Social protection

A: Economic Policies to influence the demand side

Policy Briefs: 01, 02, 03, 04

Global Employment Agenda Core Elements: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, (see annex 2)

A1: Economic Policies

Key Gender Issues

Classical economic models assume rational, self interested, market oriented behaviour. They do not recognise unequal power relations and a gender division of labour in the household, the labour market and the economy. This results in gender blind policies. Gender blind policies are not gender neutral in impact.

Macroeconomic policies do not take into account the structural nature of gender inequality that prevents the poor and marginalised women from taking advantage of opportunities to enhance income and employment. These include limited access to productive resources, land, wealth, capital, information, jobs, networks, technology.

Policies also do not take into account the linkages between productive and reproductive work. This has led to intensification of women's work as they struggle to combine care responsibilities with the need to earn an income.

Women's unpaid work is not considered of economic value, though it plays a vital role in the reproduction of the labour force.

Many of the goods and services produced by women are not included in the Systems of National Accounts including domestic work, volunteer work, subsistence production and the informal economy.

Cut backs in infrastructure and public services disproportionately affect women since it is women who must bridge these gaps in families and households.

Macroeconomic policies are decided in more powerful Ministries (Trade, Finance etc) with little gender analysis.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Economic modelling needs to take into account the gender division of labour and unequal power relations in the labour market and in the household.

All policy design needs to undertake gender analysis to examine existing structural inequalities and direct and indirect discrimination in access to productive resources.

Gender budgeting tools have been developed to investigate the differential impacts of national and local budget allocations on women and men and are a major means of designing gender sensitive policies and budgets.

Understanding the relationship between women's paid and unpaid work is the key starting point for policy development. Women's unpaid work is not considered of economic value, yet women make a tremendous contribution to global GDP through their reproductive work and volunteer and, community work.

Time Use surveys are being used by a number of countries to give a monetary value to women's unpaid work and can help with data collection on the care economy. Attempts are being developed to integrate information from Time Use Surveys into Systems of National Accounts.

National budgets need to prioritise areas which can benefit women economically and socially – for example infrastructural development such as roads, sanitation, health, clean water, education, child care can have a major impact in reducing women's domestic burdens etc.

Institutional separation of economic and social policies is particularly detrimental to women since they are often not seen by policy makers as agents of economic transformation but as passive recipients in need of social assistance.

Male breadwinner bias in policy making assumes that women are only secondary income earners in households and therefore of less importance.

Women are underrepresented in dialogue on macroeconomic priorities and policies such as PRSPs. Although PRSPs are required to undertake extensive civil society consultations, the fact that women are often concentrated in the informal economy with little organisation or representation often means that their voices are not heard in developing macroeconomic priorities which can benefit them.

Tight monetary and fiscal policies often lead to a deflationary bias – slow growth and high unemployment – which harms women more than men. Fiscal austerity in which budget deficits are seen as inflationary result in cuts in public spending which hurt women disproportionately, given the gender division of labour in households.

Minimalist state strategies harm women. Role of the state is critical in the development process – including in allocating resources, providing infrastructure, education, training, promoting particular sectors, labour standards, regulating capital flows to avoid capital volatility and in active labour market policies.

Capacity building of key ministries such as Trade, Finance etc is needed in gender analysis.

The collection of gender disaggregated data is particularly crucial for policy development.

Efforts need to be made to increase dialogue and representation of women in macroeconomic policy making. Organisation of the informal economy is particularly important since women may be concentrated there and are concentrated in the segments that are least protected, most invisible and most vulnerable.

A refocus away from excessive emphasis on inflation targeting and towards other gender equitable goals including employment generation and targeted investment to strategic sectors to stimulate productivity will benefit women.

A2: Financial policies

Key Gender Issues

Financial policies are often deeply embedded within neo-liberal economic thinking, with its emphasis on inflation targeting, privatisation and minimal state expenditures as the route to economic growth. Costs in terms of employment can be high, and poverty reduction efforts can be undermined.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Inflation targeting and economic growth policies have often failed to generate sufficient employment to reduce poverty. Pro-poor growth (PPG) strategies can enable poor women to become both agents and beneficiaries of economic growth. PPG policies are most effective when they combine measures to improve equality in employment, education and training, access to productive resources and promote greater bargaining power within the household.

Fiscal Policies

Direct taxation (as opposed to indirect taxation) tends to benefit the poor and women more directly.

Taxing basic goods and services through VAT and other taxes disproportionately negatively affects the poor, particularly poor women

Failure to provide tax rebates to covers social costs of women entering the labour market such as childcare may also act as a disincentive to labour force participation.

Employment disincentives may exist for women because of joint income tax structures that disadvantage the spouse who earns the least.

High taxes may act as a disincentive for informal economy operators to register their holdings.

National Budgets

Cuts in social services shift the burden on to households and on to women in particular.

Privatisation may result in intensification of women's unpaid work, particularly in relation to healthcare and transport.

User-fees for public services may increase gender inequality, since women are often primarily responsible for related health, education needs of households.

Women often bear the brunt of national debt servicing: cuts in subsidies, public goods and services increase women's domestic burdens.

Cuts in public expenditures in infrastructure – clean water, sanitation, roads, transport – impact more heavily on women.

Fiscal Policies

Taxation (fiscal) and income transfers are important redistributive mechanisms for women, in the context that women carry the burden of the care economy.

Progressive taxation regimes benefit poorer women rather than flat taxation

Exempting basic goods and services from VAT taxes benefit the poor and women

Tax rebates on retirement savings schemes need to take into account the disparities between men's and women's labour force participation and the number of periods women are out of the labour market for child birth and rearing;

Fiscal and financial sector development plans should address social development objectives and incorporate gender concerns in the allocation and mobilisation of domestic financial resources for economic and social development.

Tax incentives and amnesties may be a way to register informal enterprises, including those owned by women.

National Budgets

National budgets should take into account development goals including gender equality (gender budgeting) and not just monetary and financial goals.

Gender budgeting provides tools to analyse the different impacts on men and women of national and local financial allocations, they are being used extensively to formulate more gender sensitive and transparent budget allocations.

Gender analysis is required in revenue raising, expenditure plans and reviews and provision of public goods and essential services to reduce gender inequality in the allocation of public resources.

Participation of civil society in expenditure reviews which also link resource allocation to overall development goals can have a significant beneficial impact on the poor and women.

There is often little public consultation in determining budget allocations. Even where consultations exist, women may not be in organised sectors to have voice and representation.

Gender analysis is rarely used to analyse differential impacts of budget allocations on women and men.

National budgets are often narrowly focused on monetary and financial goals.

Gender responsive budget audits can be used to determine which groups benefit from fiscal policies and whether there are biases against the poor and disadvantaged.

Broad based consultations in the formulation of financial policies will lead to greater transparency, democracy and voice for women.

A3: Investment policies and investment climate, including infrastructure

Key Gender Issues

Female employment often grows with expanded trade. Trade may increase women's labour force participation, but impact negatively on leisure time and the reproductive economy.

There may be trade offs between new employment opportunities and the quality of jobs resulting from increased investment.

Female labour is particularly attractive for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This may be a result of lower wages and less likelihood that women will organise into trade union activities. There are current debates on the relationship between trade and wage equality. Seguino⁵⁹ argues that FDI is attracted to the undervalued wages of women and that FDI worsens the gender wage gap. Competition between low-wage economies for trade and investment reduces women's bargaining power. The World Bank on the other hand argues that increased trade leads to greater equality.

Global competition and efforts to attract FDI and expand trade may compromise core labour standards such as freedom of association and equal pay.

Women may be concentrated in sectors where capital is volatile and highly mobile.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Incentives packages to attract FDI should not compromise core labour standards including freedom of association, equal remuneration and non-discrimination.

Efforts need to be made to ensure women are given opportunities when new markets open and should not be excluded on the basis of being small operators.

Women need opportunities for skills upgrading to meet demands of FDI, and in cases of job losses from capital flight.

Policies need to address gender based constraints such as childcare and domestic responsibilities so that women are able to take advantage of new opportunities from expanded trade.

States need to recognise the changing employment relationships resulting from new production structures. Labour law needs to be able to adapt to new definitions of workers so that the most vulnerable including women are covered by labour codes.

Women may not be able to benefit from expanded investment and trade due to (a) gender biases that lock them out of particular markets and (b) lack of access to productive resources including credit.

Women's family responsibilities and unpaid work burdens may also act as barriers to taking advantage of employment and income opportunities from expanded trade.

Trade liberalisation may reinforce gender segregation in the labour market

Although opportunities for self-employment grow with increased trade, in some cases disguised wage workers are made responsible for the costs of production and non-wage costs while being dependent on a contractor or supplier. Labour law may be limited in scope to cover these types of workers.

Changing production structures have impacted heavily on women. The growth of subcontracting and homeworking has seen women being located at the lowest end of global value chains. Complex networks of subcontracting make identifying the firm responsible for wages and conditions difficult.

States need to be able to provide regulatory frameworks for investment which are able to address the increase in triangular employment relationships and multiple layers of subcontracting. States have an important role in determining who is ultimately responsible for wages, working conditions and social protection within global value chains.

States need to develop policies to address home-workers who are often left unprotected under labour law. Policies need to include strategies for social protection, organisation and representation, monitoring of conditions and occupational health and safety.

States should not take a deterministic view of trade liberalisation. There is often space to shape trade relationships through strategic alliances and negotiations by social partners. There may be opportunities to attract FDI on the basis of respect for labour standards (for example 'Better Work programme').

A4: Trade and regional integration

Key Gender Issues

Women are often concentrated in manufacturing and export oriented industries. Trends have seen male to female substitution of labour as conditions and technology improve (especially in Export Processing Zones).

FDI is particularly attracted to female labour. Mixed picture for women's employment growth related to trade – some empowerment particularly at household level but also poor working conditions, lack of representation, low wages and job insecurity.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

As above, States need to provide incentives for FDI but not make trade-offs with regard to core labour standards.

States have a role to play in regulating capital flows to avoid capital volatility and flight and protect the domestic economy. A policy mix of both liberalisation and protection are often necessary in different situations. Regulation of FDI rebalances the bargaining power of workers and can promote productivity growth as firms rely less on low wages for competitive advantage.

Trade liberalisation can weaken the role of the state and its ability to enforce labour standards, especially related to gender equality.

Trade liberalisation and global competition can lead to increased informalisation of labour.

International trade draws in more women (export industries) but sometimes results in decline of women's role in local economy and local food production.

Serious job insecurity exemplified by post Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA) situation – high unemployment for women and relocation based on wage spiral downwards.

Unfair competition between developing country farmers including women, and heavily subsidised developed country farmers leading to drops in global prices for agricultural commodities and the impoverishment of rural areas in developing countries.

Increased competition from cheap imports for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) can threaten the viability of female-led enterprises.

Increasing role of Multinational Corporations (MNC) in food and agriculture creates serious livelihood survival issues for women farmers since women dominate in food production in many countries. Additionally privatisation and cash crop export agriculture affects women's access to land.

Burden of adjustment to economic shocks and dislocation resulting from trade liberalisation are borne by women.

Time poverty, limited access to productive resources, and unpaid reproductive work limit women's ability to take advantage of new opportunities arising from expanded trade.

For sectors which are unable to compete globally States need to ensure that there is adequate retraining of women and not just men (e.g. post MFA textiles). Active labour market policies should target women in these sectors in the same way that has been done for declining male dominated sectors such as shipping and mining.

Policies need to take into account the gender differentiated impact of trade policies and the way in which they also interact with existing discrimination in the labour market and access to productive resources. A range of trade impact tools exist which can analyse impacts on gender equality, the environment etc

Promotion of specific sectors with the greatest export potential should be given necessary support in terms of fiscal and financial policies and be linked to social objectives such as greater gender equality.

A5: Sectoral policies: industrial, services, agriculture, environmental industries and services

Key Gender Issues

Women are concentrated in the agriculture and services sectors, but limited access to productive resources limits productivity and output. Many service sector jobs have serious decent work deficits, some, such as domestic work, may not be covered under the labour law. Even in skilled occupations such as nursing, job status, pay and working conditions may be poor.

Women's work in some of these sectors may not be given monetary value thus undervaluing their economic contribution particularly in subsistence agriculture and in services such as domestic work.

Occupational segregation is common in all these sectors, limiting women's employment options and choices.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Ensuring women's access to productive resources such as land, credit etc can enhance productivity and economic growth. This is particularly the case in the agricultural sector.

States should extend regulatory frameworks and labour laws to address lack of labour protection – women are often concentrated in sectors which are not afforded protection under the labour law.

Policies in all these sectors should analyse gender segregation and the impact that women's household responsibilities have on their employment opportunities.

Interventions in the agricultural sector need to take into account women's food provisioning role.

Occupational segregation needs to be addressed through broad ranging measures such as working towards pay equity, reforming education and training structures to encourage gender balance, incentives for girl's schooling, public awareness raising to encourage women into non-traditional work etc.

A6: Labour mobility and migration [Policy Brief 04]

Key Gender Issues

Migration is increasingly feminised, (women make up nearly half of all temporary migrants) often due to high unemployment and labour market discrimination in home countries.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Receiving-countries need to allow freedom of movement, ensure labour law protection for unprotected occupations, encourage organisation of migrant women, enforce contracts, provide social security entitlements, forge bilateral agreements, and facilitate the use of safe and efficient remittance transfer systems.

Low-skilled women are particularly in demand in domestic work, entertainment and other unprotected sectors. However, for some skilled migrant women de-skilling is an issue, with the work they undertake not matching with their qualifications and experience.

Although migration can facilitate greater labour force participation of women in high income countries, the development of global care chains means that the costs of migrant women taking over the care responsibilities of women in developed countries are borne by the vulnerability of migrant women, and the children and families they leave behind.

Sending-countries often rely only on temporary migration to solve unemployment problems, particularly of women.

Remittances are starting to exceed FDI and are a big earner of foreign exchange. There is anecdotal evidence that women remit more. High levels of remittances should not cause relaxation about state responsibilities for gender-sensitive employment creation.

There are few linkages between remittances and productive investments at home. Evidence suggests that women are more likely to spend remittances on family welfare. (however in the long term this can be seen as investment in human capital).

There is a brain drain and social cost for home communities, particularly through the loss of skilled women in traditional female occupations such as health and education. This in turn impacts in deterioration of services for women in developing countries, intensifies their domestic care burdens, and works against poverty alleviation strategies.

Mixed picture: increased empowerment and economic independence for many migrant women but also high degrees of vulnerability including (because of irregular migration status), lack of labour law protection, exploitative recruitment practices, little social protection, race and class issues, and risks of trafficking.

Sending-countries need to address the root causes of the migration of low skilled women in order to make it a genuine choice and attract back those who have left. These causes include poverty, labour market discrimination, high unemployment of women, low skills base and discrimination in access to productive resources. Sending countries should develop gender sensitive employment policies rather than relying on migration to resolve unemployment problems at home.

Sending-countries should provide incentives and other supports to returning migrants to enable them to reintegrate economically and socially. Information and incentives for enterprise development, skills upgrading and the productive use of remittances are important.

Pre-departure training needs to include strategies to invest remittances productively and not just on consumption.

Social remittances – the ideas, skills and experiences generated in the migration experience – can be an important means of transforming gender relations when women return to their home communities. Policies need to be put in place to enhance these types of remittances

Co-development strategies enable receiving countries to meet their labour market needs without compromising human rights and labour standards, and for sending-countries to avoid using migration as a last resort to solve unemployment and poverty, particularly of low-skilled women.

Linking MDGs and PRSPs to migration policies can reduce recruitment from at-risk sectors such as healthcare and education in low income countries.

Regulated migration policies are key to ensuring a win-win scenario for both sending and receiving countries. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration provides guidance on regulation.

A7: Employment intensity of growth [Policy Brief 03]

Key Gender Issues

Employment elasticities of growth have been declining in many countries. Economic growth on its own has not been enough to generate sufficient employment unless it is within a pro-poor employment-centred growth strategy.

Gender equality is a key element of pro-poor growth strategies. Investment in education for girls and increased income in the hands of women results in more bargaining power in the household, less child labour, more schooling for children, better nutrition, health and lowered infant mortality, and reduced fertility. Each of these factors has a positive impact on per capita income and development and the formation of the future human capital.

KILM⁶⁰ research has found that female employment elasticities of growth have grown more on average than men's. Potential reasons include: female catch-up rates in terms of labour force participation, greater sensitivity of female employment to economic growth, whereby women suffer more than men in times of economic downturn, or that women are engaged in lower productivity, lower wage jobs.

Research shows that women have gained through export-oriented production and in the services sector, though the quality of the jobs has been poor. Women have been major economic players in these sectors in newly industrialised countries. FDI has also shown to be attracted to female labour, partly for reasons of lower wages, less organisational potential and gender constraints. Where jobs evolve into higher skilled labour such as in some export processing zones, men tend to replace women.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

While recognising that economic growth in itself may not produce more jobs, States can take measures to increase the employment intensity of growth and ensure that the poor, and women in particular are able to take advantage of new income and job opportunities, through pro-poor strategies, human resource development policies, enhancing access to productive resources, encouraging entrepreneurship development and skills development.

Important elements in integrating women into pro-poor growth may include⁶¹: (a) the growth strategy should be based on rising demand for female labour (e.g. export industries with complementary access to education for females), (b) removal of gender gaps in education to enable women to seize opportunities in employment, (c) improving access to productive assets, (d) policies to improve female bargaining power in the household (e.g. educational access, reproductive health, access to productive resources, etc.).

Gender targets can be set for employment intensive public works schemes.

Employment intensive infrastructural schemes can reap double dividends for women: job creation as well as putting in place the infrastructural support (sanitation, roads, irrigation systems) which can ease women's unpaid care burdens and time poverty.

Labour saving technologies in the home, childcare and other supports are essential to enable women to earn better incomes.

Numerous studies show how gender inequality reduces economic growth. Putting productive resources in the hands of women increases productivity and output, both directly and indirectly through future human capital formation.

Women may be excluded or self-exclude from employment intensive infrastructural development and guarantee schemes unless special measures are in place to ensure their participation (childcare, type of wage structure, transport etc).

Limited access to productive resources limits women's ability to take advantage of new employment opportunities resulting from increased trade.

Attracting FDI (which is often female intensive) should not be at the expense of core labour standards including equal pay, freedom of association and collective bargaining. Some countries have been able to attract FDI on the basis of respect for standards (e.g. Post MFA Cambodia).

Since women may be concentrated in sectors where capital is highly mobile, opportunities should be put in place for women to re-train and upgrade skills to meet changing labour market demands (see Policy Briefs on active labour market policies and on skills training).

Self-employment has enormous employment growth potential. Both a mainstreaming and a gender specific approach may be appropriate to encourage women into self-employment and MSEs (see Policy Brief on enterprise development).

B: Skills and Employability

Policy Briefs: 05

Global Employment Agenda Core Elements: 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, (see annex 2)

B1: Training policies and systems

- Vocational training policy review and development
- Management of training institutions and systems
- Investment in training
- Core work skills
- Workplace learning, on-the-job training and apprenticeship

Key Gender Issues

Women make up two thirds of the world's non-literate population. Gender discrimination in access to education starts from the earliest stages of life in many societies and limits the choices and opportunities of women in the labour market.

Gender gaps in education and skills development reduces the productivity of the current and future generations, impairs human capital formation and reduces the pool of talent available in the labour market.

Occupational segregation persists, constraining women's choices and income opportunities. Approximately half of all workers in the world are in occupations where 80 per cent are of the same sex. The gender division of labour is reflected in the economy with women often concentrated in the services sector and other traditional female domains.

Labour market segmentation also persists with many women being in low-skilled, low paid and low productive sections of the labour market.

Women miss out on training opportunities because of lack of information, lack of time due to household responsibilities/ childcare, gender stereotypes, and cultural barriers.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Upgrading skills for women brings together the equity, efficiency and anti-poverty rationales thus making full use of a country's human capital.

International policy debates have recognised that enhancing women's capabilities leads to long term benefits for a society and an economy – reduced fertility, lower child labour and infant mortality, increased school enrolments, and greater decision-making power for women in the household etc.

There is a need for an explicit gender equality agenda in training from the level of employment and training policies, to institutional strengthening, down to curricula, training materials, training delivery, training of trainers, training venue and facilities.

Affirmative action strategies are often necessary to bridge gaps in access to skills training. Training institutions need to make special efforts to reach women trainees including through hiring female trainers, and ensuring that male trainers undergo gender training.

Lower literacy rates, lack of information and cultural barriers can also be obstacles to upgrading skills for women. Training delivery may also not take into account women's domestic responsibilities.

Curricula may be riddled with gender stereotypes, and vocational training may be organised along typical gender lines. Post training support may not be available, or women may not be able to take advantage of it because of time poverty.

Some attempts in promoting non-traditional skills from women through technical cooperation have been unsuccessful because of severe cultural constraints, lack of market access, harassment and community hostility.

Women are often at the centre of the mismatch in supply and demand in the labour market, and often do not have the skills in ICT, technology and sciences that are highly valued in the private sector. Vocational training institutions may also be unable to effectively analyse labour market demand.

Women are less likely to benefit from life long learning and adapting to changing labour market needs because of their reproductive responsibilities.

Many graduate women do not see self employment as a viable option and continue to seek work in the diminishing public sector.

Women are less likely to have access to apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities, since employers are reluctant to hire women because of the perception that they have only a conditional attachment to the labour market due to their family responsibilities.

Vocational training institutions have an important role in breaking down labour market segmentation and gender segregation through: (a) promotion of non-traditional skills development, (b) setting targets for women's participation in all courses, (c) evaluating demand for labour in the context of increased trade and FDI, (d) promotion of high end skills development and other supply side measures. Vocational training institutions should also make greater links with the private sector to evaluate changing demand for skills and also to encourage employers to hire young women as apprentices and trainees.

Vocational training and skill development institutions need to address issues of childcare and re-schedule training at times suitable for women to ensure their participation.

Curriculum review is often necessary to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes.

Public awareness campaigns can encourage non-traditional skills development and address gender stereotypes.

Women's access to non-traditional occupations should be facilitated with adequate support but with caution in the context of severe cultural and religious constraints. Gaining community support is beforehand is key to the success of such strategies.

Post-training support should be given, linking women with employment services, Business Development Service (BDS) providers, microfinance institutions etc.

Indicators can be developed to measure achievements in gender equality in vocational training and measure gaps between men and women.

Equal employment opportunities policies at national and enterprise level are key to enabling gender equality in recruitment, promotion and skills development.

B2: Technology

Key Gender Issues

The gender digital gap (in access and abilities to ICT) limits women's opportunities to participate in the knowledge economy. Gaps are particularly common for women in rural areas and poor communities. Domestic responsibilities, cultural constraints and economic inequality also impede access.

Where women are involved in employment based ICT use it tends to be at the lower end. Telemarketing, and call centres have created more jobs for women but with low pay, status and little opportunity for advancement.

Vocational training centres often maintain gender stereotypes and make little effort to encourage females to enrol in ICT and science courses.

Women may not have the required literacy (women make up two thirds of the world's non-literate population), language and information skills to make full use of ICT.

Women have less disposable income to purchase new technologies

Lack of sex disaggregated data on ICT use limits policy development.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Career guidance and curriculum development can encourage women into ICT occupations.

Vocational training institutions can set targets to attract women to ICT and science courses.

States need to promote literacy of girls and women so that they have the necessary skills base to make use of ICT. Incentives schemes have proven to be successful in encouraging girls into these areas.

Public employment services and training centres can promote women's access to ICT particularly in rural areas where women are concentrated.

Given women's time constraints, information should be geared towards women's economic activities. For example ICT can be an important means for enhancing market access or learning about new crop techniques etc.

ICT has the potential to reach women who have not been reached by other media.

ICT can place greater control in the hands of women in areas such as skills development, new learning technologies, access to market and other information. It can also add value to women's existing knowledge in the traditional spheres. It can be a means of ending women's economic isolation.

Innovations show that women's inventions tend to have direct application to improving family and community well-being and efficiency.

ICT makes time and distance irrelevant, thus opening up opportunities for women (e.g. call centres).

Open source software can help ensure that information becomes a global public good available for all.

B3: Employment services development and reform

- Reform of public employment services
- Role of private employment agencies
- Career guidance

Key Gender Issues

Women are often at the centre of the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market, particularly in the highly skilled end. They also often have less access to labour market information systems which could broaden their choices and visions.

Women are less likely than men to access public employment services and research suggests that men benefit more from the allocation of jobs and training opportunities than women in Public Employment Services (PES).

ILO School to Work Transition Surveys (SWTSs)⁶² have shown that young people rely almost entirely on informal networks to find jobs, and in many cases young women have less access to these networks, contributing to young women having the highest unemployment rates of any group.

Both public and private employment agencies can contribute to reinforcing gender segregation and segmentation in the labour market.

Private recruitment agencies may sometimes be implicated in the exploitative recruitment of women or may not prepare women adequately for the assigned work, particularly in cases of temporary migration.

Career guidance can reinforce occupational segregation by channelling girls into traditional skills and sectors, and not into higher skilled, higher demand occupations.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Public Employment Services (PES) can play a key role not only in matching supply and demand in the labour market, but also in eliminating discriminatory practices, ensuring social justice, fairness and diversity in the labour market. Training of PES staff, ensuring greater quality service to women clients, developing gender sensitive impact indicators are key to this process.

PES can set targets to attract female job seekers.

PES can play a central role in promoting equal employment opportunities including detecting gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and promoting equal access to employment, training and promotion.

PES staff should be trained in gender awareness and the vulnerability of women particularly in the low skilled categories, migrants etc

Career guidance should address occupational segregation and encourage girls and women to participate in non-traditional occupations and skills.

Both public and private employment services need strengthening to be able to provide specific job search assistance for women and employment counselling. Their outreach also needs to be expanded given that many women are concentrated in rural areas.

Special efforts need to be made in supplying up-to-date labour market information and business related information such as opportunities for specialised training, continuing education and job placements as well as information about rights and required skills and training.

ILO Convention 181⁶³ provides guidance on the monitoring and regulation of private employment agencies including in gender sensitive strategies.

B4: Improved access to training and employment opportunities

- Youth
- Women
- Informal economy workers
- Persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups

Key Gender Issues

Women cut across all the above groups making up a large proportion of the most vulnerable in each category.

Vulnerability of women at both ends of the age spectrum (higher unemployment for younger women, and older women face poverty due to lack of social protection and age discrimination in employment).

There is segmentation even within the informal economy, with women located at the lower end, where the decent work deficits are the most serious. They are likely to be in economic activities characterised by low technology, low skills, low productivity and income, hazardous work, and lack of representation and voice.

Gender discrimination intersects with other forms of discrimination including disability, ethnicity, class, and age. This results in many layers of disadvantage in the labour market.

Gender discrimination in access to education starts from a very young age in some societies and limits the life chances and employment opportunities of large numbers of women and is often continued in the next generation.

Disabled women are less likely to be in paid employment than disabled men, they also have lower educational outcomes and incomes than disabled men.

Across all of these groups, women's unpaid work in the private sphere limits opportunities to upgrade skills and training. Interventions must address these constraints.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Policies to promote youth employment should be based on equal opportunities and eliminating labour market discrimination for young women (who have the highest rates of unemployment overall).

Governments need to address age discrimination for younger and older women through legislation, programmes and public awareness campaigns.

Policymakers should recognise that women are not a homogenous group, (there are different levels of vulnerability according to race, class, disability etc). Nor should women be seen as passive victims, in need of social assistance. Women are dynamic agents capable of transforming communities and economies when given opportunities.

Addressing decent work deficits in the Informal Economy needs a comprehensive approach with strong gender dimensions in areas such as governance and rights, economic upgrading, organisation and mobilisation.

Both a mainstreaming and affirmative action approach may be appropriate for different groups of disadvantaged workers.

C: Enterprise Development

Policy Briefs: 06, 07, 08, 09, 10

Global Employment Agenda Core Elements: 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, (see annex 2)

C1: An enabling business environment: the national or cross-cutting themes

- Governance and political conditions
- Infrastructure
- Regulations and the cost of doing business
- Entrepreneurship
- Access to finance

Key Gender Issues

Discrimination and limited access to productive resources: land, credit, skills, technology, networks, information, reduce the productivity and output of women owned enterprises.

Women in micro-enterprises often set up supply-driven operations rather than demand driven (often linked to occupational segregation). The failure rate of these enterprises is high due to market saturation, gender segmentation (women are concentrated in female oriented enterprises such as food vending, hairdressing etc) and lack of access to technology and skills training.

High registration costs, transaction costs, high taxes and complicated procedures may act as disincentives for women in MSEs to join the formal economy.

Women are often unable to access essential services such as Business Development because of lack of access to information, lack of legal literacy, limited time due to family responsibilities etc.

There may be problems of labour substitutions, with girls taking on their mother's domestic responsibilities, thereby missing out on schooling when their mothers start enterprises.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

To increase productivity gender discrimination in access to training, skills development, credit, land, information, technology, social networks and other productive resources needs to be addressed through legislation, policies, mainstreaming of institutions and gender specific action.

Tax incentives, access to Business Development Services, market access and information can enable women's businesses to grow.

Information on entrepreneurship needs to be accessible to women, including non-literate women.

Simplified registration procedures and lowered transactions costs and targeting of women for these policies may act as incentives for registration of enterprise in the informal economy.

Promotion of MSEs in developing countries should target women but also address the problems of labour substitution where women's domestic responsibilities are often transferred to older daughters at the expense of their schooling. Issues such as childcare, labour saving technology in the home, changing the gender division of labour in households and providing incentives for girls' education can address these problems.

Access to microfinance services

Access to financial services is not a reality for all. Often, people with low incomes or the very poor are excluded because they lack collateral or the services offered do not meet their needs. This pertains in particular to women because they tend not to have land and property rights.

Although microfinance is an important element in enabling disadvantaged people to access financial services to smooth consumption and provide a resource for income generation, a focus on small scale microfinance institutions consigns typically makes clients remain in the informal economy.

Microfinance institutions need to address issues of control over the resources that clients receive, in particular over loans. Although a loan may be in a woman's name her husband may use it for non-productive purposes, leaving her in debt.

The very poor might need other services than loans. A range of financial products needs to be available for them including savings, micro insurance, and money transfers.

The poorest of the poor are often excluded from access to finance; a large group among them are women.

The failure rate of micro enterprises may be high despite having access to financial services because of limited access to productive assets, information, markets and lack of training and skills. In general, women are less literate and educated and thus more vulnerable.

Access to microfinance services

Access to finance is critical for women and men to smooth consumption and provide a resource for income generation. An additional income source can lead to increased decision making power in the household and better access to health and education for children. Finance is particularly empowering where women retain control over the funds and the returns of the funds rather than giving it to the husband. However, there may be a labour substitution effect for daughters.

Finance is not enough on its own; it needs to be accompanied by training, market access, skills development, mentoring support, etc.

Increasing access financial services to disadvantaged groups and mainstreaming access to formal financial markets makes good economic sense: both, men and women are increasingly participating in the economy. In addition, women have proven to have higher repayment rates. Women are often better savers leading to greater savings mobilisation. Improving women's and men's access to financial services is a key element in poverty reduction and economic growth.

Savings schemes are essential for the poor since they are particularly risk-averse and may not wish to take loans. Increasing access to finance should be accompanied by other enterprise-friendly strategies such as addressing discrimination in access to resources, strengthening business development services, simplifying registration procedures, tax and other incentives.

Microfinance should be seen as one element in a poverty reduction strategy rather than the central plank. Microfinance should not engender complacency about state responsibility for providing public goods and services and regulatory frameworks, and gender sensitive employment-centred economic policies.

C2: Value chain upgrading and clustering

Policy Brief 08

Key Gender Issues

Women are often concentrated in the lowest segments of global value chains – as subcontracted workers and homeworkers – some of the least protected, lowest paid and most vulnerable workers.

Although there may be more opportunities for self-employment, in some cases women are in reality disguised wage workers. Women may be in a dependent position with regard to the sub-contractor though they are also made responsible for the costs and risks of production, thus reducing their earnings overall.

Labour law often struggles to catch up with ambiguous employment relationships within value chains, leaving many women without basic protection.

The lead firms responsible for wages and working conditions may be hidden in complex chains of subcontracting, thus reducing the bargaining power of women.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Value Chain analysis needs to integrate gender analysis in order to identify where women are located within a global value chain and where there may be opportunities to upgrade their position.

Value chain analysis has become a powerful tool in mapping subcontracting chains and identifying responsibility for wages and working conditions. It is being used in ethical trading initiatives and corporate social responsibility initiatives to improve working conditions in global production, often in female dominated sectors.

Countries are reviewing and amending labour law to extend their scope to cover workers in disguised employment relationships such as women homeworkers in global production chains. ILO Convention 177 provides guidance on minimum standards for homeworkers.

C3: Local Economic Development

Policy Brief 09

Key Gender Issues

Local Economic Development (LED) may not necessarily be empowering for women if they are embedded in traditional communities, since LED is based on the engagement of local actors.

There may be few incentives for local actors to respect national regulatory frameworks and norms for equality.

Some LED approaches separate the 'economic' and the 'social'. They target higher levels of economic activity for growth and relegate women to community development or social development (i.e. women, esp in the informal economy, are not seen as viable economic actors).

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

LED needs to be inclusive of women as well as the informal economy and recognise the importance of women as strong economic agents when given opportunities.

Each stage of the LED process should have gender sensitive indicators to monitor gender impacts

Stakeholder discussions must include representations of marginalised women.

While promoting LED, States need to provide regulatory frameworks such as labour standards and measures to promote gender equality.

Stakeholder dialogue is an important component of the LED approach but women may not be represented and organised in their communities leaving them with little voice in dialogue.

LED assumptions of community homogeneity and commonality of interests may impede analysis of unequal power relations in a community and the gender division of labour in the household and labour market.

If there are strong socio-cultural constraints in the community, it may be appropriate to organise separate workshops for women where they can articulate their economic needs and problems, understand their legal rights and entitlements, and develop their own organisations.

C4: Promoting good workplace practices

Policy Brief 10

Key Gender Issues

Because of the gender division of labour in the household, women in particular struggle to balance family responsibilities with employment and income generation.

Women may experience harassment including sexual harassment in the workplace.

Women often experience indirect discrimination with regard to hiring, training and promotion.

Women are less likely to be in senior management positions.

Inadequate maternity leave and childcare acts as disincentives for women's labour force participation.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Family friendly policies (eg flexible working hours and parental leave) help establish a balance between work and family, and also lead to greater productivity, worker loyalty and less absenteeism.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies should be established in hiring, promotions, and training. A full range of EEO policies is needed to encourage diversity and quality in human resources.

Maternity leave and childcare arrangements are important for women's continued involvement in work.

Anti sexual harassment policies should be in place and rigorously enforced.

'Glass ceiling' issues should be addressed with regard to promotions and management positions. Gender imbalances in senior positions can be addressed through a targeted approach, and opportunities for career development.

Family friendly policies can encourage both women and men to be involved in household responsibilities and enable greater labor force participation of women.

C5: Targeting groups of enterprises and entrepreneurs

Policy Briefs 05, 06, 07, 08, 09

- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)**
- **Multinational Enterprises (MNE)**
- **Cooperatives**
- **Entrepreneurs in the informal economy**

Key Gender Issues

The failure rate of female run enterprises is high due to lack of access to productive resources, technology, social networks, skills, Business Development Services, credit, mentoring and market access. Many enterprises are also supply-pushed rather than demand-driven. There is need to ensure that women are able to identify real income opportunities, beyond their traditional skills base in often market saturated sectors.

Female run enterprises may result in daughters giving up schooling to take over mother's domestic responsibilities (labour substitution effect).

The lower end of the informal economy where decent work deficits are the greatest is often where women are in the majority.

Evidence suggests that employer discrimination in hiring of women in the private sector is common.

SMEs struggle to comply with maternity and other protections, which often acts as a disincentive to hire women.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Enterprise development support needs to take into account women's reproductive work in the home. Specific measures need to be in place to ensure children continue to attend school when their mothers operate enterprises.

Women need specific training in market feasibility and analysing demand for skills and services in their communities. Training needs to enable women to think beyond their traditional skills and avoid sectors which are already over-crowded.

Corporate codes of conduct can be an important way of promoting gender equality issues but should not be at the expense of collective bargaining.

Awareness raising amongst employer's organisations is needed to overcome discrimination in hiring of women. Tripartite talks and social dialogue are key to addressing the short term costs of hiring women (e.g. in maternity protection).

Promotion of cooperatives is an effective way for women to combine productive assets, market information, technology, equipment and ensure economies of scale. It also increases their bargaining power and voice.

D: Labour market institutions and policies

Global Employment Agenda Core Elements: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (see annex 2)

D1: Institutions and policies, including wages

Policy Brief 11

Key Gender Issues

Labour market institutions stand at the centre of international debates regarding labour market rigidities and employment protection. Mounting evidence suggests however that employment protection laws, unemployment benefits, trade unions and collective bargaining, rather than causing rigidities can smooth the functioning of an imperfect market and lead to greater efficiencies. For women, as a particularly disadvantaged group within the labour market, these institutions play a vital role in ensuring equity, social justice and diversity in the labour market, as well as eliminating discrimination.

KILM research has shown that employment elasticities for women have grown at a greater rate than for men. This could be because of (a) a 'catch-up' in terms of labour market participation, (b) greater sensitivity of female employment to economic growth whereby women suffer more in economic downturns, or (c) that women are engaged in lower wage, lower productivity jobs. The research also showed that employment rigidity (protection) is insignificant for women, though this could be because of lack of enforcement of employment protection for women.

The gender wage gap is one of the most persistent forms of discrimination and is common in every country.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Strong labour market institutions such as employment protection, trade unions and collective bargaining, and wage policies can redress many of the disadvantages and discriminations that women face in the labour market.

New forms of rights such as the right to training, parental leave, reversible part-time/full time schemes enable greater labour force participation by women.

As a core labour standard, all countries are obliged to work towards equal pay, although no country has yet reached that goal. Convention 100 provides for various and flexible strategies to work towards equal remuneration and not just legal remedies.

Minimum wage can help women in particular, since even when it is not respected it provides a benchmark for wages

D2: Labour market adjustment policies and programmes

Key Gender Issues

Women's labour force participation is increasing globally but quantity is not matched by job quality.

Labour market discrimination can occur at all stages of pre entry and post entry: this is based on educational/skills access, recruitment, job allocation, training, wages, promotion, breaks due to family responsibilities, etc.

Women suffer greater unemployment than men in most countries, and are often the first to lose their jobs during financial crises, transitions, privatizations, etc.

Gender division of labour is common within the labour market – occupational segregation limits opportunities and does not make full use of human capacities; Segregation is both horizontal and vertical.

Flexibility in the labour market can be particularly harmful for women (casualisation of contracts, lack of social protection, etc.)

There are dual labour markets in many developing countries (formal and informal economy) with different levels of protection and security. Women often concentrated in informal enterprises.

Labour surplus countries have a high proportion of unemployment or underemployed (and often low skilled) women who have no option (in the absence of gender sensitive employment creation policies) but to seek temporary migrant work.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Various labour market adjustment policies can be used to improve the employment prospect of women.

These include:

- (a) wage subsidies for employers willing to recruit women and give them on the job-training;
- (b) earnings supplements to enable women to re-enter the labour market;
- (c) opening up apprenticeship opportunities including in non-traditional sectors, self employment assistance and training (credit, training, tax incentives);
- (d) loans and grants for skills training;
- (e) public-private partnerships for job creation and placement;
- (f) ensuring employment guarantee schemes are gender balanced;
- (g) ensuring that women are targeted in employment intensive infrastructural schemes;
- (h) providing healthcare and social protection incentives for job creation schemes;
- (i) improving women's access to labour market information systems and changing demands.

In many cases both a mainstreaming approach to existing interventions and services is required as well as gender specific measures.

Key Gender Issues

In many countries women have higher unemployment rates than men. Unemployment rates also disguise the high levels of discouraged workers and working poor who are women, as well as those taking breaks from the labour market for family reasons. Many women are considered 'inactive' rather than unemployed and hence not eligible for active labour market protection.

Occupational segregation and labour market segmentation confine many women's employment choices to low-skilled low paid work that is linked to the gender division of labour.

Women have fewer opportunities for upgrading or changing their skills to meet changing labour market demands.

Global competition and the drive for greater flexibility erodes job security for women in many sectors. Women are often concentrated in sectors with high capital volatility and mobility.

Active labour market interventions have been required in many post-Multifibre Agreement (MFA) countries.

Active labour market policies such as guarantee schemes may target only male breadwinners.

Lack of access to information channels, lack of legal literacy and their smaller role in the public sphere may mean that some women are not aware of entitlements to passive income supports.

Women are less likely to have transferable employability skills and are less likely to seek formal help in their job-search.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Active labour market policies (ALMP) should be targeted not only to male dominated sectors but also female dominated sectors such as textiles and garments, particularly in the context of the end of MFA.

ALMP need to take into account household responsibilities which restrict training opportunities.

ALMPs can be an important means of breaking down occupational segregation and labour market segmentation by opening up training opportunities to low-skilled women.

Employment Guarantee Schemes can successfully attract women's participation by: explicit recruitment of women by quotas, setting the wage rates to attract women workers, providing transportation to work sites when they are far away, providing childcare arrangements (these can be low cost such as hiring older women to care for children), payments in food often also attract women given their food provisioning role. Despite cultural perceptions to the contrary, women engage in hard physical labour and should therefore not be restricted from public works employment. Where the scheme is targeted towards heads of households or to only one household member, women may be denied access or self-select out. Where community based organisations recruit, women may have a greater chance of participation, though this is not clear (see G. Swamy box policy brief 11).

There is need to strengthen women's capabilities (skill training, employability issues, etc.) to match labour market demand.

Information about ALMPs needs to be made accessible to women, particularly in non-literate populations.

D4: Employment services

Key Gender Issues

The gender division of labour is a hindrance to the efficient functioning of the labour market. Research suggests that men benefit more from the allocation of jobs than women in Public Employment Services (PES), and that PES can reinforce occupational segregation and gender segmentation in the labour market.

ILO School to Work Transition Surveys have revealed that both young men and young women are unlikely to make use of PES but use informal channels to find jobs. PES are not reaching young women in particular.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Public Employment Services (PES) can play a key role not only in matching supply and demand in the labour market, but also in eliminating discriminatory practices, ensuring social justice, fairness and diversity in the labour market. Key to this process are (a) training of PES staff, (b) ensuring greater quality service to women clients, and (c) developing gender sensitive impact indicators.

Employment and career counselling are important public employment services in a number of countries. Gender sensitivity is particularly important in this area, and special efforts should be made to counteract occupational stereotyping. Public employment services can also work with educational institutions to promote gender equity in school counselling.

PES can contribute to reducing the gender pay gap through carrying out job evaluations and ensuring job descriptions enable women and men to be hired at the same levels for the same job.

Various strategies can be used by PES to break down gender inequality. These include:

- (a) working with local employers to ensure gender neutral recruitment;
- (b) breaking down occupational segregation by working with job-seekers;
- (c) ensuring gender balance in activation measures delivered by PES; and
- (d) using both mainstreaming and gender specific approaches.

Because public employment services are often the implementing agencies for active and some passive labour market policies, they are instrumental in carrying out the recommendations in the previous section.

D5: Industrial Relations

Key Gender Issues

Examples of gender blindness in Industrial Relations (IR) include:

- (a) the dominance of male-dominated industries as the basis of IR research;
- (b) the treatment of women but not men as gendered subjects;
- (c) the failure to recognise the importance of gender as a factor in IR;
- (d) the focus on systems and structures (rather than processes through which gendered relations come into play); and
- (e) lack of analysis of how gender relations impact on industrial relations (the separation of the personal/gender relations from workplace practices).

Women are under-represented in employers and workers organisations, particularly in leadership positions.

Collective bargaining teams, negotiation teams and seminar participants in trade unions and employers groups tend to be male dominated. Not enough women are trained in these skills.

Employers organisations have lagged behind in setting up gender mainstreaming policies and women are underrepresented in institutions such as chambers of commerce.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Many trade unions have set up women's committees to ensure women's concerns are addressed.

Women need to have greater representation in trade unions and employers groups including in leadership and negotiation teams, meetings and training. Collective bargaining can be a key means of progressing on equality issues and addressing the concerns of women.

Social partners can set targets for women's participation in tripartite negotiations and train more women in collective bargaining.

E: Governance, empowerment and organizational capital

Global Employment Agenda Core Elements: 1 – 10 (see annex 2)

E1: Representation, participation and advocacy

Key Gender Issues

Different gender roles mean that men and women are likely to have different perceptions and experiences related to good governance.

Lack of representation of women due to their position in the informal economy, and the time burdens in the private sphere.

Women are concentrated in sectors where they are ‘invisible’, isolated and unorganised. In some cases, their ability to form unions and exercise freedom of association are actively prevented.

Women in some of the most precarious and vulnerable occupations are unprotected by basic labour law coverage and may not even be recognised as workers.

Changing patterns of production can disguise employment relationships and prevent women from exercising their rights in certain occupations.

Corruption and harassment from suppliers, authorities and contractors impede the ability of poor women to earn a remunerative income.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Good governance recognises that different groups within society have competing interests and needs. Good governance requires transparency in public affairs, access to information, accountability in the private and public arena, free press, freedom of association and expression, the ability to participate in public institutions, rule of law, and legislation based on human and labour rights principles.

Women are important for good governance. World Bank studies show less corruption where women are managers.

A good governance framework for equality would include (a) equal employment opportunity policies, (b) affirmative action, (c) equal pay for work equal value, and (d) policies to encourage equal shares in childcare unpaid work.

Rigorous efforts are required to ensure that women in all occupations are recognised as workers and have rights under labour law.

E2: Freedom of association/Collective bargaining

Key Gender Issues

Women are underrepresented in trade unions and employer's structures particularly in leadership positions. Women need training in collective bargaining negotiation.

Women may be concentrated in sectors where freedom of association is restricted.

Lack of organisation of women in certain sectors prevents collective bargaining.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Collective Bargaining (CB) agreements have the ability to go beyond entitlements in the law regarding gender equality.

CB is a key mechanism for ensuring gender equality at work.

When women are able to organise they can be a powerful force for change even amongst the most vulnerable occupations. Examples include SEWA, SEWU, HomeNet, Streetnet, among others.

E3: Institution Building

Key Gender Issues

Due to the gender division of labour in society and the household, women may be under-represented in the mechanisms, processes and institutions for articulating and negotiating differences in power and resources.

Lack of accurate information and disaggregated data may hinder gender analysis and gender mainstreaming efforts.

An either/or approach to gender mainstreaming and gender specific interventions in institutions carries risks of not being able to meet the needs of women.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Building good governance institutions enables different competing interests to articulate their needs, negotiate for change, overcome differences in power, and exercise their legal rights. Ensuring gender sensitive indicators for good governance institutions is essential to ensure women's rights and interests at every level are being articulated. Gender equality indicators, decent work indicators and gender sensitive pro-poor indicators for good governance are being developed to capture the different experiences and needs of women and men.

Gender mainstreaming and gender specific interventions may both be required and are complementary. To re-build institutions to meet women's needs it is critical to ensure (a) gender balance at staffing levels, (b) adequate resources for gender mainstreaming, and (c) analysis of impacts.

Greater participation is linked to institutional change – once the proportion of women in institutions reaches 30 per cent and above the presence of women triggers institutional transformation.

E4: Social Dialogue

Key Gender Issues

Women tend to be underrepresented in social dialogue structures including employers and workers organisations.

Women's interests may not be represented in social dialogue processes.

Strategies for gender responsive policy making

Social dialogue is a key means to progress on equality in employment issues, including addressing areas such as sexual harassment, maternity leave, equal pay, equal opportunities for recruitment and promotion, family friendly policies, entitlement for contracts, and part-time and temporary workers.

ANNEXES

- 1. Conventions and Recommendations related to Gender Equality and Employment**
- 2. The Ten Core Elements of the Global Employment Agenda**
- 3. The Six Key Policy Areas in the ‘Vision Document’**
- 4. Glossary**



Annex 1: Conventions and Recommendations related to Gender Equality and Employment

Key Conventions on Gender Equality^a

- The C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90);
- The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and Recommendation, 1958 (No. 111);
- The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981, (No. 156) and Recommendation, 1981 (No. 156);
- The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191).

Key Employment Conventions^b

- The Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122);
- The Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195);
- The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168), and the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99);
- The Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189);
- The Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193).

The Eight ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work^c

Freedom of association and collective bargaining:

- The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87);
- The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Elimination of forced and compulsory labour:

- The Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29);
- The Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).

Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation:

- The Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100);
- The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

Abolition of child labour:

- The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138);
- The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

^a For a full Resource Guide on gender equality in the world of work, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/gender.htm#key>.

^b For a complete list of instruments of particular relevance for the work of the Employment Sector, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/empframe/practice/download/vision-e.pdf>, p. 22.

^c For more on the ILO's Programme for the Promotion of the Declaration, see <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>.



Annex 2: The ten core elements of the Global Employment Agenda (March 2003)

The 24th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 recognized

“the need to elaborate a coherent and coordinated international strategy on employment to increase opportunities for people to achieve sustainable livelihoods and gain access to employment, and in this connection support the convening of a world employment forum by the International Labour Organization in 2001”.

In response to this, in 2003, the ILO Governing Body adopted the Global Employment Agenda (GEA)^d whose principal purpose is to place employment at the heart of economic and social policies, and contribute to the efforts to promote Decent Work.

The GEA's ten core elements^e seek to promote employment, economic development and social justice. Some of them refer to the economic environment; others to the labour market. The former refer to conditions that make employment creation possible. They require analysis because they are factors that cause change and have to be framed by appropriate policies. This is the case, for example, of trade and investment and of technology, all causes of both job creation and job destruction. The role of the ILO is to examine these forces of change and the policies of organizations and actors involved in these areas in their relation to employment.

Other core elements relate to labour market policies and institutions for employment promotion and can be addressed not only by analysis and promotional activities, but also by technical cooperation projects and concrete advisory services.

Policies proposed to implement the ten points of the Agenda also fall into two other categories: those that can be addressed by national policies and those that need a global policy response, given that the role of global governance requires more serious consideration and coordination. The ongoing debate within the multilateral system over the appropriate global policies for greater stability in financial markets needs to continue, as the challenge of financial stability is beyond the total ability of any one nation alone to address. Through the global alliances envisaged by the Agenda, the ILO proposes to examine the employment consequences of policy choices and options of the international financial and other institutions.

^d ILO: *Implementing the Global Employment Agenda: Employment strategies in support of decent work, “Vision” document*, Geneva, 2006.

^e See more on the GEA, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/empframe/practice/>.

The ten core elements of the Global Employment Agenda are:

The elements addressing the economic environment are:^f

1. Promoting trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries
2. Promoting technological change for higher productivity and job creation and improved standards of living
3. Promoting sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods
4. Macroeconomic policy for growth and employment: a call for policy integration

The elements addressing the labour market are:

5. Promoting decent employment through entrepreneurship
6. Employability by improving knowledge and skills
7. Active labour market policies for employment, security in change, equity and poverty reduction
8. Social protection as a productive factor
9. Occupational safety and health - synergies between security and productivity
10. Productive employment for poverty reduction and development

^f For more details on these ten core elements see the ILO's "Review of the core elements of the Global Employment Agenda" at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb286/pdf/esp-1.pdf>.

Annex 3: The six key policy areas in the Vision Document (ILO 2006)

Following discussions it was decided that the Global Employment Agenda's (GEA) ten core elements⁹ be better grouped so as to make them more manageable and operational for country level work. The ILO's "Vision Document"^h thus sets out six key policy areas each of which is broken down into sub-areas. These are listed below along with an indication of the GEA Core Elements with which each major group is associated.

(A) Economic Policies to influence the demand side

(GEA Core Element 1,2,3,4,5,10)

- Macroeconomic policies
 - Financial policies
 - Fiscal policies
- National Budgets
- Investment policies and investment climate, including infrastructure
- Trade and Regional Integration
- Sectoral policies: industrial services, agriculture, environmental industries and services
- Labour mobility and migration
- Employment intensity of growth

(B) Skills and employability

(GEA Core Element 2,3,5,6,9)

- Training policies and systems:
 - Vocational training policy review and development
 - Management of training institutions and systems
 - Investment in training
 - Core work skills
 - Workplace learning, on-the-job training and apprenticeship
- Technology
 - Improving training delivery through ICT
 - Improving the capacity to innovate and invest
 - Improving access to ICT to reduce the skills gap
- Employment services development and reform
 - Reform of public employment services
 - Role of private employment agencies
 - Career guidance
- Improved access to training and employment opportunities
 - Youth
 - Women
 - Informal economy workers
 - Persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups

⁹ See Annex 02.

^h See more at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/empframe/practice/download/vision-e.pdf>.

(C) Enterprise development

(GEA Core Element 2,3,5,6,9,10)

- An enabling business environment: the national or cross-cutting themes
 - Governance and political conditions
 - Infrastructure
 - Regulations and the cost of doing business
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Access to finance (Credit)
- Value chain upgrading and clustering
- Local economic development
- Promoting good workplace practices
- Targeting groups of enterprises and entrepreneurs
 - Small to Medium Enterprises (SME)
 - Multi National Enterprises (MNE)
 - Cooperatives
 - Entrepreneurs in the informal economy

(D) Labour market institutions and policies

(GEA Core Element 5,6,7,8,9,10)

- Institutions and policies, including wages
- Labour market adjustment policies and programmes
- Passive and active labour market policies
- Employment services
- Industrial relations

(E) Governance, empowerment and organizational capital

(GEA Core Element 1 - 10)

- Representation, participation and advocacy
- Freedom of association/ Collective bargaining
- Institution building
- Social Dialogue

(F) Social Protection

(GEA Core Element 7,8,9)

Glossary

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are government programmes that intervene in the labour market to help the unemployed find work. ALMPs include (a) efforts to generate employment through employment intensive public works schemes, (b) hiring subsidies, (c) the promotion of SMEs and self-employment, (d) vocational training and retraining, and (e) skills and employability development programmes.

Affirmative action Specific actions in recruitment, hiring, upgrading and other areas designed and taken for the purpose of eliminating the present effects of past discrimination, or to prevent discrimination

Capability approach The key idea of the capability approach is that social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – their freedom to promote or achieve valuable beings and doings. An essential test of progress, development, or poverty reduction, is whether people have greater freedoms.

Care work Providing for the needs of well-being of another person. Encompasses care provided to the elderly, the sick and the disabled in care institutions or in the home of the person requiring care. **Informal care** of the **care economy** is unpaid care work performed by family members and friends.

Clusters An industry cluster is a grouping of related industries and institutions in an area or region. The industries are inter-linked and connected in many different ways. Some industries in the cluster will be suppliers to others; some will be buyers from others; some will share labour or resources. The important thing about a cluster is that the industries within the cluster are economically linked, they both collaborate and compete and are, to some degree, dependant upon each other; and ideally, they take advantage of synergies.

Collateral is a security pledged for the repayment of a loan.

Conditionality is typically employed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or a donor country with respect to loans, debt relief and financial aid. Conditionalities may involve relatively uncontroversial requirements to enhance aid effectiveness, such as anti-corruption measures, but they may involve highly controversial ones, such as austerity or the privatization of key public services, which may provoke strong political opposition in the recipient country. These conditionalities are often grouped under the label 'structural adjustment' as they were prominent in the structural adjustment programs following the debt crisis of the 1980s.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders, as well as the environment. This obligation is seen to extend beyond the statutory obligation to comply with legislation and sees organizations voluntarily taking further steps to improve the quality of life for employees and their families as well as for the local community and society at large.

Credit is the provision of resources (such as granting a loan) by one party to another party where that second party does not reimburse the first party immediately, thereby generating a debt, and instead arranges either to repay or return those resources (or material(s) of equal value) at a later date. The first party is called a creditor, also known as a lender, while the second party is called a debtor, also known as a borrower.

Decent work The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Operationally Decent work is related to four pillars: Rights, Employment, Social Protection and Social Dialogue.

Disaggregate to break the whole into smaller parts based on defined characteristics.

Discrimination An intentional or unintentional act which adversely affects employment opportunities because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, marital status, or national origin, or other factors such as age (under particular laws).

Discouraged Workers Those who have tried to find work in the past and are willing to take on a job but have given up on looking for work because they feel, or know, that nothing suitable is available. They are excluded from calculations of the labour force, together with groups such as retired people or people who choose to take on home or childcare duties.

Disparity The state of being different or dissimilar.

Employment elasticity is measured by how many jobs are created for every unit of economic growth.

Enterprise one of the factors of production, along with land, labour and capital. A company organized for commercial purposes; business firm.

Entrepreneur somebody who has the idea and enterprise to mix together the other factors of production to produce something valuable. An entrepreneur must be willing to take a risk in pursuit of a profit.

Externality An economic side-effect. Externalities are costs or benefits arising from an economic activity that (a) affect people other than the people engaged in the economic activity, and (b) are not reflected fully in prices.

Fiscal policy attempts to influence the direction of the economy through changes in government taxes, or through some spending (fiscal allowances). The two main instruments of fiscal policy are government spending and taxation.

Flexicurity involves combining flexibility and security. It involves a combination of easy hiring and firing (flexibility for employers) and high benefits for the unemployed (security for the employees). It was first implemented in Denmark in the 1990s. The term refers to the combination of both labour market flexibility in a dynamic economy as well as security for workers. The Government of Denmark views flexicurity as involving a “golden triangle” with a “three-sided mix of (1) flexibility in the labour market combined with (2) social security and (3) an active labour market policy with rights and obligations for the unemployed”.

Gender While 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, gender describes the socially-constructed roles, rights and responsibilities that communities and societies consider appropriate for men and women. We are born as males and females, but becoming girls, boys, women and men is something that we learn from our families and societies.

Gender bias refers to the ways some jobs are made to be advantageous or disadvantageous based on sex. This type of bias can show up at any step along the way in a pay equity programme.

Gender gap In the context of economic inequality, gender gap generally refers to the systemic differences in the social and economic roles and wages of men and women, or boys and girls. There is a debate to what extent this is the result of gender differences, lifestyle choices, or because of discrimination.

Gender Mainstreaming Taking into account the different experiences and needs of women and men in all activities. It includes gender specific action where necessary. Taking women's concerns and experiences central to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres. Its goals are gender equity through empowerment of women as well as men. Gender mainstreaming includes (a) prioritization of women's empowerment because of the much greater discrimination against women, (b) not only increasing household incomes but also increasing women's economic, social and political empowerment, (c) challenging the root causes of gender inequality not just basic needs, and (d) linking a grassroots participatory process with macro-level advocacy and lobbying.

Gender predominant jobs Jobs which are associated with one sex or the other, based on quantitative or qualitative criteria.

Glass ceiling The term refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is halted at a particular level because of some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism.

Household work It is a fact that all women work. They perform dual roles of production and reproduction. Their work goes unrecognized because they do a variety of jobs daily that do not fit into any specific 'occupation'. Most of them are involved in arduous household work. Although women work for longer hours and contribute substantially to family income, they are not perceived as workers by either the women themselves or data collecting agencies and the government. To understand the issue of occupational health problems of women, it is necessary to make a detailed study of the women's work in terms of the actual activity undertaken, the hours of work and the extent of remuneration received.

Human capital is the quality of labour resources (the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the workforce) This can be improved through investments, education, and training.

ILOLEX is a trilingual database containing ILO Conventions and Recommendations, ratification information, comments of the Committee of Experts and the Committee on Freedom of Association, representations, complaints, interpretations, General Surveys, and numerous related documents.

Income transfer A non-compensatory government payment to individuals, for example for welfare or social security benefits.

Inflation targeting is a monetary policy in which a central bank attempts to keep inflation in a declared target range —typically by adjusting interest rates. The theory is that inflation is an indication of growth in money supply and adjusting interest rates will increase or decrease money supply and therefore inflation.

Informal economy The informal economy covers economic activities that are neither taxed nor monitored by a government; and often not included in that government's Gross National Product (GNP); as opposed to a formal economy. The term informal economy refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Informal economy workers include wage workers, own account workers and contributing family members. Work in the informal economy is characterized by small or undefined work places, unsafe working conditions, low level of skills and productivity, irregular incomes, long working hours and lack of access to information market, finance and training.

Instrumentalist view Where pragmatism and contextual feasibility are more important than abstract, theoretical purity.

Male Breadwinner Bias is the bias that comes from assuming that the nonmarket sphere of social reproduction is articulated with the market economy of commodity production through a wage which is paid a male breadwinner and which largely provides for the cash needs of a set of dependents (women, children, elderly people, sick people). “Male breadwinner” bias constructs the ownership of rights to make claims on the state for social benefits (access to services, cash transfers) around a norm of full-time, life-long working-age participation in the market-based labor force. Those whose participation does not fit this norm typically have lesser rights, which they can frequently only exercise as dependents on those who do fit the norm. The result has been the exclusion of many women from entitlements, and the reduction of the scope of the entitlements of many others, making women dependent upon men, especially during periods of women's lives when they are intensively involved in taking care of children and elders, and when they themselves are elders.

Market fundamentalism The fundamentalist element of this position is an unshakable belief that free markets maximize individual freedom, are the only means to economic growth and that society should adhere to their specific ideas of progress. “Fundamentalists” believe that markets tend towards a natural equilibrium, and that the best interests in a given society are achieved by allowing its participants to pursue their own self-interest.

Microfinance refers to the provision of financial services to poor or low-income clients, including consumers and the self-employed. The term also refers to the practice of sustainably delivering those services. More broadly, it refers to a movement that envisions “a world in which as many poor and near-poor households as possible have permanent access to an appropriate range of high quality financial services, including not just credit but also savings, insurance, and fund transfers.”

Monetary policy is the process by which the government, central bank, or monetary authority of a country controls (i) the supply of money, (ii) availability of money, and (iii) cost of money or rate of interest, in order to attain a set of objectives oriented towards the growth and stability of the economy.

Neo-liberalism Broadly speaking, neoliberalism seeks to transfer control of the economy from state to the private sector. The definitive statement of the concrete policies advocated by neoliberalism is often taken to be John Williamson's "Washington Consensus", a list of policy proposals that appeared to have gained consensus approval among the Washington-based international economic organizations (like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank).

Passive labour market policies Government measures for employment support and social benefits including income support, unemployment insurance and labour legislation, social security schemes and maternity protection provisions.

Pay equity Implementing the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, free from discrimination based on sex.

Pay equity programme A planned and structured process whose goal is to achieve pay equity.

Pro-poor growth is growth that is good for the poor. There are two main approaches to defining pro-poor growth. The absolute definition of pro-poor growth considers only the incomes of poor people. How 'pro-poor' growth should be judged by how fast on average the incomes of the poor are rising. The relative definition of pro-poor growth compares changes in the incomes of the poor with changes in the incomes of people who are not poor. Growth is 'pro-poor' if the incomes of poor people grow faster than those of the population as a whole. (*Source* = "What is pro-poor growth and why do we need to know?")

Remuneration Payment or compensation received for services or employment. This includes the base salary and any bonuses or other economic or social benefits that an employee or executive receives during employment.

Reproductive work work that reproduces the labour force on a daily basis – see household work and care economy.

Residualist approach The residualist approach targets public assistance at the neediest, leaving most families to purchase whatever care they can afford.

Social Provisioning The term "social provisioning" can be used to describe an emerging methodology in Feminist economics. Its five main components are: (a) incorporation of caring and unpaid labor as fundamental economic activities; (b) use of well-being as a measure of economic success; (c) analysis of economic, political, and social processes and power relations; (d) inclusion of ethical goals and values as an intrinsic part of the analysis; (e) and interrogation of differences by class, race-ethnicity – and other factors.

Social Safety nets lessen the effects of poverty and other risks on vulnerable households. Safety nets can be private or informal, such as family members in different households supporting each other through hard times with cash, food, labour or housing. Formal programs, run by Governments, Donors or NGOs, provide additional income or in-kind transfer programs, subsidies, and labour-intensive public works programs. Programs to ensure access to essential public services, such as fee waivers for health care services, and scholarships for schooling costs are other examples of safety nets.

Structural adjustment See 'conditionality'.

Supply chain The resources and processes that are involved in acquiring components and raw materials and includes delivery of end products to final consumers. It includes the activities of sellers, distributors, manufacturers, wholesalers and any other service providers and contributors to the buyer's decision to buy.

Time Use Survey A Time Use Survey is a statistical survey that aims to report data on how, on average, people spend their time. Among other things, time use surveys can reveal the amount of household work and voluntary work performed beyond paid jobs.

Trickle down Of or relating to the economic theory that financial benefits provided to big businesses and wealthy investors will pass down to profit smaller businesses and consumers.

Value chain analysis A value chain is a chain of activities. Products pass through all activities of the chain in order and at each activity the product gains some value. The chain of activities gives the products more added value than the sum of added values of all activities. The value chain categorizes the generic value-adding activities of an organization. The "primary activities" include: inbound logistics, operations (production), outbound logistics, marketing and sales (demand), and services (maintenance). The "support activities" include: administrative infrastructure management, human resource management, information technology, and procurement.

Washington consensus The term 'Washington Consensus' was initially coined in 1989 by John Williamson to describe a set of ten specific economic policy prescriptions that he considered to constitute a "standard" reform package promoted for crisis-wracked developing countries by Washington D.C based institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the U.S. Treasury Department. Subsequently the term has come to be used in a different and broader sense, as a synonym for market fundamentalism.

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Economic Policies

Following a short introduction this policy brief outlines nine key gender issues relating to economic policies and then considers what will be involved in gender responsive policy making. Economic policies can be broadly defined as the actions taken by a government to influence its economy for ensuring economic growth. The actions can include monetary regime and central bank policy, exchange rate policy, fiscal and public sector restructuring, among others. Economic policy also includes international trade but this will be dealt with separately in the following policy brief.

Key gender issues

Wide reaching changes have taken place in the world's economies in recent decades and which have reshaped the structure of employment on a global scale. National economies are now more integrated into the global system than at any other point in the recent past. Fundamental shifts in economic policies have accompanied this process of globalization. These policies have emphasized maintaining low rates of inflation, liberalizing markets, reducing the scope of the public sector and encouraging cross-border flows of goods, services and finance, but not labour.

Economic stabilization programmes and the process of global integration have frequently squeezed household incomes, pushing women to enter the paid labour force. At the same time, economic reforms have intensified demands on women's unpaid work, creating a situation in which increasing the supply of women's labour is a central strategy by which families cope with fundamental economic change.

The transformation of women's employment during this period has been similarly far reaching. More women participate in paid employment than at any other time in history. The entry of women into the

labour force has meant that, in many cases, the economic opportunities available to them have grown. However, equality of opportunity remains elusive. Sex segmentation of labour markets is endemic, with women concentrated in lower quality, irregular and informal employment. Economic stabilization programmes and the process of global integration have frequently squeezed household incomes, pushing women to enter the paid labour force. At the same time, economic reforms have intensified demands on women's unpaid work, creating a situation in which increasing the supply of women's labour is a central strategy by which families cope with fundamental economic change. At a basic level, women's employment, paid and unpaid, may be the single most important factor for keeping many households out of poverty.

Evidence from around the world suggests that the greater the employment focus, the more effective economic growth becomes in fighting poverty

Evidence from around the world suggests that the greater the employment focus, the more effective economic growth becomes in fighting poverty. Indeed, employment is the primary channel through which the majority of the population can share in the benefits of economic growth. However, the ability of employment to reduce poverty depends on prevailing gender relations and intra-

household dynamics. Therefore, any analysis that seriously considers the connections between growth, employment and poverty reduction must incorporate a gender perspective or run the risk reaching erroneous conclusions. Indeed, the analyses of the impact of the structural adjustment policies of the 1970s and 1980s have established that gender analysis has been systematically lacking in the design of economic policies. With the widespread impoverishment of women in many developing countries there have been calls for greater attention being given to structural inequalities facing women, and the rejection of economic modelling that does not take into account the gender division of labour and unequal power relations in the labour market and the household.¹ More recent evidence reveal that many of the policies adopted during the past two decades of market-based reforms would have had an overall negative impact on employment, and frequently a disproportionately strong effect on women's employment. The consequences of these policies extend beyond employment outcomes, with important implications for poverty, women's unpaid labour and the long-run trajectory of human development.²

This policy brief discusses the relation between economic policies, employment, and gender equality. It focuses in particular on how changes in economic policies affect women's and men's employment differently. Since economic policy is wide ranging, the following discusses a selected number of issues. In what follows nine key gender issues are addressed that policy makers need to be aware of when designing employment-centred economic policies.

The work that women do in the care economy is essential for the reproduction of the labour force and the functioning of the economy but it is rarely recognised or given an economic value

1. Economic policies undervalue women's contribution to the economy

The gender division of labour within the household is a key obstacle to women's ability to earn an income. The work that women do in the **care economy** is essential for the reproduction of the labour force and the functioning of the economy but it is rarely recognised or given an economic value.

Unpaid work is one of the most important issues in understanding women's disadvantaged position in the labour market. This is because their ability to participate in paid work depends on their roles and responsibilities in the household and the community. This role is not defined as an economic activity and thus often not included in GDP or employment statistics.

The **gender division of labour** in a society is shaped by particular historical and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, in most societies women assume a larger responsibility than men for looking after children and the elderly, voluntary work in the community and keeping households afloat, particularly in times of economic crisis.

For an economy, women's unpaid work is critical for the daily reproduction of the labour force and, in the longer term, for the formation of the next generation of human capital. However economic modelling and analysis rarely takes this into account.

Some economic policies minimise the social responsibilities of the state. This puts extra pressures on households and further reduces women's ability to participate in the paid economy. Budget cuts in infrastructure, transport, food provisioning, childcare, health, education and other social services impact more severely on women than men since the gender division of labour in the household forces them to find ways to compensate for the lack of social provisioning.

Women's economic empowerment has multiplier effects in terms of improving the well being of children and breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next

On the other hand, increased spending in these areas can significantly empower women. It provides free time and space to earn an income and reduces women's vulnerability to poverty. And the effect is not just limited to improving the lives of women. The positive impacts on families and communities are well known. Women's economic empowerment has multiplier effects in terms of improving the well being of children, and breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next.

2. Unequal access to productive resources

Economic policies are often designed within a framework that assumes that men and women are able to equally take advantage of economic opportunities. But this is rarely the case. Not only do women have unpaid work responsibilities, but there is often direct and indirect discrimination in women's access to productive resources.

In many societies women have limited access, or unequal rights, to skills development, land, inheritance, credit, technology, information, economic networks, advisory services and markets. Cultural practices, gender norms and even legislation may get in the way of access to these key resources which women need to earn an adequate income and take advantage of new economic opportunities.

An underlying assumption that shapes economic policies is that men are the breadwinners in a household. Based on the traditional gender division of labour, men are assumed to be the primary income earners,

while women's roles are within the home. Any income women earn is therefore seen as secondary. This can be reflected in women's access to social insurance, pensions and welfare benefits may be through their husbands; women's and men's equal benefit from social programmes (e.g. housing, cash for work programmes etc); fiscal policies which may tie women's income to their husbands for taxation purposes.

3. Separation of economic and social policy

As discussed in the Section 1, a fundamental obstacle to the design of gender sensitive economic policies is the separation of economic and social policy. Policy makers often do not see the poor and excluded (including marginalised women) as potential agents of economic development. Rather they are seen passive recipients in need of social assistance. This way of thinking has many implications as discussed below.

The focus of macroeconomic policies may be on the powerful economic sectors with an underlying belief that the benefits of growth will eventually 'trickle down' to the more marginalised sectors. A **residualist approach**³ to social policy is the state only acts to fill in gaps for dominant economic policy. Often missing are notions of the state's important role in redistribution and social protection. Within such frameworks economic risk becomes the burden of the already vulnerable.

Secondly, there is often an institutional separation of economic and social. Greater power and influence is given to Ministries that deal with the economy than to those that deal with social affairs. Within a hierarchy of ministries, those that deal with gender or women's affairs tend to lack influence in economic policymaking. More powerful ministries such as Finance and Planning have responsibility for policymaking and often have little concern for gender mainstreaming and ensuring equality of opportunity

and outcomes. A lack of capacity to conduct gender analysis within these institutions often results in policies that neglect both employment and gender dimensions of poverty alleviation. Not surprisingly the impacts are never gender neutral.

4. Under-representation of women in dialogue on economic policies

A lack of transparency and democracy has often been evident in the design of economic policymaking. Few consultations take place nationally, and in some cases the key economic framework is laid out by international financial organisations which set targets for inflation and economic growth amongst other things.

In some places political space has opened up in the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process. This is to ensure extensive consultations and dialogue in policy making. But many women are in fields of economic life where they are unorganised - whether in the formal or informal economies. This means that they continue to lack representation and voice in policy areas that may affect them most.

Many women are in fields of economic life where they are unorganised - whether in the formal or informal economies. This means that they continue to lack representation and voice in policy areas that may affect them most.

5. Fiscal policies

Taxation and other fiscal policies are not gender neutral: they have significant effects on women. For example:

- Direct taxation and progressive tax regimes⁴ tend to benefit the poor (and women) more directly than indirect taxation and regressive regimes or flat taxation rates.
- Taxing basic goods and services through value added tax (VAT) and other taxes has a particularly negative affect on the poor (and excluded women). This is because they use a greater proportion of their income on these basic items.
- Tax cuts also reduce the amount of government revenue that can be redistributed to compensate for the unpaid work that women do in the care economy. It also leads to dwindling resources to fund public goods and services.

Fiscal policy attempts to influence the direction of the economy through changes in government taxes, or through some spending (fiscal allowances). The two main instruments of fiscal policy are government spending and taxation.

Fiscal policies such as taxation and income transfers are important tools for reaching social goals and they are a major means of redistributing wealth. This is particularly important in situations where women carry the burden of the care economy.

Taxation policies can be used as incentives or as disincentives. For example high taxes may act as a disincentive for informal economy operators to register their holdings, and conversely tax incentives and amnesties may be ways of encouraging registration.

A disincentive to women participating in the labour force would arise with the failure to provide tax rebates to cover the costs of women entering the labour market (for example the cost of childcare). Joint tax structures that penalise the spouse who earns the least can also act as a disincentive.

6. Inflation targeting

Monetary policy usually targets low inflation, low public debt, minimal public expenditure, reduced taxes and reduced budget deficits. These policies are deeply embedded within the conceptual frameworks used to design economic policies. Lower priority is usually given to employment creation, public investment and the social responsibilities of the state.

Inflation targeting is a monetary policy in which a central bank attempts to keep inflation in a declared target range typically by adjusting interest rates. The theory is that inflation is an indication of growth in money supply and adjusting interest rates will increase or decrease money supply and therefore inflation.

Central banks are required to keep inflation below targeted levels and rigid rules are often enforced on ratios of budget deficits to GDP and ratios of public debts to GDP, thus requiring governments to cut public expenditures even in economic down turns. Low inflation is maintained on the assumption that low and stable inflation is linked to rapid economic growth in the long run.

Unfortunately, inflation targets, which arguably may be necessary in some form, usually get the absolute priority over other targets, such as growth or employment targets. In addition, it is a fact that reducing inflation frequently has a negative impact on employment growth. When employment growth slows, women's employment is often disproportionately affected.

In other words, it is often the case that employment is seen as an outcome of economic policies rather than as a target. Yet employment is seen by many others as the key to poverty reduction.

It is now well recognised that economic growth in itself is not enough to reduce poverty and that the employment elasticity of growth has been declining in many countries around the world.

It is also well recognised that more employment in itself is not enough, as is shown by the large numbers of working poor.

The conclusion seems clear enough: if there is to be a significant impact on poverty reduction then there must be a strong employment content to growth, and employment creation must be targeted to particular sections of the poor - including vulnerable women.

7. National budgets and public expenditures

National Budgets are the means by which a government provides resources to meet its objectives and priorities. Reducing public spending is often the primary goal of governments though this may go against reaching some development goals.

Public expenditures can have direct impacts on employment outcomes. Social services, income support measures and the provision of public goods impact labour force participation and employment in highly gendered ways.⁵ When such services are cut, households adjust in numerous ways that affect men and women differently.⁶ The amount of both paid and unpaid work that women perform may increase with fiscal reform. For example, public cutbacks can reduce the number of clinics in a region and therefore increase the unpaid time needed to walk to the next facility to access basic health services. Similarly, public cutbacks that reduce household monetary resources (e.g. cutting transfer programmes or raising fees) create pressures to increase the amount of remunerative work performed. Finally, measures to introduce user fees for public goods may increase gender inequality.

Some economic policies prioritise the private sector as the engine for employment growth. There is often a belief that the public sector ‘crowds out’ the private. But:

- public spending and investment is important not only in the creation of jobs but also in affirmative action and other measures to promote gender equality,
- public spending on infrastructure, and on education and training has important indirect impacts on employment creation, productivity and competitiveness.
- high public spending relative to GDP is associated with more employment. Therefore the public sector is an important source of job opportunities which should not be under-estimated especially in countries where the private formal sector is small.
- public spending can be through services provided by municipal authorities to the local economy. This can play a significant role in upgrading the informal economy where many women are concentrated.

8. Privatisation

Privatization almost always involves a reduction in the work forces of the enterprises in question. Yet, the net effect of privatization on employment depends on numerous factors. In some cases, privatization may involve new investments in productive capacity. Under these circumstances, the negative impact on employment may be offset, at least in part. However, the overall effect on employment is complex. Many public enterprises are responsible for supplying essential economic services that affect production costs and competitiveness – such as transport facilities, basic utilities and telecommunication services. If the cost of these services rises after privatization, or access is limited in terms of small or informal producers, employment and earnings of both men and women could suffer.

The gender-specific effect of the restructuring of public enterprises varies. Some public firms are involved in capital-intensive activities with male-dominated workforces. In these cases, privatization would have a disproportionate impact on men’s employment. The effect on women’s employment is likely to be more indirect. The loss of men’s jobs will affect household earnings and could increase women’s labour force participation. Similarly, if privatization negatively affects informal activities through changes in economic services, this could have gender-specific effects due to the patterns of labour force segmentation prevalent in the informal economy.⁷

In other words, while both men and women may be negatively affected by privatization the impact is different. Privatisation can increase women’s care and time burdens and therefore reduce the time they can devote to paid work. For example, privatisation of healthcare and transport may result in cuts in services and this puts pressure on households (i.e. women) to compensate. Privatisation of social insurance and pension provision increases women’s dependence on men, and penalises women who are not linked to a male breadwinner.

9. Financial crises

There have been a number of financial crises in recent decades, including the more recent one in 2008. These are often linked to financial liberalisation that can increase a range of risks: for example currency risk, capital flight risk, fragility risk, contagion risk and sovereignty risk.⁸

The liberalization of capital markets associated with modern monetary and exchange rate regimes results in increased economic volatility associated with short-term capital flows. Inflows of short-term capital can devastate an economy if the flows suddenly reverse, leading to a rapid depreciation of the currency. The examples of economic and

financial crises over the past decade that were triggered by short-term capital flows are numerous (e.g. East Asia, Brazil, and Argentina). A rapid and uncontrollable depreciation of the currency can lead to a large-scale economic contraction, mass displacement of workers and failure of the banking and financial system.

When these risks cause a financial crisis this can have a very negative impact on formal employment of both women and men. There is limited empirical data on the differential employment responses of men and women to financial crises. Nevertheless, some evidence reveal that male workers in traditional male dominated industries may be first to lose their jobs (e.g. car industry). In other export-led industries, nevertheless, it might be women who first lose their jobs. Paid domestic work and the services sector may also be hard hit by job losses. Women also predominate in precarious and casualised work and are thus often at the forefront of job losses. An inherent 'male-bread winner' bias in which women are seen to only have contingent attachment to the labour market, may also result in women being disproportionately affected by unemployment in times of crisis.⁹

In some cases women may need to increase their labour force participation in response to the deterioration in real household income. Importantly women may also bear the burden of increased unpaid care work due to cuts in social provision. The Asian Financial Crisis illustrates this situation. Policy measures that cut public expenditure made the crisis worse and led to even greater impoverishment. In many of the affected countries it was women who were the first to lose formal employment, and many migrant workers were expelled from host countries. The amount of unpaid care work that women provided increased substantially in all the affected countries.¹⁰ The human cost in terms of increased stress and ill health were profound: but these were not reflected in GDP statistics.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

This section considers 10 ways in which economic policies can be designed to be more gender sensitive and respond to the issues raised in the first part of the policy brief.

A. Measuring women's unpaid work

Many policy makers try to develop policies that promote equality. But they often find that they lack reliable data and analyses. A good example of this is women's unpaid work where, despite evidence that it is essential for the functioning of economies, it is often invisible, undervalued, unaccounted and difficult to measure.

There have been attempts to estimate the value of unpaid work. One estimate from the UNDP in 1997 was that women's unpaid work accounted for 10-35 per cent of GDP worldwide, with a value of \$11 trillion in 1993 alone.¹¹ Such estimates are usually difficult to make but it is worth the effort. When a value has been put on women's unpaid work it is then possible to build this information into the mainstream economic statistics that are used to guide policy-making.

According to UNDP estimates, in 1993, women's unpaid work accounted for 10-35 per cent of GDP worldwide. This had a value of \$11 trillion.

Efforts are increasing to gather more accurate information on the importance of unpaid work and to develop suitable policy responses. But these efforts tend to be one-off and they have not been systematised. Time-Use Surveys are becoming accepted as useful, statistical data collection techniques. They make it possible to both record women's paid and unpaid work in systems of national accounts and to help shape appropriate policies. See the box on the next page for an example from India.

Efforts to value unpaid work are welcome but they do not overcome the problem that a woman's roles in their household and community have a major impact on their ability to take on paid work. Policies measures are needed to ease the burden of care work. These measures should substantially increase the amount of time women can devote to earning an income; they include such things as childcare institutions, and infra-structural development including transport, sanitation and utilities.

Reproductive work, i.e. the work required to reproduce the workforce on a daily basis, should be considered as an economic activity as at it amounts to investment in human resources.

There is also the possibility of targeting employment creation for women. This would have multiple benefits: increase household income; give women greater status and decision-making power; and lead, in the longer term, to equitable changes in the gender division of labour in care work.

B. Improving the status and conditions of women's paid work

Labour market segmentation and the gender wage gap are deeply embedded problems that affect all economies. Broad ranging strategies are needed to overcome these problems including equal employment opportunity policies, legislation, and gender sensitive human resource development. More specific measures include:

- Greater efforts to ensure girls education, particularly in the sciences and technology. This can reap important dividends for the future labour market.
- Career guidance and reform of vocational training, including linking such institutions to private sector demand. This can also contribute to breaking down occupational segregation.
- Strategies to free up time and resources to increase women's economic mobility and ease their unpaid work burdens may give women greater freedom and choices for remunerative work.
- Measures to improve access to productive resources and entrepreneurship services can help unlock the productive potential of women's economic activities.
- Since women are often concentrated in unprotected sectors of the labour market, efforts to amend labour legislation and expand coverage can greatly improve the status, wages and conditions of these occupations.
- Similarly organisation and mobilisation of women workers for collective bargaining can be one of the most effective ways of improving women's employment conditions in areas such as recruitment, wages, working conditions, training and promotional opportunities.
- Public awareness-raising campaigns also have a role to play in terms of encouraging women into non-traditional areas and breaking down the resistance of some employers to hiring women.

Capturing unremunerated work: the case of India

India was one of the first countries to carry out a time-use survey to capture the contribution of women to the economy through unremunerated work. Influenced by the CEDAW and Beijing pronouncements in 1995, India undertook a survey to quantify unpaid work as an important step towards ensuring consideration of unpaid workers in the formulation of policies on development and welfare.

The findings showed that Indian women, rural and urban, although performing fewer hours on Systems of National Accounts (SNA) activities, perform greater numbers of hours on extended SNA activities such as housework. The share of women in the total work, both paid and unpaid, came to 55 per cent of total work hours performed by all persons, which is comparable with the estimate of 53 per cent in the 1995 UNDP Human Development Report.

Some critical policy issues that emerged from the results included:

- *The total GDP of the country was largely underestimated because it did not include the goods and services for self-consumption, mostly produced by women;*
- *The division of the total labour force in a household into paid and unpaid workers generates a hierarchy that reflects the lower status of women both in the household and the labour market;*
- *Capturing statistics related to unpaid work would enable realistic planning for employment and skills training.*
- *These statistics also enable the realistic mapping of labour intensive and recurring activities mostly done by women and the identification of strategies to alleviate women's time burdens: water supply schemes, ensuring the availability of fodder and fuel and the setting up of childcare facilities.*

Source:

United Nations: Integrating Unpaid Work into National Policies, ESCAP and UNDP, New York, 2003.

The following ILO core conventions provide guidance in developing policies, programmes and legislation that can address direct and indirect forms of discrimination:

- C100; Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, 1951, and
- C111; Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958).

C. Improving access to productive resources

Private sector growth and employment creation rely on the ability of people to make use of productive resources. The failure rate of women's entrepreneurial activities is invariably high where their access to productive resources has been limited due to direct or indirect discrimination. Few women are able to move out of poverty traps.

To significantly increase women's productivity and allow their economic activities to expand and grow, policy measures are needed that open access to a range of resources such as credit, land, inheritance, information, technology, networks, and skills.

Each of these measures can have important multiplier effects in terms of increased productivity and economic growth through mainstreaming of institutions and services, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity policies, programmes, and legislation.

The failure rate of women's entrepreneurial activities is invariably high where their access to productive resources has been limited due to direct or indirect discrimination. Few women in this situation are able to move out of poverty traps.

Another area related to improving women's access to productive resources includes overcoming the male breadwinner bias. While explicit male breadwinner bias in economic policies has decreased in many developed countries over the last few decades, it still persists in some forms in many countries. For example women's access to pensions, social insurance and welfare benefits being tied to their husband, and in some cases, fiscal policies linking women's income as a secondary income to that of their husbands.

Basic gender analyses of the existing structural inequalities facing women in a given country can help policy makers to identify the potential negative impacts of different policy options and design policies that do not have an underlying male breadwinner bias.

D. Linking economic and social policy

A dominant trend in economic policy making is to see a separation between efficiency (economic concerns) and equity (social concerns), and to target economic policies on the stronger economic sectors. Even in the consultative Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) processes there are often separate policies for the 'social' sectors and the 'productive' sectors. Women's issues are often relegated to social objectives in such policy frameworks and therefore remain invisible in economic policy formulation.

That kind of thinking fails to see the poor and marginalised (including excluded women) as potential agents of economic transformation. Instead, such people are seen as eventual beneficiaries of the wealth created by others. This underlying 'trickle-down' assumption shapes many policy measures. For example it can be seen in: vocational training programmes that target only the literate and skilled; microfinance programmes that require collateral and a residential address; local economic development initiatives which ignore the informal economy; and enterprise promotion policies for (the

usually male dominated) sections of the formal private sector.

As discussed in Section One this type of economic thinking easily lends itself to the view that equality is a costly luxury that should wait until the economy has reached a certain size and level of productivity.

Fortunately, such thinking is being turned on its head. This is partly through:

- the ILO's promotion of the Decent Work agenda which establishes decent work as a productive factor in itself,
- shifts in development thinking which focus on enhancing human capabilities to drive economic and social transformation (notably Amartya Sen), and
- the mounting evidence that equality measures are often instrumental in achieving higher productivity and economic growth.

Within a Decent Work and a capabilities framework, policymakers no longer have to wrestle with the trade offs between efficiency and equity concerns because the two can not only be addressed simultaneously but also are closely linked. Rather than being a residual aspect of economic development, measures to increase equity become instrumental in creating and enhancing employment and economic opportunities.

Social provisioning, such as investments in education and health, enhances the capabilities of the poor and of women and should be viewed as an investment by economic policy makers rather than as a cost. These policies are relatively cost effective (they cost less in a poorer country than in a richer country) and this makes them affordable for even low-income countries. These policies are often also labour intensive and this can have spin off effects in terms of employment creation.

There is historical evidence to show what happens when women who have previously been excluded from economic life are given opportunities. The impact is felt not only in

greater productivity and incomes but also in positive externalities such as improved child health and education and decreased fertility of women.

Similarly human capital advocates have long recognised that relatively simple strategies can unleash the productive capacity of the poor and marginalised with multiplier effects throughout society. Such simple strategies include increasing access to education and health and ensuring equal access to productive resources.

International policymaking increasingly recognises the linkages between social and economic objectives and acknowledges that equality is both a means and an end in the development process.

International policymaking increasingly recognises the linkages between social and economic objectives and acknowledges that equality is both a means and an end in the development process. These changes have come about not only through the ILO's decent work efforts - that establish a social floor for economic life - but also through the efforts of other international actors such as the World Bank.

The World Bank has accumulated evidence to show that inequality slows growth, reduces productivity, intensifies poverty, and contributes to numerous economic inefficiencies. The World Bank argues, for example with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that Goal Three on gender equality is not only a goal in itself but is the key means of achieving the other seven MDGs.

E. Better representation of women in dialogue on economic policies

Efforts are being made to develop economic policies using democratic methods in many low-income countries. This is often through the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) processes. Widespread civil society consultations are resulting in greater transparency and accountability. Social partners have a key role to play in addressing gender concerns and that women whose voices are not heard in such forums are organised, mobilised and represented.

Widespread civil society consultations are resulting in greater transparency and accountability.

In some developed countries, tools such as a range of Gender Budgeting instruments,¹² enable many civil society activists to analyse the budget process through a gender lens and lobby for re-prioritising national and local resource allocations so as to promote greater equity.

F. Fiscal policies

Fiscal policies are important instruments for promoting gender equality. They might include measures that include taxation which funds public goods and services, income transfers, incentives, or the mobilisation and allocation of national resources for equity objectives.

Fiscal strategies which can assist marginalised women and the poor include exempting basic goods and services from VAT; removing charges for services such as primary education and maternal healthcare; establishing progressive taxation systems; and providing income transfers for those whose work is primarily in the care economy.

Some taxation systems include explicit gender biases such as when personal income tax liability is linked to the household; when marginal tax rates discourage secondary workers in the household from working, and in the allocation of exemptions, deductions and setting of tax rates. Thankfully many countries have been able to eliminate these biases.

Implicit gender biases remain however in other forms of taxation such as commodity taxes, trade taxes and corporate income taxes. These may change the pattern of household consumption, the household income or its patterns of development.

A government's ability to provide public goods and services is decreased when its revenue base is reduced because of privatisation of public assets, reduced income tax rates, reduced tariffs, or reduced corporate taxes as incentives for FDI. These measures can negatively affect women's labour force participation and at the same time increase their unpaid work burden.

G. Pro-poor growth strategies

International policy debates are increasingly recognising that economic policy based on narrowly targeting inflation and growth have not borne fruit in terms of employment creation. At best they have had little impact on poverty alleviation and at worst they are seen to have worsened poverty and unemployment and increased inequality between people and regions. Growth is an absolute prerequisite for poverty reduction and poverty has by and large fallen, not only in Asia but also in Africa during the last decade. However, scant regard to the distributional aspects of growth have resulted in increasing income inequality which (i) reduces the efficiency by which growth reduces poverty and results in productive employment in the short to medium term and (ii) undermines the prospects of sustainable high growth and future poverty reduction.

Pro-poor growth policies recognise the multiple dimensions of poverty. They use a range of strategies aimed at enabling the poor to take advantage of new opportunities.

A number of countries have recognised that growth does not necessarily translate into employment opportunities and reduce poverty. These countries have been developing systems of pro-poor growth so as to help the poor to become both agents and beneficiaries of economic growth.

Pro-poor growth policies recognise the multiple dimensions of poverty. They use a range of strategies aimed at enabling the poor to take advantage of new opportunities. These strategies include: increasing access to productive resources including land, markets and capital; providing incentives and opportunities for enhancing capabilities; investing in basic services and infrastructure; and reducing poor people's vulnerability to risk through different forms of social protection.

Pro-poor growth strategies are often designed using a policy mix that links equality, employment, growth, and poverty reduction. A good way to achieve sustainable poverty reduction is to develop measures that improve gender equality in employment, education, and access to productive resources and promote greater female bargaining power in the household.

Pro-poor growth strategies can avoid the split between economic and social policies and the trade offs between equity and efficiency. A pro-poor growth policy mix needs to address growth processes, and distributional and social objectives. It also needs to strengthen employment as this can be the link between growth and poverty reduction when it is targeted to the poor and accompanied by training policies to enhance poor people's capabilities in jobs and entrepreneurship.

In recent decades policy discussions have centred on the link between equity and growth. There is evidence to show that inequality can both hinder and promote growth, and that growth can both reduce and deepen inequality.

There is also evidence to show that gender inequality reduces the average amount of human capital in a society, and the pool of talent from which employers can draw. This obviously harms economic performance.

Pro-poor growth policies can aim at enabling women to contribute to growth and, at the same time, profit from this growth as participants in labour markets, keeping in mind that the one does not automatically follow from the other.

A number of country studies have shown that gender inequality in education reduces economic growth in both the short and long term and that there are strong links between large gender gaps and levels of low per capita incomes.

By way of contrast, training women to engage in social and economic life results in not only immediate gains in productivity and output but also in positive externalities such as reduced fertility and infant mortality and increased education of children. Long-term benefits also follow in terms of human capital formation and economic development.

H. National budgets and public expenditures

Well targeted public resources can significantly empower women. Examples include infrastructure such as transport, utilities, roads, childcare and other services; public goods such as health, education, and other forms of human resource development. In many cases double dividends may be reaped by easing women's care responsibilities at home while, at the same time, making it easier for them to participate in the paid economy.

Policies which minimise the role of the state in social provision can have the opposite effect. International policy debates have increasingly recognised that growth and equity go hand in hand. This has influenced thinking towards being more sympathetic to public spending.

Rather than 'crowding out' economic development, public expenditures can be used to 'crowd in' private sector growth. This can be done by enhancing the capabilities of economic agents, such as women who have been previously excluded, and helping them to gain access to well paid work. Public action is therefore an important means of compensating for market failures and gender biases.

Well targeted public resources can significantly empower women. In many cases double dividends may be reaped by easing women's care responsibilities at home while, at the same time, making it easier for them to participate in the paid economy.

I. Gender Budgeting

Budgets are pillars of macroeconomic policy. They are the means by which governments allocate resources to meet their economic and social objectives. With the recognition that budgets are never gender neutral, important policy tools have evolved to examine the differential impacts of national (and local) resource allocation on men and women.

Gender Budgeting¹³ initiatives do not call for separate budgets for women or for men; they are attempts to disaggregate a government's mainstream budget according to its impacts on men and women. A number of tools and methodologies are used (see box).

Gender budgeting tools and methods:

- *gender-aware policy appraisal,*
- *gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessments,*
- *gender disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis,*
- *gender disaggregated tax incidence analysis,*
- *gender-disaggregated analysis of budget on time-use,*
- *gender aware medium term economic policy framework and*
- *gender aware budget statements.*

One of the most widely used tools is **gender-aware policy appraisal**. This involves (i) identifying explicit and implicit gender issues in particular sectors or programmes, (ii) identifying the resources allocated, and (iii) assessing whether existing policy and resource allocation will continue or change gender inequalities between men and women.

The tools take into account the role of the **unpaid economy**. They are, therefore, a way of avoiding ‘**false economies**’. These come about when attempts to reduce or contain financial costs in one sector (such as health-care) result in transferring actual costs and time use to the care economy. By recognising the unpaid economy, gender budgeting tools can help policy makers to avoid the policy assumption that the reproductive economy is an infinitely available resource.

Gender budgeting has been used in many countries, both developing and developed. The process began in Australia in 1984. Policy makers and civil society groups around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of using budget analysis to help achieve gender equality and improve policy making.

Good policy requires understanding both the impact of policy and how it might be better designed to achieve outcomes that meet the needs of women and men in general, and different groups of women and men in particular. Gender budgeting tools can be used not only to analyse existing budgets but also to help develop more gender sensitive future budgets that would lead to the more efficient use of national resources.

Significant features of gender budgeting include that it contributes to greater transparency and accountability regarding the use of public resources. It also strengthens the participation of civil society in budget formulation and accountability.

Some critics have noted that gender budget tools analyse only resource allocation and do not question the overall policy framework. But gender budgeting can be used in a way that helps policymakers to redefine priorities and to ensure that public money is spent effectively. Gender responsive budgeting can open the way to ensuring that objectives such as employment, poverty reduction and gender equality are more deeply embedded within policy frameworks and given appropriate financial resources.

J. Financial policies

In responding to financial crises much attention is usually given to the global financial system and its major players and markets. But as the magnitude of the 2008 crisis is unprecedented attention needs to turn to its implications for people, particularly for poor people in poor countries, including women.

It is essential that governments maintain support to social priorities so as not to compromise on long term development and to offset the unequal burden on women. Priorities should not only be on infrastructure projects which usually create jobs for men but social investments in care services which reduce the pressure on unpaid work as well.

Lessons from Argentina could be instructive in thinking about policies that would stimulate the economy and could achieve greater equity. This country managed to recover from the 2001 crisis with an annual growth rate of 8 per cent from 2002, and moreover reducing poverty from 56 to 20 per cent and unemployment from 30 to 7 per cent. Their policies included among others, pro-poor public expenditure policies focusing on long-term development priorities such as building infrastructure and human investments.¹⁴

Protecting people from the impact of a recession calls for a comprehensive package that keeps health and education services functioning, extends unemployment insurance, launches and expands emergency employment programmes, protects the pension systems, ensures affordable housing and stabilizes energy and food prices. Fiscal room to invest in these programmes is essential for sustainable recovery.

In addition, it is often the design features and targeting strategies of responses which is essential for ensuring that both women and men will have access to the benefits. For example, in public infrastructure and investment programmes which are designed to provide employment for large number of retrenched workers, equal access to women may be enhanced by expanding the concept of "public works" to programmes which can incorporate social services and environmental protection components. Social services could include the delivery of essential community-based social services – auxiliary health care, care for elderly, childcare, early childhood development, and youth development activities. These components would attract women and the youth as some activities will not need more than secondary education.¹⁵

Additionally, as fiscal stimulus packages are being designed it is important to consider the most vulnerable in society. For example, micro finance component directed at micro enterprises within stimulus packages will have a wide impact on vulnerable people including women.

¹ D. Elson: "Male bias in macroeconomics: the case of structural adjustment", in D. Elson (ed.): *Male Bias in the Development Process*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1991).

² J. Heintz: *Globalization, economic policy and employment: Poverty and gender implications*, Employment Strategy Working Papers, ILO, Geneva, 2006.

³ The residualist approach targets public assistance at the neediest, leaving most families to purchase whatever care they can afford. A residualist approach is a characteristic of neo-liberal policy approaches.

⁴ Progressive tax regimes are those where richer people pay a higher rate of tax.

⁵ D. Budlender: *Expectations versus realities in gender-responsive budget initiatives*, Paper prepared for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva, 2004.

⁶ UNIFEM: *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts, and Experiences*, New York, 2002.

⁷ J. Heintz: *Globalization, economic policy and employment: Poverty and gender implications*, Employment Strategy Working Papers, ILO, Geneva, 2006.

⁸ D. Elson: "Male bias in macroeconomics: the case of structural adjustment", in D. Elson (ed.): *Male Bias in the Development Process*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1991)

⁹ See Elson and King-Dejardin

¹⁰ A. King Dejardin and J. Owens: Asia in the global economic crisis: *Impacts and responses from a gender perspective*, A technical note for the High level Regional Forum on responding to the economic crisis, Manila, February 18-20 2009

¹¹ *Women at a glance*, United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI/1862/Rev.2, New York, May 1997, <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/women96.htm> (accessed 11 February 2009).

¹² For more on Gender Budgeting instruments, see <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>.

¹³ For more on Gender Budgeting instruments, see <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>.

¹⁴ S. Fukuda-Parr: *The Human Impact of the Financial Crisis on Poor and Disempowered People and Countries*, UN General Assembly: Interactive Panel on the Global Financial Crisis, New York, Oct. 30 2008.

¹⁵ A. King Dejardin and J. Owens *Ibid*

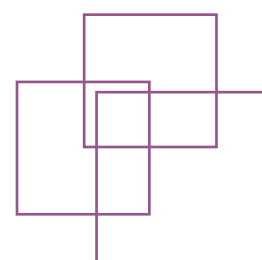
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International trade policies

Following a short introduction this policy brief outlines six key gender issues relating to Trade and Investment and then considers nine themes that might be involved in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

The impacts of expanded trade on gender equality are mixed. On the one hand trade liberalisation is potentially of profound benefit to women through increased opportunities for income and employment; but, on the other hand, it may contribute to loss of jobs, poor working conditions and widespread impoverishment. Both possibilities hold true in different contexts.

The pattern of gains and losses for women from trade liberalisation depends on country and sector specific factors that are linked to historical, social, and economic conditions and to the existing structural inequalities of women.

The way in which women's economic lives are affected by trade in a particular context is shaped by a range of factors which include:

- the gender division of labour in a society,
- the level of labour market segmentation and employment discrimination,
- women's role in unpaid work,
- their access to productive resources,
- their skills base and the skill intensity of trade and,
- Competitiveness among companies where productivity considerations would override any discriminatory practices against women.

The pattern of gains and losses for women from trade liberalisation depends on country and sector specific factors that are linked to historical, social, and economic conditions and to the existing structural inequalities facing women.

Both positive and negative impacts on women's employment have been observed through expanded trade. In some cases women have led their country's industrialisation through their employment in export-oriented industries. In other cases women have become trapped in precarious low-wage, low-skilled niches of certain global value chains.

Some women entrepreneurs have gained from new self-employment and business opportunities, while others have been displaced by cheap and subsidised imports, particularly of food and commodities.

Nevertheless, even when trade increases opportunities for women workers, they may face intense competitive pressures from other workers around the world. Such competitive conditions can keep the returns to labour low. There is also some evidence that women may be concentrated in sectors which are sensitive to economic downturns and which may contract due to greater capital intensity.

Trade has opened up new opportunities for growth and jobs in some contexts but in others global competitiveness has led to greater casualisation of work, to the growth of the informal economy, and to poor working conditions.

Given this wide range of impacts of trade on women's work, it is difficult to make definitive statements about the linkages between gender equality and trade. Nonetheless, in this subsection, we offer a few observations that might help to inform policy dialogue and formulation on the topic

1. Export-led industrialisation and the quality of jobs

Export-led industrialisation has increased women's labour force participation in a number of newly industrialized countries. This has undoubtedly led to major gains in terms of empowerment, increased status, and income within households. However, these gains have been partly offset by poor working conditions, low pay, job insecurity and in some cases denial of fundamental rights such as freedom of association. Indeed there is evidence that some incentives packages to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) may indirectly and directly compromise core labour standards.

Where countries compete for investment on the basis of low labour costs, women's employment is especially insecure.

Where countries compete for investment on the basis of low labour costs, women's employment is especially insecure. Although both men and women are affected by capital volatility, capital flight tends to take place in the context of low-skill low-wage production and in sectors where women are concentrated. There is also evidence that as a result of skills levels and cultural perceptions, males take over the jobs when working conditions, and pay improves within the Export Processing Zones.

2. Changing patterns of occupational segregation

Expanded trade can effect existing occupational segregation in ways that result in employment gains or losses for women. Trade liberalisation triggers structural change in the domestic economy. If accompanied, indeed preceded by, measures that increase the employability and mobility of women, thus allowing them to access the new opportunities resulting from structural change, then the impact is likely to be generally positive. If women, on the other hand, are stuck in weak low-growth, low productivity sectors of the economy, due to their limited access (e.g. employability, mobility, knowledge etc.), then that impact will be negative.

Women tend to dominate **agricultural production** in low-income countries. They are often producing for household consumption and small scale trading while men may be in cash crop production. Small scale agricultural producers, amongst them a large proportion of women, have not reaped the benefits of expanded trade. This is because they have been unable to compete against cheap and heavily subsidised food imports which, amongst other things, threaten domestic food producing sectors and endanger food security in households.

As the demand for women's labour in services grow, migration of women to fill these demands may result in the loss of skilled women workers from developing countries.

Women have made rapid employment gains in the **service sectors** globally. This covers a range of work from well paid and highly skilled (banks, media, advertising, IT, telecommunications, healthcare, tourism) to low paid and low skilled where job insecurity is rife (domestic work, entertainment etc). As the demand for women's labour in services grow, migration of women to fill these demands may result in the loss of skilled women workers from developing countries. This in turn can have negative effects on the women left behind who face increasing care burdens due to reduced services in the health and education sectors. Such impacts can be severely detrimental to wider efforts to reduce poverty through PRSPs and MDGs.

Traditionally there is a concentration of women in the **textile and garment industries**. This is a sector that has been a major employer of women. It has, however, been declining in poorer countries because of competition from large-scale producers after the end of the Multi-fibre Agreement in 2005.¹

3. Gender wage gaps

Trade has an effect on the gender wage gaps though there is little consensus on whether it makes them better or worse.

Some researchers have suggested that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) may be attracted by the undervalued wages of women and that this magnifies wage differences. Competition between low-wage economies for trade and investment also serve to reduce workers' bargaining power, and especially women's.

Other analysts have shown, however, that during periods of rapid economic growth, the expansion of trade is associated with a reduction in the wage gap between men and women. Many of the East Asian economies for example showed this pattern during periods of export-led growth.

4. Informalisation and increased self employment

Though direct links are hard to establish there is a relationship between expanded trade and increased **informalisation**. Global competition among industries and sectors may encourage the use of casual and precarious work that often affects women more than men.

A proportion of the self-employed may in reality be disguised wage workers who are not protected by labour legislation and are made responsible for their own social protection and the costs of production.

A related phenomenon is the growth of **self employment**. An underlying concern is that a proportion of the self-employed may in reality be disguised wage workers who are not protected by labour legislation and are made responsible for their own social protection and other non-wage costs of production. Lack of job security, social protection and other benefits may be made worse by the inability of labour law to adequately protect these categories of workers and to enforce labour standards - particularly on gender equality.

This tension between national regulatory frameworks and globalisation trends (such as trade liberalisation) is played out within **global value chains**. Production is being restructured across borders, and complex layers of contracting, outsourcing and triangular employment relationships make regulation and enforcement even more difficult. The economic vulnerability and risks for homeworkers and industrial outsourced workers are increased due to the highly competitive conditions amongst suppliers, and to the volatility of export demand. These vulnerable workers may also be forced to bear the brunt of the reduced production costs that benefit consumers.

5. Women's household responsibilities

The unpaid work that women do in the reproductive economy places time and resource pressures on their ability to earn an income.

Women's household responsibilities and their roles in food production in many developing countries can be an important barrier to taking advantage of new income opportunities resulting from trade. The unpaid work that women do in the reproductive economy places time and resource pressures on their ability to earn an income. This is intensified during periods of dislocation and adjustment that may result from trade liberalisation, since gender norms mean that it is women who are responsible for the survival of households.

6. Increased opportunities for entrepreneurs may not necessarily benefit women

Trade provides new opportunities for entrepreneurs, but, at the same time Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) may face competition from imported goods, and many women entrepreneurs often have particular difficulties in accessing new markets because they lack information, technology, financial resources and skills. Women owned businesses may often be informal and small scale and they may also therefore face greater difficulties in achieving the productive capacity required by international trade.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

The picture painted above shows that trade provides new employment for women but these may be mostly low quality employment.

Many countries have gained a lot from expanded trade, and women have benefited in terms of more employment and income opportunities. Governments and social partners can do a lot to shape the impact of trade and to ensure that its benefits are distributed to women - not only in the process of negotiating trade agreements but also through addressing existing structural inequalities.

Entry points to increase gender equality are opened up in the wide ranging measures that are linked to integration into the global trading systems. These include such things as:

- reform of domestic regulations,
- institutional reform to increase efficiency,
- support to the private sector,
- measures to enhance human capital and productivity,
- technological developments.

Countries can promote the sectors with the greatest export potential. This can be done using fiscal and financial policies that are linked to social objectives such as gender equality. The following nine items can be thought of as a starting point for action.

Governments and social partners can do a lot to shape the impact of trade and to ensure that its benefits are distributed to women.

A. Including gender issues in trade negotiations

Trade agreements are not gender neutral. They are likely to impact women and men in different ways due to gender inequalities in access to jobs, resources, markets and decision making.

On the whole trade policy deals with macro flows and considerations whereas gender actions deal primarily with the micro level and social consequences. This gap needs to be filled with more coherent policies which take fuller account of gender disparities. This can be done through the following:

- To ensure that women's interests are part of the formulation of trade positions at the national level. The area of concern will be issues such as the designation of products, trade offs between increased production and labour conditions and the promotion and protection of food security and rural economy. The aim would be to formulate a trade policy in a way that promotes women's diverse economic interests rather than undermining them.
- To support programmes which address gender specific supply constraints and help increase women's economic participation. This can be done for example through prioritizing micro level savings and loans schemes and by providing better financial services to women. In this way trade policy will protect women's rights and supports domestic policy that empower women (e.g. property rights, inheritance and other rights).

Trade policy should be formulated in a context which protects women's rights and supports their empowerment

- A certain amount of evidence already exists on the gender differentiated impact of trade policy. This evidence is positive in some cases and negative in others and as such needs to be drawn together and evaluated in order to provide the evidence base for negotiators to make informed choices on the impact of particular provisions on different economic and social groups.
- In 2006 the WTO has established the Aid for Trade Initiative which aims to help developing countries to develop the trade-related skills and infrastructure that is needed to implement and benefit from WTO agreements and to expand their trade. At the heart of this initiative is improving the social objectives of trade agreements. There are possibilities for using this initiative to support women. This could be through supporting women producers, creating child care facilities in exporting industries among other aspects.²

B. Supporting labour standards

Trade needs a normative framework, an agreed set of policies, principles and procedures to provide human rights based principles at both national and international trade policy levels. A decisive role in creating opportunities for women within expanded trade can be created by applying the core ILO conventions and including other relevant conventions such as the ILO Homeworkers conventions and those standards linked to reproductive rights and Human Resource Development.

Integrating a labour rights framework can transform trade policies by recognising that workers have rights to certain minimum protections and entitlements.

However, linking trade and labour standards is not without its problems as debates concerning the Social Clauses have shown. Some sections of the multinational business community oppose linking labour standards because of the perceived restriction on 'free markets'. Some developing countries are suspicious that promoting labour standards in export-oriented industries may disguise a protectionist agenda from wealthier countries. Others have noted the difficulties of enforcing national labour standards on non-state actors.

Nonetheless, ratification and implementation of labour standards such as the eight core ILO Conventions, potentially provide minimum standards for all workers and the protection of even the most vulnerable categories of workers in global production.

Integrating a labour rights framework can transform trade policies by recognising that workers have rights to certain minimum protections and entitlements. This ultimately benefits all actors: workers, producers, the business community and consumers.

C. Creating a business friendly environment

An enabling environment for the growth of the private sector, particularly for MSMEs, is essential for maximising the impact of trade expansion.

All entrepreneurs will benefit from:

- streamlining and simplifying registration procedures,
- reducing transaction costs,
- providing incentives, and
- providing accessible business development services.
- Special efforts may, however, be needed to make sure that women are able to take advantage of these services and institutions.

Setting targets to attract specific numbers of women entrepreneurs may be a useful strategy, and outreach programmes are important for involving women in rural areas. Women may however, be excluded from business networks because of the size of their enterprises and because of traditional attitudes. Integrating women within these networks is vital to ensure that they are able to gain essential information about markets, specific sectors, trade related issues and to conduct their businesses.

D. Support women producers

Promoting the organisation and mobilisation of women producers is also a key element of ensuring benefits from trade. As noted above many women at the lower ends of global value chains are unorganised and unprotected by labour legislation. Their voice and bargaining power to reap a greater share of the value created in global production can be strengthened through mobilisation, trade union recruitment, developing producers associations, and networking.

Promoting the organisation and mobilisation of women producers is also a key element of ensuring benefits from trade.

Some of these organisations have achieved national and global reach such as HomeNet, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) and others and have been able to network and lobby at international levels.

Through its Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme,³ the ILO has been providing extensive support to women entrepreneurs in developing countries and assisting them to upgrade sufficiently to take advantage of expanded trade.

WEDGE has assisted in the growth and strengthening of women entrepreneurial activities as they become more integrated into global production chains. This has been through:

- supporting strengthened organisations of women producer associations and networks,
- promoting mainstreaming of business support services and
- providing technical support and tools to improve market access and business viability.⁴

E. Coalition building

A powerful force in improving trade related employment is the **multi-stakeholder alliances** of social partners, NGOs, women's rights advocates, academics and consumer groups. Making gender issues more visible through advocacy work can help transform trade policy making by making it more responsive and transparent to civil society.

Increasingly policy space is opening up for consultations with relevant stakeholders in the context of PRSPs and MDGs. This also holds the potential to democratise trade policy making.

Making gender issues more visible through advocacy work can help transform trade policy making by making it more responsive and transparent to civil society.

F. Fair Trade schemes

Fair Trade Schemes have developed to ensure that primary producers receive a greater percentage of the end price of a commodity. They often also assist small producers to access larger markets, and they invariably have guidelines to enhance gender equality.

G. Strengthening active labour market policies (ALMP)

Global competition can lead to the decline of particular industries and sectors in particular countries. Active labour market policies such as re-training, recruitment and job creation have been an important strategy in male dominated industries such as ship-building. Such policies also need to target women in declining sectors such as textiles and garments after the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement.⁵

H. Trade impact tools

There is now a range of tools that can assist in (i) analysing the impact of trade on women and (ii) designing gender responsive trade policies. Increasingly governments and regional bodies have been carrying out potential impact assessments before trade negotiations begin. These assessments can be economic and sector specific and some analyse social objectives such as environmental sustainability. Such assessments are becoming key tools in the process of developing trade policy.

The European Union carries out **Sustainable Impact Assessments** (SIAs).⁶ These systematically address economic, social and environmental impacts and explicitly investigate the gender dimensions of trade on both EU member states and its partner economies. Rigorous research and reliable data are an important element in assessing the gender effects of various aspects of trade policy and trade agreements.

Increasingly governments and regional bodies have been carrying out potential impact assessments before trade negotiations begin.

The Canadian International Development Agency has developed **Gender and Equality Trade Related Capacity Building Tools**⁷ to analyse the differential impact of trade on women and men and to enable women and men to benefit equally from trade liberalisation. The tools focus on trade related capacity building – analysing, formulating and implementing trade policy, building trade related institutions and trade negotiations. The tools suggest various ways to promote gender equality in the development of trade policy.

Value Chain Analysis (VCA) is an important tool for upgrading positions and opening up opportunities within global production chains. VCA maps the entire range of activities, sectors and agents involved in the production of a good or service, from supplies of raw materials through production processes, distribution, sale, consumption and final disposal after use. Gendered VCA can help identify blockages and inequalities within the chain in order to upgrade positions and increase value apportioned within a production chain.⁸

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis⁹ (PSIAs) are tools that have been developed in the context of the reforms in the lending programmes of International Financial Institutions to poor countries. They have the potential for integration of gender concerns into trade policy design and implementation. PSIAs look at the intended and unintended impacts of macroeconomic structural and sectoral policy interventions on different groups including women and the poor.

I. Gender and trade checklist

The insert on the next two pages offers an itemised set of ten key questions to ask by way of ensuring that trade policies are gender sensitive regarding both export promotion and import liberalisation.

Gender and trade checklist

I. EXPORT PROMOTION

Employment and Production

1. *Are government measures to stimulate the export sector benefiting women in terms of access to credit and technical assistance?*

It is important that government subsidised credit and technical assistance do not simply benefit male farmers and large scale well established businesses, and to ensure that these programmes have components that pay special attention to female farmers and small businesses owned by women. This could include set aside programmes and special modules that address the concerns of this sector.

2. *Are women able to benefit from export training programmes? If there are constraints on women's participation, are they being addressed?*

In this regard, factors to consider include the following. Where does the training occur? How far is it for women to travel? Is childcare or childcare support provided? Is the teaching/training atmosphere friendly for women? Does the curriculum include examples and case studies focused on micro and small enterprises, and not just large businesses and areas where women are unlikely to venture?

3. *Are women taking advantage of opportunities in trade and marketing, and what do they need in order to strengthen their comparative advantage?*

It is important to determine if new trade and marketing opportunities are genuinely available and, if so, how men and women are responding to them. There may be significant structural impediments to women's participation. These may include significant capital/technology requirements, bureaucratic processes that are arbitrary or gender biased or high educational requirements. Some of these could be offset by credit or subsidies directed at women, and training and technical assistance.

4. *Do men and women have equal access to marketing facilities (information, trade fairs, networks)?*

Programme design should focus on how and when this type of information and activity is made available (time of day, distance from home), provisions for childcare and dissemination of information in easy-to-understand language.

Agriculture

1. *Who is in control of the means of trade such as transportation, storage and credit? How does this affect women's trading activities?*

Programme design should include an initial survey of the different needs identified by men and women farmers. This should be used to guide policy and future programme development.

2. *Are there attempts to provide women with access to other services such as irrigation and electrification?*

Access to these is critical, not just for day-to-day living but for running successful enterprises. Programme design should ensure that wells and irrigation canals are constructed at locations that do not discriminate against female farmers.

3. *What is the impact of new export promotion policies on women's property rights and access to common resources?*

It is critical that government incentives for promoting the expansion of particular crops do not lead to men taking away women's farming and household activities. In the case of land ownership, customary laws that can be beneficial to women should be upheld and promoted, or new laws and practices encouraged to protect women's property rights.

4. *Do the government's programmes help equip women to enter export production?*

Programmes should help to educate and build the capacity of women to meet sanitary and quality standards for export products. They should also provide incentives, education and training for women to undertake investment in new seed and cultivation methods.

II. IMPORT LIBERALISATION

Employment and Production

1. Which sectors are sensitive to import liberalisation. Are these the sectors that have a majority of female workers and entrepreneurs?

It is important to mitigate any adverse impacts on women in the import sensitive sectors, for example through appropriate social safety nets, tax credits, job training and skill upgrading.

Agriculture and Food security

1. What are the impacts of reductions in tariffs and the elimination of trade barriers on women's internal markets and on the overall competitiveness of women-owned micro and small businesses?

It is important to examine which offset mechanisms can be used to prevent further damage to this sector. This might include safeguard measures such as the reinstatement of a slightly lower tariff. It should also include a comprehensive programme of support measures that help reduce the cost of domestic production.

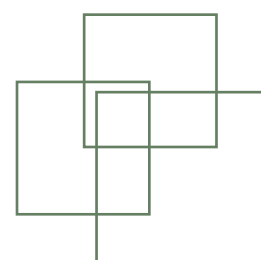
Source:

Trade Liberalisation Policy, Commonwealth Secretariat and ILO, InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development, Development Globalisation and Gender Briefs Series No.1, July 2003, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/docs/F2042326947/No%201%20Trade.pdf>

- ¹ For more on the Multi Fibre Agreement, see http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/texti_e/texintro_e.htm
- ² or more on Aid for Trade Initiative: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/aid4trade_e.htm
- ³ For more on WEDGE's activities, strategies, projects, tools, and publications, see http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.portal?p_prog=S&p_subprog=WE
- ⁴ See also Globalization and Gender Series Number 3: Small and Medium Enterprise Development http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.Portal?p_lang=EN&p_category=PUB&p_mode=PROD&p_lang=EN&p_theme=GLO
- ⁵ For more on this topic, see Globalization and Gender Briefs Series Number One. Trade liberalization policies http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.Portal?p_lang=EN&p_category=PUB&p_mode=PROD&p_lang=EN&p_theme=GLO
- ⁶ For more on EU's SIAs, see <http://www.sia-acp.org/acp/uk/index.php>.
- ⁷ Canadian International Development Agency: *Gender equality and trade-related capacity building: A resource tool for practitioners*, Gender Equality Division, Policy Branch, Gatineau (Quebec), Aug. 2003. http://www.sice.oas.org/Genderandtrade/CIDA_Trade-Related%20Capacity%20Building.pdf
- ⁸ See also PB08 Value Chain Analysis.
- ⁹ See World Bank's PSIA's resources at <http://go.worldbank.org/39I9SFVEJ0>.

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Employment intensity of growth

This policy brief begins by highlighting some gender issues that relate to the employment intensity of growth (i.e. the extent to which economic growth is linked to more jobs). It then considers seven themes that might be involved in policy making for employment-led growth that is gender-sensitive.

Key gender issues

In this section the concepts of jobless growth and of the working poor are considered. These point to the need for an analytic vision of the relationship between economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction that is closely linked to the realities of particular nations.

Economic growth does not automatically translate into job creation. Nor does employment on its own lead to greater gender empowerment and hence poverty reduction.

For example female elasticities have grown more than men's. This means that, for a given rate of economic growth (in some regions), women's employment has grown more on average than men's. The research suggests a number of possible reasons for this: (a) a 'catching up' in terms of labour force participation of women relative to men and (b) a greater sensitivity of female employment to economic growth and economic contraction, whereby women suffer more than men in employment losses in downturns. Women also tend to be engaged in jobs that have lower wages and productivity. Sex based segregation could be another potential explanation, whereby women are concentrated in more labour intensive sectors than men.²

1. Jobless growth

Jobless growth has become widespread in many countries. Although economic growth rates may be stable and even robust, they are often based on higher productivity and capital intensity and do not necessarily create many jobs.

The Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)¹ research show that, during the period 2001-2005, there was a decline in the employment elasticity of growth (which measures how many jobs are created for every unit of economic growth). The KILM research also found a number of important differences between men and women.

Despite widespread perceptions to the contrary, stricter employment protection was not found to lessen the number of women being employed.

A striking finding of the ILO-KILM research is that, despite widespread perceptions to the contrary, stricter employment protection was not significantly related to the employment elasticity of growth (i.e. more regulations did not lessen the number of women being employed)³. This finding that employment rigidity (protection) is insignificant in terms of limiting jobs for women could however be due to the lack of enforcement of employment protection legislation.

2. The working poor

Working poor is a term used to describe individuals and families who maintain regular employment but remain in relative poverty due to low levels of pay. Workers without marketable skills may face low wages, potential economic exploitation, unpleasant working conditions, and few opportunities to attain skills that would allow them to escape their personal and economic situations. In some cases, members of the working poor work at multiple part-time jobs, which require nearly full-time commitment but are classified as “part time”. In this situation some benefits, like medical insurance, are not paid by employers.

Many governments have initiated programs with the intention of assisting those who may be considered impoverished or working poor. In addition to this and the fact that some regions have seen high rates of growth, the effect on poverty reduction has been minimal partly due to high population growth and the numbers of new entrants into the labour market who have not found jobs.

These findings set the scene for the international policy debates over whether employment is a secondary outcome of economic growth or, as the ILO advocates, is central to equitable growth and poverty reduction.

As noted above, economic growth does not automatically translate into job creation. Nor does employment on its own lead to greater gender empowerment and hence poverty reduction - this is shown by the large numbers of working poor who are women.

A convergence of economic growth and gender sensitive employment strategies are the essential ingredients for sustainable poverty reduction.

When employment-led growth strategies do not address key gender issues then the impact on poverty alleviation and development is limited, and the burdens on women may be increased. The key gender issues include such things as:

- women’s ‘time poverty’ due to the clash between economic and care work, (productive and reproductive work),
- occupational segregation,
- lack of access to productive resources, and
- employment discrimination.

3. Employment intensive investment creates large number of jobs but women’s share remain limited

Investment in infrastructure accounts for as much as 50 to 70 % of national public investment in most developing countries.⁴ Also a large share of private and community investments goes into all types of infrastructure, such as access roads, water, dams, drains, irrigation, housing and schools. Apart from its importance because of the level of investments, infrastructure also directly contributes to the well being of the users. It creates access to basic social services such as education and health, as well as – through the building of productive facilities – to long-term employment in other sectors such as agriculture or manufacture. In other areas, for example soil and water conservation, infrastructure contributes to the safeguarding of the productive, natural resource base.

The employment potential of infrastructure investments is vast, but is often not realized, as many projects are equipment-intensive, frequently using foreign contractors. This may be necessary for airports, motorways or heavy bridges, but employment-intensive alternatives using labour-based technologies are available for more basic infrastructure, offering major advantages in terms of using

infrastructure investments to create local employment and incomes, as well as skills and capacities. Also, with gender stereotyping of public works jobs it is often the case that women benefit less than men.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

The failure of economic growth to generate sufficient employment has been discussed in the policy brief on Economic policies. This brief will therefore take it as given that employment is the key link between economic growth and poverty reduction, and, within that paradigm, that explicit gender-sensitive employment strategies are the core drivers of poverty reduction.

Importantly, if employment is to contribute towards poverty reduction, then there must be an increase in employment and enterprise opportunities for the working poor, of which women make up a large proportion. Targeted interventions to increase women's incomes and productivity through access to assets and skills are key elements of poverty reduction.

Policies that enhance women's capabilities to ensure more efficient human capital generation for an economy are discussed in the Brief on Skills Development and will not be addressed here. In what follows seven themes are explored related to developing gender-sensitive, employment-led growth policies.

A. Mainstream and gender targeted interventions

Both mainstreaming and gender targeted interventions are needed in the wide-ranging toolkit to promote employment-led growth. Creating effective demand for women's labour can be supported by:

- investments in infrastructure,
- promotion of high labour absorbing sectors and methods of production (particularly export oriented industries),
- labour saving technologies in the home,
- public and private investment in essential physical and social infrastructure,
- public services,
- recognition of property rights,
- good governance,
- stable institutions,
- equitable distribution of wealth,
- private sector growth,
- expanded trade,
- fiscal and commercial incentives,
- political stability, and
- the rule of law including labour law.

B. Analysing and alleviating gender-based constraints

Women's ability to participate in paid work depends on their responsibilities in unpaid work.

Analysing and reducing gender-based constraints on women's economic participation is an important starting point for employment-led growth. The analysis will show that women's ability to participate in paid work depends on their responsibilities in unpaid work. These responsibilities will include not only caring for children, the elderly and the sick but also dealing with the day-to-day work of maintaining households. These responsibilities not only act as a constraint on women's ability to earn an income, but also, when women do participate in paid work, there are often cut backs in the household care economy - unless alternative provisioning is available.

Numerous strategies are available for lessening the gender-based burdens of unpaid work. These include

- giving economic value to unpaid work in order to formulate appropriate policy responses,
- changing gender relations through awareness-raising for more equitable distribution of tasks, and
- promoting labour saving technologies in the household.

Many developed countries have declining welfare states and increasing women's labour force participation. In these cases it may be appropriate to facilitate regulated migration to enable temporary migrants to meet the demand for domestic work.

For all countries, the public provision of social services is often critical and has the added benefit of also increasing the number of jobs. Infrastructural development also provides many benefits. These include:

- increasing assets for poor communities,
- generating employment when labour intensive technologies are used, and
- relieving women's work burdens by providing water, irrigation, roads, utilities, transport, healthcare, childcare, sanitation, and other supports.

C. Social safety nets

Social safety nets⁵ are an important tool in supporting employment led growth because they can help overcome poor people's risk aversion, and help maximise productivity and output.

Social Safety nets lessen the effects of poverty and other risks on vulnerable households. Safety nets can be private or informal, such as family members in different households supporting each other through hard times with cash, food, labour or housing. Formal programs, run by Governments, Donors or NGOs, provide additional income or in-kind transfer programs, subsidies, and labour-intensive public works programs. Programs to ensure access to essential public services, such as fee waivers for health care services, and scholarships for schooling costs are other examples of safety nets.

Women are often the key to the survival of households in times of crisis, such as transitions, droughts, wars, and other dislocations. In the absence of savings and assets, safety nets can act as insurance mechanisms in the face of economic shocks. In times of financial crisis their role is even more important.

D. A balanced approach to increasing jobs and productivity at the same time

Employment-led growth is often based on identifying opportunities for increasing the number of jobs in different sectors. For example in agriculture, where a large proportion of women are located, an appropriate balance must be found between increasing productivity and labour demand.

Enhancing women's access to productive resources such as land, inheritance, capital, and equipment can be complemented by strategies to:

- diversify into high value agricultural products,
- build infrastructural support such as irrigation, roads and energy supplies, and
- provide market information, extension services and supports in terms of packaging and storage facilities.

These strategies can increase both labour intensity and productivity simultaneously. Outside of agriculture, many women in developing countries are concentrated in the informal economy. Again, policies must find the right balance between productivity growth and employment growth. Within a Decent Work framework a combination of incentives and protections for entrepreneurs and workers respectively can assist in moving informal work to formality while maintaining the employment potential of the informal economy.

Incentives are important to assist women entrepreneurs in the informal economy; these include such things as such as:

- tax holidays,
- duty exemptions,
- lower interest rates and credit,
- enterprise support services,
- access to social services such as health, safe water, sanitation, education, child care and labour intensive technologies.

Women workers in the informal economy can be helped to move towards formality by providing protections such as proper and enforceable legal frameworks, recognition of their rights, and welfare.

E. Private sector growth and MSMEs

Private sector growth is another area for stimulating labour demand. Increasing numbers of women are engaged in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and self-employed women are gaining in numbers throughout the world.

The growth potential of women's enterprise can be significantly improved through mainstreamed and gender targeted assistance in business financing institutions, as well as through legislation and policies that address discrimination.

Women are able to participate in private sector growth through streamlining procedures and reducing transaction costs as well as by providing a range of fiscal and human resource incentives. This can be linked to increased access to productive resources such as credit, land, technology, business networks and market information.

The growth potential of women's enterprise can be significantly improved through mainstreamed and gender targeted assistance in business financing institutions, as well as through legislation and policies that address discrimination.⁶

F. Export-oriented growth and Foreign Direct Investment

Export-oriented growth has been very employment intensive and there is much evidence that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is particularly attracted to female labour. While this has undoubtedly resulted in major gains in terms of female empowerment through more income and jobs, this has been partially offset by low wages, lack of freedom of association and collective bargaining, and poor working conditions.

Within a Decent Work framework equity and efficiency imperatives are combined, enabling policy makers to address decent work deficits in female-led, export-oriented growth industries without trade-offs between productivity and employment growth.

Strategies to promote export led industrialisation should not only promote core labour standards but also ensure that measures are in place to compensate for fluctuations and adjustments in export demand. Opportunities for retraining in new skills and technologies for women enhance a country's global competitive edge, and act as a further incentive for FDI.

G. Employment intensive investment for decent job work for women and men

ILO experience has shown that for the same level of investment in local infrastructure, the use of labour based technologies can create between two and four times more employment, decrease foreign exchange requirements by 50-60 per cent, decrease overall costs by 10-30 per cent, and reduce negative environmental impacts.

Employment intensive investment programmes aim to undertake, among others, the following:

- (i) promote the development and application of employment-friendly policies for public investment in infrastructure,
- (ii) promote small enterprises in the construction sector (labour-based contractors) and private sector execution of public works using locally available resources in an optimum manner, combining job creation in the infrastructure sector with improved and decent working conditions,
- (iii) promote organisation and collective negotiation at the small enterprise and community levels in labour-based works and improve access of deprived communities to productive resources and social services and,
- (iv) provide assistance to social safety nets and labour-intensive employment schemes for direct job and asset creation in reconstruction programmes following man-made or natural disasters.

All of the above include specific gender dimensions which need to be taken into consideration. Here there are 2 challenges: The first is that the type of work public investment includes (i.e. construction) often includes more men as a result of gender stereotyping of jobs and cultural barriers to women's participation. The second is that the distribution of assets created by public works depends to a large extent on the

gender division of labour and control over resources and land. Land use and tenure rights have a crucial bearing on the distribution of benefits from land development and improvement projects as an example. Often, programmes which do not involve women at the decision making stage might inadvertently shift land use from one crop to another with commercial value and where land is owned by male land owners, as one example.

The ILO's Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) promotes a local resource-based strategy to increase the impact of investments in infrastructure on employment creation, poverty reduction and local development works with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the private sector and communities in orienting infrastructure investments towards the creation of productive employment and towards the improvement of access to basic goods and services for the poor. EIIP has proven that a combined use of local participation of men and women in planning with the utilization of locally available skills, technology, materials, and appropriate work methods is an effective and economically viable approach to infrastructure works in developing countries and which equally affects women and men. This is not always easy and consistently concerted efforts are needed to ensure that women are participating from the planning stages to the implementation stages.⁷

In addition, the emphasis on local level participation and planning should ensure that women participate both as workers and leaders. Also, local assets are created which stimulate demand in poor communities and lessen many women's work burdens through the creation of local infrastructure.

An important caution about employment intensive schemes is that they need to be sensitive to the physical aspects of work when encouraging women's participation. Women take part in heavy physical labour in many developing countries and it is essential to avoid discrimination in access to the better-paid physical tasks. But it is also

important to recognise that heavy labour can damage women's health and well-being - especially in the context of women's intense work burdens and often poor nutritional status. One way of addressing this problem is to ensure that equal value is given to less laborious tasks.

As analysis by Gurushri Swamy⁸ has shown, it is not easy to find the right balance in remuneration systems to encourage the poor and to ensure that women benefit. Wages set too high in public works can draw workers away from private jobs and lead to over-representation of men. On the other hand, gender gaps in wages can reinforce existing inequalities between men and women. Similarly schemes based on household participation can result in women being excluded or self-selecting out.

Remuneration systems that have been effective in attracting women to these schemes include in-kind wages, piece rates, subsidised food, home-based work opportunities, and non-wage support such as transport and childcare.

¹ ILO: *Key Indicators of the Labour Market, Fifth edition*, Geneva, 2008.

² Kapsos, S. *The Employment Intensity of Growth: Trends and Macroeconomic Determinants*. Employment Strategy Papers 2005/12, Employment Strategy Department, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2005

³ Kapsos, S. *ibid*.

⁴ ILO: A Global programme: Investing in employment for poverty reduction and local economic development, Employment Intensive Investment Programme, Geneva, 2003.

⁵ Social Safety Nets, The World Bank, WB Learning Programs – Social Protection, 2008, <http://go.worldbank.org/C29EC57630> (accessed 09 February 2009).

⁶ For more on this topic, see the policy brief on Enterprise Development.

⁷ For more on the ILO's EIIP programme see: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/>

⁸ G. Swamy *Gender Dimensions of Public Employment Schemes*, World Bank, Gender and Development Group, Washington D.C. Draft 2003

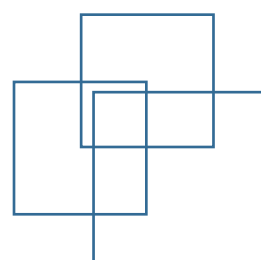
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Labour migration and mobility

This policy brief begins by highlighting some gender issues that relate to temporary labour migration. It then considers what might be involved in gender responsive policy making in both sending and receiving countries.

Key gender issues

Mobility and gender issues are not limited to migration. It also covers vertical and horizontal mobility in labour markets and employment activities, and physical restrictions on mobility due to customs and traditions. These issues are discussed in other policy briefs so, here, the focus is on temporary labour migration.

Many women migrants seek employment overseas because, in their home countries, they are faced with poverty, unemployment, labour market discrimination, and limited access to productive resources and skills.

1. Temporary labour migration and remittances

Demand and supply factors continue to fuel the growth of global labour migration, particularly of women. Women now make up nearly half of labour migrants globally. Many women migrants seek employment overseas because, in their home countries, they are faced with poverty, unemployment, labour market discrimination, and limited access to productive resources and skills.

The demand for low skilled labour in receiving countries is due to changing demographics and labour markets and to declining social services. The demand is particularly strong in sectors such as domestic work, health services, and enter-

tainment, in commercial sex work, restaurants, hotels and in agriculture.

The growth of women's labour force participation in industrialised countries is also increasing the **demand for migrant labour in domestic work.**

At the same time migration is increasingly being promoted as a solution to unemployment problems in sending countries and because of the vital role it is playing in regenerating rural communities through remittances.

Remittances provide valuable funds for small scale building projects and for the education of children and siblings. In some countries remittances exceed ODA and have become one of the most important sources of foreign exchange.

Remittances provide valuable funds for small scale building projects and for the education of children and siblings. In some countries remittances exceed Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹ and have become one of the most important sources of foreign exchange. In 2003, remittances exceeded aid in the following regions: South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, and East Asia and Pacific. The 2005 World Bank estimates showed that recorded remittances exceeded ODA in the past 15 years. In 2005 remittances were estimated to be \$160 billion. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women may send back a larger proportion of their income than men, though there has been no systematic research on this.

2. Irregular circumstances and exploitation

Migrants make a major contribution to the development of their national economies. But, even so, many women migrants remain **vulnerable to abuse and exploitation** or end up in irregular circumstances. Some are unaware of the risks of migration and the costs to their families and communities; most have inadequate information before leaving and do not know how to protect themselves in situations of abuse and exploitation.

While working abroad, **few migrant women have access to adequate social protection** despite heightened economic vulnerability and risk. In some cases, the categories of work that women engage in are unprotected by labour legislation. Also, given their uncertain labour status, women migrants may face a large number of possible abuses that can be combined with racial, cultural and religious divisions.

Upon their return to their home communities, migrant women often still face the same problems that pushed them into migration in the first place – for example lack of access to jobs, skills, and income opportunities. Many migrant women are therefore in a continuous cycle of migration and re-migration in search of work. The social costs for families left behind, particularly children, are well known.

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Gender Responsive Policy Making

The demand for international labour migration is likely to continue. This is true despite the link that is often made between labour migration and discourses about race, assimilation, cultural integration and national security. These often seek to restrict new entrants.

Restrictive migration policies may also increase the amount of **irregular migration**. This would increase the vulnerability of migrants, particularly of women, to trafficking, smuggling or other forms of irregularity.

Managed and regulated migration on the other hand can provide a ‘win-win’ situation for both sending and receiving countries; this would involve increased employment, productivity and growth. And, despite the social costs (and some cases of exploitation), temporary migration is an empowering experience for many women: it often increases their earnings, self reliance, decision making power, and status within their communities.

In what follows some policy options are considered that sending and receiving countries might put in place to ensure that migration is well managed and regulated, and that it leads to win-win situations.

A. Sending countries

Sending countries need to develop a policy mix that builds a supportive environment for ensuring that migration is well managed and regulated. This would include:

- Proper pre-departure training linked to registration. This would ensure that women have access to accurate information about the migration process, its costs and benefits, and guidance in investing their remittances productively when they return.

- Opportunities for insurance, tax breaks, social protection and efficient remittance transfer systems. These would act as incentives for regular migration.
 - Regulating private and public recruitment agencies and developing model contracts with clear rights and responsibilities.
 - Negotiating bilateral agreements to ensure the respect for rights and labour standards of their nationals overseas.
 - Social and economic reintegration assistance to ensure that returning migrants can adjust in their home communities and take advantage of their experiences to generate productive income opportunities. This is particularly important since lack of employment opportunities and poverty often force women into further migration cycles.
- Sending countries also need to take heed of several more strategic considerations:
- Employment creation and entrepreneurship opportunities are essential components of a migration policy for sending countries, not only for returnees but to ensure that the initial migration is a genuine choice.
 - Relying on temporary migration alone to solve unemployment problems is a dangerous and unstable course for national economies. Long term solutions need to be found to address the root causes of migration: poverty, unemployment and gender discrimination.
 - Employment creation strategies in sending countries need to provide measures to increase the demand for labour while also upgrading the supply of labour in terms of relevant skills. Labour demand is influenced by a range of factors such as trade and investment policies, private sector growth, and employment intensive strategies.
 - A supportive environment for entrepreneurship development can act as a catalyst for growth. This would include:
 - streamlining registration procedures,
 - providing fiscal incentives,
 - reducing transaction costs, and
 - providing effective business development services.Access to productive resources such as credit, technology, land, information and other assets.
 - On the supply side a significant contribution can be made to upgrading women's skills and helping them to find employment opportunities within their local labour market. This would involve measures such as:
 - reforming vocational training institutions and linking them closely with private sector demand,
 - ensuring that women have access to diverse skills and not just gendered skills, and
 - providing re-training opportunities as well as measures to ensure girls education and their entry into science and technology fields.
 - It is important to make it possible for women to access information about various income and job opportunities. This can be done through upgrading labour market information systems and ensuring that their services are mainstreamed and able to reach women.
 - Addressing employment discrimination is a key feature of employment creation for sending countries. Equality legislation, affirmative action and a range of equal employment opportunity policies and programmes are part of the policy mix to enhance women's economic opportunities.

A supportive environment for entrepreneurship development can act as a catalyst for growth.

B. Receiving countries

For receiving countries, there are many policy measures that can maximise benefits of migration for their economies while ensuring respect of the rights of migrant workers, particularly women migrants. These measures include:

- Treating migration policy as part of the labour market architecture rather than as national security or border control issue.
- Maximising productivity and growth by analysing labour demand and linking this with sending countries through bilateral and multilateral agreements.
- Reducing migrant vulnerability and ensuring the protection of their rights by
 - ensuring categories of migrant workers are recognised under labour law, enabling them to organise into associations or unions,
 - ensuring social protection coverage, and
 - opposing discourses that link migration to racism and xenophobia.
- Avoiding discriminatory practices such as measures that enforce women's dependence on male migrants or on employers.
- Labour inspection, enforcing employment contracts and monitoring of recruitment agencies are also vital.

¹ A. Szabados: *Official Development Assistance and Migration*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Department of Development Assistance, International Conference on Migration and Development, Bratislava, 2007, pp. 16-17.

² *ILO's Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Non-binding principles and guidelines For a rights-based approach*, International Migration Programme, Geneva, 2006.

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C. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration

The ILO offers a range of Conventions that can guide constituents in developing migration policies that promote and respect the rights of migrants, particularly women.

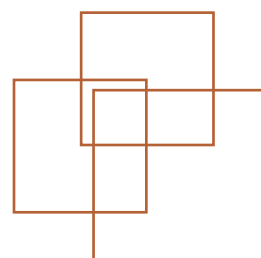
The ILO has developed guidelines for stakeholders on the development and strengthening of labour migration policies within a framework of international instruments.

The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration was adopted by a Tripartite Meeting of Experts in 2005.² It provides examples of good practices and a comprehensive collection of principles and guidelines on managing migration based on human and labour rights standards.

The Multilateral Framework can guide the development of a managed, regulated and gender-sensitive migration policy that can maximise benefits for sending and receiving countries and for migrants themselves, particularly for the more vulnerable women migrants.

D. Linking migration with development

The contribution of labour migration to employment, economic growth, development and the alleviation of poverty should be recognized and maximized for the benefit of both origin and destination countries. As such migration should be mainstreamed in national employment and labour market policies. Within this context, the contribution of both women and men migrants to the development of their host and origin country should not be underestimated.





Skills and employability

This policy brief begins by highlighting three gender issues that relate to the development of skills for employability. It then considers seven factors that might be involved in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

'... there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women.'

Kofi Annan

In this subsection we consider gender discrimination and division of labour and how this leads to the under-development and under-use of women's skills, and to the waste of the huge potential they have for promoting economic growth.

1. Gender discrimination

Evidence from many societies shows that gender discrimination limits the life choices and opportunities for women. It begins at the earliest stages of life and continues through childhood and into youth, adulthood and old age.

Even in countries where young women's education is equal to or even higher than young men's, young women may have higher rates of unemployment and make up a large proportion of discouraged workers.

Unequal gender relations drives a vicious cycle of underinvestment in girls. In poor communities parents are faced with the opportunity cost of educating their sons or their daughters - and many are more likely to invest in their sons. This is because of the limited returns to investing in girls - for example low wages, uncertain jobs, and the fact that girls tend to leave the family home when they marry. It is therefore not surprising that women make up nearly two thirds of the world's 860 million non-literate population, and of the more than 100 million children who are not in school, the majority are girls.

With the Millennium Development Goals and the recognition of the importance of girls' education in combating a number of dimensions of poverty, countries are making concerted efforts to reduce the gender gaps in education, at least in primary

school. Through incentives schemes and affirmative action strategies many countries have seen the gender gaps in enrolments closing significantly. While this is undoubtedly a positive development, it may not be enough to eliminate the labour market discrimination and occupational segregation that limit women's employment options in adulthood.

Gender discrimination in access to employment is common in all countries. Even in countries where young women's education is equal to or even higher than young men's, young women may have higher rates of unemployment and make up a large proportion of discouraged workers.

Employers may be reluctant to hire women because of the belief in their conditional attachment to the labour market and to the perceived costs related to maternity protection. Such barriers may be reinforced by 'male breadwinner' bias and underlying policy thinking which sees women as secondary income earners.

Even when women do find **employment it is often within a narrow range of occupations** that are based on traditional female skills and activities. These are associated with low returns, wages and status. In many developing countries women are overly represented in the informal economy, and invariably in the most precarious forms of work - where the viability of their incomes is continuously threatened by a low skills base, market saturation, low productivity and intense competition.

Upgrading skills in the informal economy is limited by:

- women's time burdens,
- their roles as caregivers in households, and
- a lack of training materials tailored to the needs of women in informal work, many of whom may be non-literate.

Attempts to encourage non- traditional skills have met with limited success in countries where there are strong socio-cultural restrictions on women.

2. Gender division of labour

Women are often caught in the imbalance in the supply and demand for labour; this is because of their low skills base and their concentration in lowly productive work in particular segments of the labour market.

The gender division of labour in many societies and labour markets is reinforced by vocational training and skills development for women that focus on a small range of 'female skills': there is an absence of the science, technology, and skills that are in high demand in the private sector. Curricula may be riddled with gender stereotypes that reinforce existing gender relations.

Training delivery within formal vocational training institutions often does not take into account women's household responsibilities: this can act as a key barrier to upgrading their skills. For the women who do receive training, there is often a lack of post-training support such as job search assistance and opportunities to reinforce their training.

Attempts to encourage non- traditional skills have met with limited success in some countries, particularly where there are strong socio-cultural restrictions on women. Lessons learned from technical cooperation reveal that such approaches need to be accompanied by (i) market assessment of skills in demand, and (ii) community awareness-raising to avoid hostility to women undertaking non-traditional work.

3. Under-use of women's skills

The picture painted above may be dismal. Yet skills development for women is a critical entry point on the supply side of the labour market. It addresses a number of structural inequalities in the labour market ranging from occupational segregation and wage gaps to high levels of women's unemployment, underemployment and working poverty.

It is vital to enable women to gain greater access to education, training and employability skills. This is true not only from a rights-based equality of opportunity perspective but also because it forms a key plank in poverty reduction strategies.

Equity and efficiency rationales for enhancing women's capabilities are closely linked to the new emphasis on pro-poor growth strategies. International policy frameworks are increasingly recognising that women hold the key to breaking the poverty cycle; this is because increased education and income for women leads to greater productivity and growth and the achievement of numerous development goals linked to the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Benefits from the socio-economic empowerment of women include, amongst other things: enhanced child wellbeing and nutritional and educational status, reduced fertility, and their greater decision-making power and status within households and communities.

The effects of not empowering women are severe. High levels of inequality are a drag on economic growth, increase poverty and delay social justice. The under-use of women's skills results in a waste of human resources and a stifling of innovation and creativity.

To compete globally countries must make full and efficient use of their human capital – and at least half includes women.

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Gender Responsive Policy Making

In this sub-section we consider seven topics that policy makers might consider when dealing with skills development and employability in the workforce generally and for women in particular.

A. Gender sensitive Labour market policies

The ILO has always placed a strong emphasis on enhancing women's skills formation and this has been further reinforced through the *ILO Recommendation No.195 on Human Resource Development: Education, Training and Lifelong learning, 2004*. This reinforces the point that education and training are a right for all. It emphasises equality of opportunity between women and men, and boys and girls for education, training and lifelong learning. It also recognises that access to education is a vital means of combating social exclusion.

An important starting point for policy makers is recognising the diversity of women's skills training needs. These include:

- non-literate populations and those in the informal economy through,
- graduate women who are unable to enter the labour market, and
- women who require retraining to adapt to new labour market demands.

At the same time there are good reasons for promoting skills development for women in general. There are of course the rights-based reasons but there are also more practical reasons that suggest a wide range of benefits:

- from a business perspective, encouraging life-long learning and upgrading skills for women makes good sense by generating innovation, competitiveness and staff loyalty;
- for an economy, it results in more efficient labour allocation, higher productivity and aggregate output, increased global competitiveness and better human capital formation for the next generation; and
- from a poverty-alleviation perspective, increased education, labour force participation and income for women are the most effective tools to combat the numerous dimensions of poverty.

B. Analyse existing structural gender inequalities

In order to design effective gender sensitive interventions, policymakers need to analyse existing structural gender inequalities. Wider gender relations and the unequal gender division of labour within the household reduces girl's and women's access to education and skills development and contributes to their choosing a narrow range of 'female dominated' skills. Their choices and opportunities within the labour market are therefore severely limited.

Efforts to address labour market segmentation, occupational segregation and employment discrimination must be based on an unambiguous gender equality agenda at all levels of education and training.

Efforts to address labour market segmentation, occupational segregation and employment discrimination must be based on an unambiguous gender equality agenda at all levels of education and training. This means prioritising education for all, at all levels of schooling not just primary schooling, and encouraging science and technology for girls.

Career guidance can also help broaden girls' visions and choices. A commitment to life-long learning enables many women to gain the skills and the qualifications that are required in a highly competitive and changing labour market.

C. Promote equality through micro level actions

When developing skills training for women, micro level actions to promote equality are as important as macro level commitments. At the micro level, training delivery needs to be flexible and adapted to the time constraints of women.

Where women's mobility is limited, **mobile training units** can be used - these have also been effective for upgrading the skills of women in the informal economy. Women's access to training can be promoted by, amongst other things:

- providing childcare and transport allowances,
- having more female trainers, and
- arranging gender awareness training for male trainers.

Encouraging **non-traditional skills** training can be attempted through incentives, affirmative action, awareness-raising campaigns, and targets for existing courses. Non-traditional skills training should, however, be attempted with caution; particularly in situations where there are severe restrictions on women; only after a market assessment of the likelihood of employment for women with these skills and after intensive awareness raising in the community.

Community involvement in awareness-raising has been shown to be an important element of success for women entering new occupations.

Post-training support is often vital for women as it helps to (i) reinforce their skills, and (ii) provides opportunities to link women to relevant employment, and business support services.

D. Adjust vocational training curricula

Curriculum change in vocational education can help to (i) eliminate gender stereotypes, and (ii) integrate a range of transferable employability skills. Targets and affirmative action can be applied within vocational training institutions to encourage more gender balance in courses.

Vocational training institutions may need to adapt their services to meet private sector demands. Partnerships with the private sector can help to (i) make vocational training more responsive to skills that are in demand in the private sector, and (ii) provide opportunities for apprenticeships, internships and other forms of work experience for women and girls.

Ensuring that women are trained in market relevant skills is essential to combat labour market segmentation and occupational segregation. Many women are trapped in market saturated economic activities where competition is fierce and productivity low.

Guiding women in identifying which skills are in demand in a particular community is essential before any skills training takes place. It is important to ensure that women are aware of changing labour market demands for skills and technology. Training institutions, career guidance in schools, employment services and other labour market information systems have a key role to play in this process.

E. Facilitate self-employment and enterprise development

In many countries there is a high rate of unemployment of women graduates. Some underlying factors include:

- many young women graduates aspire to public sector employment (where there are less jobs)
- Some women graduate in areas that are not in high demand in the labour market
- there are continuing barriers to recruitment in private sector companies.
- Many women do not regard self-employment and enterprise development as viable options.

Efforts to combat discrimination in hiring should continue but there is also a need to promote enterprise development for women as a viable employment option and one that could enhance their creativity and innovation. Awareness-raising to improve the status of entrepreneurship development for women should be accompanied by incentives programmes; mainstreaming of business related support services; the creation of an enterprise friendly policy environment.¹

F. Strengthen active labour market policies

Active labour market policies² (ALMPs) are an important tool to help women adapt to changing skills and technological demands. Even though women have made extensive employment gains in export-oriented industries in some countries, export demand can fluctuate and capital may be mobile. Women in these sectors need opportunities to adjust their skills and abilities accordingly. A case in point is the decline in female-dominated textiles and garments industries in the context of the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement. ALMPs to open retraining opportunities for women are crucial in such situations.

G. Reinforce commitment to equality of opportunity

Finally, at the macro level, there needs to be a firm commitment to equality of opportunity. This will involve:

- appropriate legislation and policies,
- a strong gender-sensitive human resource development strategy,
- an employment-centred macroeconomic framework.

Governments have an important role to play in overcoming discrimination in recruitment. This can be done through:

- legislation,
- creating institutions for monitoring and enforcement,
- taking affirmative action, and
- raising awareness among employers, the media and the wider society.

Policy makers need to make a cost-benefit analysis of measures to promote equality such as affirmative action, childcare and other supports. But the analysis needs to go beyond short term costs, (which are often minimal), to recognise the longer term real benefits for a nation's human capital formation, poverty alleviation goals and international competitiveness. The long term costs of not investing in half of the population are much higher than the short term costs of enhancing women's capabilities.

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¹ For more on this topic, see the Policy Brief on Enterprise Promotion for Women.

² For more on ALMPs, see the Gender Responsive Policy Making section of the brief on Labour Market Institutions and Policies.

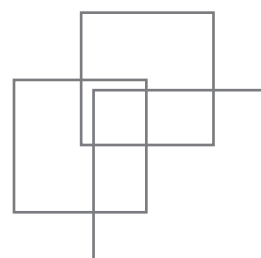
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Enterprise Development

This policy brief begins by highlighting six gender issues that relate to developing enterprises. It then considers three broad themes that might be involved in gender responsive policy making

Key gender issues

This subsection addresses six issues relating to obstacles to women's entrepreneurship development and to the way in which this can block the enormous contributions that women can make to the development process.

Entrepreneurship development is therefore an under-used employment alternative for many young women, and one in which their talents, creativity and innovation could flourish given an enabling policy environment.

1. Entrepreneurship is an under-used potential for many women

Poverty alleviation and pro-poor growth strategies often recognise the importance of promoting enterprise development for both women and men. With the right support, it can offer the opportunity for individual, social and economic empowerment and increase earning power to support themselves and their families.

Women have been increasingly active in small scale enterprises in both the formal and informal economies. Although it is true that not every woman should be encouraged to start an enterprise, it is also true that in many cases women in developing countries do already have income generating activities - particularly those active in the informal economy.

At another level, not enough young women graduates see enterprise development as a viable or appropriate employment option. Many instead, look for work in either the diminishing public sector, or in the private sector where there may be significant discrimination against hiring women.

Entrepreneurship development is an under-used employment alternative for many young women, and one in which their talents, creativity and innovation could flourish given an enabling policy environment.

2. There are many gender constraints that prevent the growth of enterprises

It is important to recognise that women are not all the same; and this is particularly the case for women in business. Women's businesses are rooted in many different economic environments from the survivalist enterprises characteristic of the informal economy through to large scale women-owned businesses in the formal economy.

Many women are concentrated in the informal economy; often at the lower ends that are characterised by low entry requirements, low productivity, intense competition and a low skills base.

In developing countries, many women are concentrated in the informal economy; often at the lower ends that are characterised by low entry requirements, low productivity, intense competition and a low skills base.

Failure rates of these micro-enterprises are high due to many factors including market saturation, lack of access to productive resources, and time poverty linked to reproductive work. With a large part of their day given over to care activities,¹ little time is left for remunerative activities even when the household's survival is dependent on women's income.

Some women have been able to tap into the new opportunities coming from expanded trade and the growing services sectors, but many may be held back by inadequate market information, and lack of capital and business networks.

Gender segregation in skills development sets limits on women's choices and visions. This often means that women start enterprises in traditional 'female activities' where intense competition often threatens the viability of their businesses.

Further along the continuum some women have been able to tap into the new opportunities coming from expanded trade and the growing services sectors, but many may be held back by inadequate market information, and lack of capital and business networks.

Women also have different needs according to the stage of growth and development of their enterprises; for example, many experience particular barriers at the first stage of starting a business.

A common element across the range of women's enterprises is that women and men have different access to resources, skills, markets, networks and labour. It is also the case that women face gender constraints at the household and the institutional level that may prevent their enterprises from growing.

3. Mainstreaming and gender specific action

Policy frameworks on enterprise development tend to reinforce a false dichotomy between mainstreaming and gender specific action. An either/or approach can result in (i) not adequately addressing the particular needs of the most discriminated groups of women entrepreneurs or (ii) failing to integrate women's entrepreneurship development into the mainstream of policy and budget allocation.

Enterprise policy may require both a mainstreaming approach and a gender specific approach depending on the different needs of different groups of women entrepreneurs.

4. Many women have a low skill base and lack literacy

A low skills base and lack of literacy threaten many women's income opportunities. In some countries gender relations are such that there is underinvestment in girls in terms of education and other capability enhancing assets. This in turn results in limited employment and income opportunities in adulthood.

The expendability of girls' education is also seen in the fact that many women's survivalist enterprises rely on child labour and on daughters skipping school in order to take over the non-market activities of their mothers. Child labour is also prevalent in many female dominated enterprises where women struggle to meet production quotas.

5. Many women lack access to resources

The growth potential of enterprises is linked to access to resources such as land, credit, technology, networks, information and markets. Women's limited access to each of these factors place severe limits on the viability of their income activities. This accounts for the concentration of women in the smallest and most precarious enterprises.

6. There are constraints due to lack of infrastructure and a poor business environment

All enterprises are affected negatively by lack of infrastructural support and a poor business environment. But the negative impacts are made worse for women with their additional work burdens and limited sources of public information.

All enterprises are affected negatively by lack of infrastructural support and a poor business environment (which includes complicated registration procedures and high transaction costs). But the negative impacts are made worse for women with their additional work burdens and limited sources of public information.

Women also face limited access to business advisory services and support networks such as employers' organisations and business associations. Often they might not afford the membership costs or the cost of the services provided. In other cases their enterprises are not eligible for registration since they fall under the informal economy. These can provide mentoring support and essential market information including information on supplies, design, marketing and new opportunities.

Although expanded trade may offer new opportunities for enterprise, women may not be able to take advantage of them because of the some the factors mentioned above. Moreover expanded trade may result in an influx of cheap imports that women's enterprises cannot compete with.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

Given this range of gender based constraints it is not surprising that women are often locked into poverty traps in many developing countries and are unable to generate an income which can lift them and their families out of poverty.

However, international policy debates are increasingly recognising women as an untapped resource for pro-poor economic growth and for achieving wide ranging development goals which can contribute to breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next.

There is mounting evidence that efforts to enhance women's economic capabilities can reap major benefits in terms of increased productivity and aggregate output. The attention of policy makers is therefore turning to unleashing the productive potential of women entrepreneurs.

In what follows in this sub-section we consider three key themes that might inform the process of making policy for gender-sensitive enterprise development.

A. Women's entrepreneurship needs appropriate policy support at many levels

With appropriate policy support, entrepreneurship development for women can result in strong growth oriented businesses that can significantly reduce poverty. In many cases **both a mainstreaming strategy and a gender specific strategy** are appropriate and, when combined, can be a major catalyst for pro-poor growth. At the poorest levels of society, where women are engaged in a number of lowly productive income generating activities, an integrated approach is essential. Providing business training or micro credit are not enough in themselves. A range of supportive measures need to be integrated at different policy levels.

In the longer term there is need to change gender relations within the household and the economy so that there is a more equitable distribution of reproductive tasks between men and women.

A strong employment-oriented macro-economic framework is an essential starting point, but **employment on its own may not be enough**, given the large numbers of women who are included in the working poor.

A significant driver for development would be a pro-poor growth strategy based on linking growth and poverty reduction to both gender responsive employment creation and the enhancement of women's capabilities. Within that framework **rethinking the 'economic' and the 'social' will be required**. This is because women are often trapped in the policy gaps of this split because of the clash between their productive and reproductive work.

Awareness raising campaigns and the media can play a role in encouraging women into entrepreneurship and into sectors that were previously dominated by men.

There is need for a significant **reduction in women's time burdens** and an increase in the proportion of their time allocated to income generation. This demands a two pronged approach which (i) gives economic value to women's reproductive work while (ii) also ensuring public expenditure on infrastructure, transport, childcare, utilities and labour saving technologies in households. Such supportive measures can also **reduce the need for children's labour**, particularly of daughters who assist their mothers in non-market activities.

In the longer term there is need to **change gender relations** within the household and the economy so that there is a more equitable distribution of reproductive tasks between men and women - while also ensuring adequate levels of private and public social provisioning.

Efforts also need to be made to **develop women's capabilities**. This would include access to education, literacy, technology and vocational training - particularly for skills that are in high demand in the private sector. Reform of curricula and adapting training delivery to the needs of women are part of a human resource strategy; this can address labour market segmentation and encourage the development of non-traditional female skills.

Awareness raising campaigns and the media can play a role in encouraging women into entrepreneurship and previously male dominated sectors. Legislation and effective enforcement are also key strategies. Equity promoting measures includes:

- eliminating discrimination in employment,
- promotion of enterprise development and cooperatives,
- enhancing access to productive resources including legal rights to inheritance, land and property.

The enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship development also needs measures to **simplify registration procedures and reduce transaction costs**. Providing fiscal incentives, training, market access and other incentives can help generate new enterprise growth for women and contribute towards formalisation of their businesses.

Fiscal policies can be an important support for women entrepreneurs by:

- ensuring individual tax structures for women,
- providing for childcare as tax relief for entrepreneurship, and
- taking into account women's work patterns in insurance and pension schemes.

B. Trade policies need to be analysed for their gender impact

Trade and investment policies need to be reformed and reformulated to avoid producing market distortions in favour of male entrepreneurs and of large scale and foreign owned businesses.

Many trade policies are increasingly taking into account the gender impacts on local producers both in the text of agreements and in the institutional reforms accompanying trade expansion. Such measures can include:

- ensuring equality of opportunity,
- access to technology and high demand skills,
- preferential grants, and
- preferential access to public tendering.

Facilitating market access for women includes a range of strategies such as:

- encouraging women to participate in trade fairs,
- e-commerce programmes,
- development of fair-trade initiatives,
- supporting women producers in design, quality control and marketing strategies, and
- linking women to trade and export networks.

C. Strengthening institutions that support business development for women

At the meso level, there is need for policies to ensure (i) mainstreaming of institutions that support business development, and (ii) targeted interventions towards women. **Business advisory centres** are critical in identifying market niches and supporting enterprise development.

Given the gaps in financial service provision for poor women, **microfinance institutions** can provide collective and individual loans and support savings mobilisation and insurance products. Although access to microfinance is important for many poor women in developing countries this should be grounded in a framework that promotes access to formal financial services in the longer term.

Supporting the organisation and mobilisation of women producers and linking them with existing **business networks** can ensure that (i) they get essential mentoring support from each other, and (ii) they have greater voice and bargaining power within their market areas.

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At the level of the enterprise, poor women have often been able to successfully organise collectively in **cooperatives and other associations** that enable economies of scale in production and meeting production quotas. Collective production can also eliminate upstream and downstream blockages in access to supplies and markets.

Group based savings and loans schemes have also enabled many women to enjoy multiplier effects not available through individual loans.

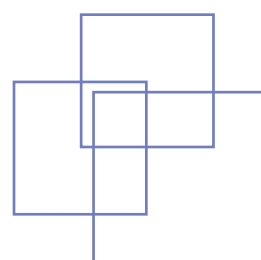
Group based enterprise activities can also:

- facilitate access to technology and skills training,
- enhance design and quality,
- strengthen bargaining power and negotiation with middlemen, and also
- lead to a greater collective voice in community development.

¹ For example (a) looking after children, the elderly, and the sick, (particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS), as well as (b) cooking, water gathering and other activities.

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Access to microfinance services

This policy brief begins by highlighting four gender issues related to microfinance. It then considers three broad themes that might be involved in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

Microfinance covers a range of financial products and services including loans, savings, insurance and money transfer services. Services are of small scale and thus they target low-income clients who are neglected by the formal financial system.

There is evidence that microfinance can address the gaps in financial services for the poor. However, legal and regulatory obstacles often constrain efficient functioning of microfinance. Microfinance has to be delivered in a sustainable way to ensure that beneficiaries can continuously access services.

Microfinance is being actively promoted as a key part of poverty reduction strategies as it is proposed to improve social and economic development. Increasingly men and women are recognised to play a role in achieving the full range of development goals and ensuring that financial services to both sexes has a major impact on increased productivity and growth.

A gender sensitive approach which ensures equal access of men and women to microfinance is necessary. Nevertheless, the benefits for women are numerous and go beyond improved access to credit. It provides a gateway to economic empowerment and consequently improved status within women's households and communities. In addition, there is evidence that women have a higher loan repayment rate and that when women control their income there are substantial benefits for household wellbeing.

In this sub-section four gender issues that relate to microfinance are highlighted.

Microfinance is the provision of financial services of small scale, mainly to poor or low-income beneficiaries covering consumers, producers, savers, investors and innovators and others

More broadly, it refers to a movement that envisions “a world in which as many poor and near-poor households as possible have permanent access to an appropriate range of high quality financial services, including not just credit but also savings, insurance, and fund transfers.”

1. Access and control over resources

Adding a new source of income can change intra-household relationships. It may impact on women and men differently depending on who has control over the resource. Control means whether someone is able to decide about the use of the new income source as well as the returns created by that source. These control patterns are embedded in socio-cultural norms that micro-finance clients are faced with and can be challenged if a formerly excluded group gains access to resources.

Women may be forced to pass over loans to their spouse or other family members who may then use them for consumption or for their own economic interests. Similarly, if invested in a business activity the returns thereof may be used for purposes not intended by the client.

Research by Linda Mayoux has shown that women have been used as fronts for others who are excluded from financial services. In some cases, women have been pressured to pass on loans to male family members who then used these resources for consumption or for their own economic interests over which the woman had little to no control. Nonetheless, the woman remains responsible for repaying the loan. In such scenarios, increasing indebtedness and economic vulnerability can result.

Mayoux' research shows another unintended consequence: in some case, the increase of the woman's income resulted in decreasing contributions of men to household expenditures. Again, the results can vary tremendously depending on cultural background: in some cultures household expenditures are segregated by gender in a way that women control the money for small household items while men for larger items, in others the assets are completely separated and before any purchase a negotiation process takes place.

In addition, it is often the case that men own land and other fixed capital and assets leaving women without access and control over these assets. In such circumstances, women lack collateral required by formal financial institutions and remain excluded from formal finance. Microfinance, using alternative collateral like group guarantees or kitchen utensils, allows excluded groups access to financial services.

2. Microfinance has little effect on labour market segmentation

Often, social norms “dictate” the domains in which women and men work. Driven by these norms, women’s income generation strategies are often concentrated within a narrow range of ‘traditional female’ activities with low productivity, profitability and returns. In addition, women are often more restricted in their mobility and time because of household chores and family care which influence their choice of activity.

Indeed, microfinance can, in some cases, contribute to oversupplying the market in certain market niches by enabling more women to enter already crowded markets for traditional female products and services.

Thus, a risk exists that gender labour market segregation is reproduced. Risks exist not only for beneficiaries of microfinance institutions but also their families. If women engage in new income generating activities, it is often the girl child that replaces her in raising siblings, caring for the elderly or performing household chores.

Women’s income generation strategies are often concentrated within a narrow range of ‘traditional female’ activities with low productivity, profitability and returns.

3. Microfinance may not reach the poorest

Financial services are an important economic resource for income generating activities and consumption smoothing of households independent of their level of income. While this is true also for the poorest, they might need more attention for improving their social and human capital first.

When it comes to accessing financial services, many of the poorest, and among them women, are either excluded or exclude themselves from microfinance institutions because of:

- lack of confidence in their own capacity,
- exclusion by other clients due to selection bias of group mechanisms,
- exclusion by staff due to biased incentive schemes,
- exclusion by design that requires entry fees etc.
- lack of collateral and fixed address.

Women face additional constraints in microfinance as in some cases it can lead to greater gender conflict as women struggle to keep control over the finances, and men withdraw their contributions to household expenditures.¹ However, when the poorest, including women, have access to group-based microfinance it can open opportunities to improve their skills by linking the group structure to other services like training, education, health etc.

Many of the poorest, most disadvantaged women are either excluded or exclude themselves from microfinance programmes.

Micro Finance Institutions need to be conscious of the issues that pertain to the gender-based constraints when designing programmes. When reaching out to the poorest, the following areas are key:

- Stabilising income and consumption
- Increasing savings and assets
- Increasing income generation
- Preventing over-commitment and reducing vulnerability
- Building the trust and confidence²

Gender Responsive Policy Making

Microfinance can be a significant resource to lift people out of poverty. But, although the benefits of microfinance are numerous, and have in recent years gained much publicity, there are issues, nevertheless, which needs to be addressed in order to maximise benefits and minimise negative impacts for both women and men.

In this sub-section three policy elements that need to be addressed if we are to have gender responsive microfinance are highlighted.

4. Microfinance on its own is not enough to break poverty cycles

Microfinance is not a cure-all medicine. In the absence of gender responsive macro economic and employment policies, a sole focus on the micro level can lead to policies that put people who are already vulnerable at even greater risk.

While it is important to create opportunities at the micro level for enhancing women's economic and social wellbeing this needs to be linked to the macro and meso level. The state needs to perform its function to provide public goods and services and redistribute wealth. It needs to promote equal access to financial services as well as to education and skills training to enable women's and men's equal participation in the economy. To make this happen, the state needs to abolish existing inequalities in property right, heritage rights, or rights to open a business, etc.

A. Policy needs to recognise the situations of different groups

An important starting point for microfinance policy is to acknowledge that people live in different individual situations that shape their demand for financial services. Clients – either men or women – are not a homogeneous group. Women can be self-employed, married, pregnant, urban etc. Similarly, men can be categorised by employment status, civil status, income level etc. According to their situation, clients will have different needs and policy has to ensure that a range of products are available to meet these needs.

For example, the very poor might favour savings products that help them stabilise consumption and build the assets necessary for an economic activity. Evidence shows that even the poorest households can save. In particular, women seem to be interested in compulsory savings that enable them to avoid men taking extra income from their activities. Depending on gender separation of household expenses, women might also be more attracted to health insurance or education loans.

In some instances it might be justified to target only women. This kind of positive discrimination can be advocated if structural causes of gender inequality exist and women are a marginalised or neglected group, especially over the long term.³

Based on the individual's needs, more research is needed on i) gender specific constraints to access to financial services and ii) the impact of microfinance on intra-household relations including women and men as well as the girl and boy child. Analysis of these impacts can lead to designing gender sensitive microfinance policies that provide the supporting framework for an enabling environment and lead to more equitable outcomes.

B. Flexible repayment schedules are important

Experience has shown that flexible repayment schedules can reduce pressures on vulnerable clients. If vulnerable clients can reschedule troubled loans, they may be prevented from multiple borrowing and becoming over-indebted. These can be of particular importance to women with respect to their pattern of income.

Interest rates continue to be a topic for debate regarding financial sustainability of microfinance institutions vis-a-vis poverty reduction results. While financial sustainability of financial institutions is a non-negotiable in view of client protection, several institutions have proven that they can successfully reach financial and social results.

Indicators of success for microfinance should not confine themselves to repayment indicators. They can include a range of factors covering empowerment, gender equality and poverty alleviation

A participatory approach and commitment of microfinance institutions is critical to balance financial and social goals that orient on the needs of female and male microfinance clients. In addition, indicators of success should go beyond financial indicators and include factors including empowerment, gender equality and poverty alleviation.⁴

C. Microfinance can be linked to non-financial services and to support on the meso and macro levels

As noted above an integrated approach is essential when addressing the economic needs of the very poor, including women. Credit on its own is not enough nor is business training. A full range of activities is essential to address market saturation and occupational segregation. For women, these activities might include assistance in finding economic opportunities that can be exploited in their communities and that go beyond traditional activities.

Legislative reform and targeted programmes can facilitate access to other essential productive resources such as land, inheritance, technology, markets and information.

The growth and dynamism of enterprises, in particular of women's enterprises, will increase when they are accompanied by:

- mentoring support,
- financial management training,
- skills training,
- business development advice,
- gender awareness training,
- legal literacy,
- childcare
- market access support.

All these elements cannot be incorporated within a single microfinance scheme. But the scheme should link clients effectively to existing services providers and coordinate a gender mainstreaming approach⁵ with such institutions. At the very least microfinance staff must be fully trained in gender mainstreaming and understand the range of gender related constraints and obstacles.

In order to be effective microfinance needs not only to be mainstreamed into related meso level institutions, but also to operate within an overall enabling policy environment for enterprise development. This enabling environment would include:

- simplification of enterprise registration procedures,
- reduction of transaction costs, and
- providing incentives for disadvantaged entrepreneurs including tax reductions, training and market access.

At a broader level the benefits of microfinance can be maximised by developing a framework of macro level commitment to gender equality. This commitment would be applied (i) through a mainstreaming approach to all policies, and (ii) through specific legislation and policies addressing labour market discrimination, human resource development and recognising women's unpaid work.

Legislative reform and targeted programmes can facilitate access to other essential productive resources such as land, inheritance, technology, markets and information.

¹ For a list of Lynda Mayoux' research publications consult the following website:
http://www.lindaswebs.org.uk/Page1_Development/Gender/Genderbib.htm.

² A. Simanowitz: Microfinance for the Poorest: A review of issues and ideas for contribution of Imp-Act, Thematic Report No. 4, University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, Nov. 2001.

³ R. Boros, U. Murray and I. Sisto: (2002): A guide to gender-sensitive microfinance, FAO, Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme, 2002.

⁴ For more information on social performance, visit the Social Performance Resource Centre on the Microfinance Gateway at http://www.microfinance-gateway.com/resource_centers/socialperformance/.

⁵ For a definition of "Gender Mainstreaming", see the Glossary.

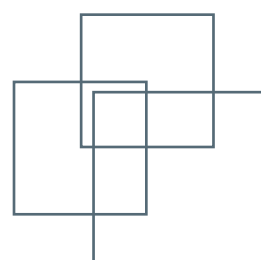
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Value chain development

This policy brief begins by highlighting two main gender themes that relate to VCA. It then considers two broad approaches to ensuring that VCA results in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

A value chain is a chain of activities linked to the production of a good or service. Products pass through all activities of the chain gain value. The chain of activities gives the products more added value than the sum of added values of all activities.

A major feature of globalisation has been the restructuring of production across geographical borders and through complex networks of contracting and sub-contracting. International production has become both geographical and organizationally fragmented while still having coordination across boundaries. In many cases production is based on vertical specialisation in particular parts rather than finished products.

Understanding how value chains work is essential for both policy makers and businesses in developing countries since there are different entry points for market access and upgrading in design, supply, and technological development as well as in enhancing working conditions.

Value Chain Analysis (VCA) has become a powerful tool for understanding the complex relationships and linkages in the production process. VCA has been described by researchers as mapping 'the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception through the different phases of production (involving a combination of physical transformation and the input of various producer services), delivery to final customers and final disposal after use'.¹ It has become an important way of (i) assessing opportunities along the chain, and (ii) understanding where barriers in the production process may block access for firms and small producers in developing countries - and notably for women who may often be concentrated at the bottom of production chains.

VCA has been used for a number of purposes. Originating out of supply chain analysis, VCA has traditionally been used by businesses in their strategic planning to map out their production, marketing and distribution linkages, and to identify entry points for increasing profitability. It has been used in agricultural research to model impacts of trade policies, prices and supplies of agricultural commodities. Others have used it to identify points to upgrade firms within a particular commodity chain.

The value chain approach is a methodology based on the assumption that economic performance and competitiveness of clusters or sectors largely depend on how these clusters or sectors are related to other actors both up and down the value chain. The methodology starts with an analysis of the value chain. On the basis of such an analysis, a number of possible scenarios for upgrading or developing clusters or sectors are identified and subsequently implemented.²

Policy makers have used VCA to develop interventions for particular sectors so as to enhance their competitive edge. For still others VCA has become a powerful tool in monitoring employment relationships and conditions of work along a production chain, and for understanding the types of blockages that limit opportunity and access along the chain. Some multinationals have also been using VCA to upgrade conditions within their production chains, and to monitor enforcement of voluntary codes of conduct as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

In this sub-section we look briefly at two of the main gender issues associated with VCA.

1. Those at the lower end of the chain tend to have the least say in what goes on

From a gender perspective an important characteristic of many value chains is that there are different levels of value, risk and bargaining power in production processes. Power is often concentrated in the top linkages, while the lower ends of the chain are often characterised by the greatest risk and the least value apportioned. The drive to cut production costs is often borne further down the chain, with many poor women producers paying the price for lower consumer prices.

In some production chains, capital is highly mobile and volatile. Seasonality of demand and the pressures of just-in-time production create intense pressures and risks for the suppliers and producers. These factors make for highly competitive conditions among contracting firms, with very little opportunity for promoting good working conditions among subcontractors further down the chain.

Power is often concentrated in the top linkages, while the lower ends of the chain are often characterised by the greatest risk and the least value apportioned.

Employment relationships within the chain are often characterised by a continuum from a small group of formal employment relationships at the top linkages through to a large proportion of informal relationships, whether as subcontractors or subcontracted workers at the bottom linkages.

Depending upon the product, final production may be in the informal economy in developing countries, either in Export Processing Zones or in some of the more precarious and less protected forms of work – for example, an increasing number of people work at home. A large number of these workers are the dependent on subcontractors for a manufacturer or an intermediary and more often, they are women who perform assembly work or other low-skilled tasks on a contract basis. Producers in labour intensive industries like to use homeworkers because it gives them flexibility to respond to changing demand and also reduces their labour and overhead costs. Flexibility is enhanced because employers can hire and lay off homeworkers much more easily than they can factory workers. Using homeworkers also reduces factory overheads by eliminating the need to maintain capacity that will only be used at peak demand periods and by passing on to workers the cost of electricity, machine maintenance, and rent.

2. The complexities of some arrangements make them difficult to regulate

Women are often concentrated in these least protected forms of work. At this end of the value chain employment relationships can become ambiguous and obscured. It often becomes unclear whether some categories of self-employed are in reality disguised wage workers operating in legal limbo; and who are made responsible for their production costs and the risks associated with production.

For example, homeworkers are often not fully independent self employed operators, but are often in a dependent relationship with their supplier or contractor. Although they are paid piece rates their return is often considerably reduced once the production costs that they bear are taken off.

National labour law often struggles to adapt to changing production relationships. And, monitoring and enforcement becomes especially problematic where the complex webs of middlemen make it difficult to allocate final responsibility for working conditions, wages and piece rates.

It often becomes unclear whether some categories of self-employed are in reality disguised wage workers operating in legal limbo.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

In this sub-section we consider how to overcome gender blindness in VCA and also how well focussed VCA can help identify intervention points for promoting Decent Work for women.

A. There is need for analysis as VCA can sometimes be gender blind

Within a Decent Work framework, VCA can be a powerful tool for (i) upgrading industries to compete in international markets, and (ii) improving the position of the currently disadvantaged workers within the production chain.

For policy makers VCA can provide a framework for developing different levels of interventions within pro-poor growth strategies. This might range from increasing the bargaining power of poor producers to enhancing market access to the highest links of the chain. VCA helps to identify many opportunities for economic empowerment.

Gender relations exist in every link of the chain though they may not be readily visible.

However, like any policy tool, VCA can be gender blind. This will happen if it does not fully map all sections of the production chain and disaggregate them by sex; or if it does not evaluate working conditions and different levels of power, particularly at the lower ends of the chains where women are concentrated.

VCA needs to investigate the micro, meso and macro levels of the production chain, including understanding labour market segmentation, and the impact of gender roles in non-market work that limits opportunities for women.

Gender relations exist in every link of the chain though they may not be readily visible. Gender relations need to be analysed in every stage of VCA: from the initial hypothesis to be examined and the stakeholder analysis, through to the preliminary mapping of supply, production, distribution, and consumption, and on to the design of interventions for upgrading and redistribution of values. The quantitative and qualitative analysis which investigates relative values along the chain needs to be informed by gender analysis since this is an important source of blockage and barriers within any section of the chain.

VCA needs to investigate the micro, meso and macro levels of the production chain, including understanding labour market segmentation, and the impact of gender roles in non-market work that limits opportunities for women.

B. VCA can identify intervention points for promoting Decent Work for women

Gender analysis in VCA makes it possible to identify intervention points throughout the chain and thus to promote Decent Work for women in international production.

At the macro level, policy makers using VCA can identify points of vulnerability and discrimination and develop appropriate responses.

For example, VCA may show how women's enterprises can be upgraded through training, design, technology and credit. The need for other supports such as childcare, market advice and business development services may also be identified.

VCA may also show how to reduce vulnerabilities of producers through access to social networks, social provisioning, and infrastructural support such as transport and utilities. These would help to reduce women's time burdens on non-market activities.

Other levels of intervention may be to strengthen the bargaining power of women through increased access to information, markets, marketing support and organisational strategies.

At the macro level, policy makers using VCA can identify points of vulnerability and discrimination and develop appropriate responses in labour legislation, property rights, changes in taxation codes, streamlining of business registration procedures and costs.

Other interventions can be designed to:

- remove restrictions in access to productive resources,
- promote collective bargaining and freedom of association, and
- encourage the mobilisation and representation of vulnerable groups, such as women workers among others, in economic policy making.

An innovative and effective use of VCA has been in regulating complex global chains of production where it has been used to monitor codes of conduct for large companies. It has also proven to be a successful tool for the mobilisation of networks to reduce vulnerability within chains. For example, networks of trade unions, academics, NGOs, organisations of vulnerable producers such as homeworkers, and other civil society stakeholders.

The following box gives the example of the UK's "Ethical Trading Initiative" that has successfully monitored a number of production chains.

The Ethical Trading Initiative: supporting labour codes in global value chains

Using core ILO conventions to develop a base code, the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), a UK based multi stakeholder initiative, supports labour codes within global value chains. In a recent impact assessment of ETI in a number of different supply sites in different sectors across three countries, it was found that ETI company codes were having a positive impact on more 'visible' standards such as child labour and minimum wage but were having less impact on other code principles such as freedom of association, discrimination, and regular employment.

Permanent and regular workers were reaping the benefits of the codes but casual, migrant and third party contract workers were not being reached by the codes. Interviews with suppliers revealed that compliance with codes had become virtually impossible in the face of buying practices (particularly lead times and falling prices). These trends have led to an intensification of the use of casual, migrant and contract labour.

Source:

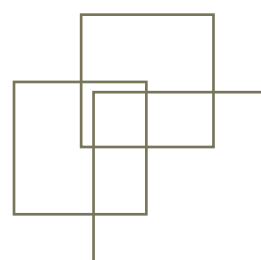
S. Barrientos: Impact Assessment of codes of labour practice among companies in the Ethical Trading Initiative, Paper presented at the ILS Research Conference on Decent Work, Social Policy and Development, ILO, Geneva, 29 Nov - 1 Dec. 2006.

¹ R. Kaplinsky and M. Morris: "A Handbook for Value Chain Research", International Development Research Centre, 2000, as quoted in L. Mayoux: Participatory value chains analysis in Enterprise Impact News, Enterprise Development Impact Assessment Information Service, Issue 19, May 2003.

² For more on value chain, see http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.portal?p_lang=EN&p_prog=S&p_subprog=MO

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Local economic development

This policy brief begins by highlighting three main gender themes that relate to local economic development. It then considers a broad approach to ensuring that local economic development results in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

Local economic development (LED) is a locally owned, participatory development process undertaken within a given territory or local administrative area in partnership with both private and public stakeholders. The LED approach makes use of local resources and competitive advantages with the final objective of stimulating economic activity, creating decent employment and reducing poverty.¹

The purpose of local economic development (LED) is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation.

The LED process enables the design and implementation of a common development strategy by making use of local resources and of any competitive advantage in a global context. (see boxes)

Since the early 1990s the ILO has adopted the LED approach² in its work as it is a practical approach to strengthen the economic capacity of localities not only for employment generation and economic growth but also accompanying measures such as labour standards,

Some strategies within a LED approach include:

- *establishing dialogue between key stakeholders within a community to define a development plan,*
- *setting up institutional mechanisms for implementation,*
- *enhancing access to finance and business development services,*
- *training,*
- *infrastructural development,*
- *developing strategies to attract investment, and*
- *geographical and functional coordination of local resources including clustering approaches.*

social dialogue and social protection. In other words, the LED approach has facilitated the integration of the Decent Work Framework at the local level. Some key problems with the original approach included:

- lack of gender analysis,
- exclusion of the most vulnerable economic sectors within a territory - including informal economy enterprises because they were not perceived as dynamic economic areas but recipients of social policy,
- a lack of emphasis on labour standards.

In this sub-section we note that LED approaches can be gender blind, that communities are rarely as homogenous in practise as they are in theory, and that women may lack representation and voice. When addressing the above-mentioned issues, the LED approach can provide a powerful vehicle of change in communities and traditional social structures.

1. LED can provide an opportunity to facilitate women's empowerment

Like many other policy areas, the initial LED approaches were shaped by the separation of the 'economic' and 'social'. Within a community, LED strategies often targeted only the stronger economic sectors and enterprises. This was because it was assumed (i) that the benefits of increased productivity and profitability would eventually reach the weaker economic segments, or (ii) that the marginalised and the poor would be provided with social assistance.

This separation of economic and social was of particular relevance for women since they are often not seen as being dynamic economic agents within a community and thus were often not specifically targeted within an LED approach.

More recent LED approaches tend to be more aware of men's and women's differential relation with the labour market. As such, obtaining the full participation of women in a LED process will require at times changing deeply entrenched discriminatory attitudes and challenging existing power structures. In other cases, and where women enjoy better access to decision-making structures and resources, the LED approach will serve to strengthen their participation in the private sector, putting greater attention to their needs in terms of business development services, access to micro finance, association-building.

2. Many communities are fractured by divisions which can result in unequal benefits from LED strategies

The gender division of labour within households, communities and the local labour markets is a key starting point for understanding the lack of equality and homogeneity in a community.

Local communities are not homogeneous. Indeed, many communities are fractured by divisions and conflicts -with different actors competing for resources and power.

The gender division of labour within households, communities and the local labour markets is a key starting point for understanding the lack of homogeneity, and hence possible inequality, in a community. Women's non-market roles in households and communities determine their ability to access remunerative jobs. Direct and indirect discrimination limits their paid economic activities. Such discrimination includes:

- limited access to skills and education,
- lack of access to productive resources including credit, markets, information, land and advisory services
- Cultural constraints on mobility.

Failure to analyse social divisions from an early stage can result in excluding many groups, including women, and unintentionally deny them the opportunities to take advantage of new economic initiatives.

3. Women may lack representation and voice at the local level

Social dialogue is a key mechanism of LED. The LED approach is based on the use and valorisation of local assets, of local institutions and on the empowerment of local societies. The strategies put in place therefore respond to the needs and opportunities identified by a diverse group of local stakeholders.

An LED approach may not necessarily be empowering for women if they are surrounded by restrictive social and cultural practices.

Even though LED strategies are based on consensus, this does not imply that the process is without problems and risks. Special attention should be paid to avoid replicating unequal and hierarchical social structures among the group of stakeholders. This holds particularly true for women, who in some societies may have only limited access to channels of information (for example about resources, markets, training, job opportunities and other public information). Gender norms, for example, can limit women's economic choices. Labour market segmentation is evident in many of the entrepreneurial activities that women undertake (these are often concentrated on traditional female skills and activities such as cooking, sewing, hairdressing etc). Market saturation, low productivity and high competitiveness makes for a high failure rate of such enterprises. Guidance is therefore often needed to expand women's visions and options.

The lack of representation and voice is an important issue for women, and other marginalized groups in many communities, since they are often concentrated in unorganised sectors or have varying degrees of exclusion from public spheres.

Indeed, in some communities, an LED approach may not necessarily be empowering for women if they are surrounded by restrictive social and cultural practices. In such situations it may be very difficult to encourage the promotion of equality rights and labour standards (which are established at national level) since there may be few incentives for local actors to change existing gender relations.

The LED approach therefore often struggles with the problem of respecting traditional social structures within a community as defined by local actors, while avoiding social exclusion and the reproduction of existing inequalities.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

In this subsection we first note the need for good gender analysis work at the early stages of LED. We then consider some of the gender issues that are associated with each of the six phases of the LED approach and which would require a gender analysis.

A. The six phase LED approach can help unlock women's productive capacities

It is worth addressing each of the six phases of a typical LED strategy so as to understand the gender issues within each phase.³

A proper gender analysis in the early stages can help avoid problems later

Start up activities and consensus building

When consensus is being built around a LED strategy, special care must be taken to ensure that women and men are given equal opportunities to be directly involved in the core group of local stakeholders that will lead the LED process, and to express their needs and opinions concerning the development of their locality. During this process both men and women should be made aware of women's potential contribution to the LED process and of the discriminatory attitudes that prevent them from participating. In addition, in order to build gender awareness of the local authorities, capacity-building initiatives should target elected representatives and staff, and should include gender sensitization as well as practical tools to enable them to carry out gender analysis and gender budgeting. Representatives of women's groups should be included to convey the concerns and recommendations of their members to the participants of these workshops.

Territorial analysis and institutional mapping

This is the level at which analysis is conducted of the economic sectors and institutions of the territory and it is therefore critical to analyse women's roles in the community.

While many women are 'invisible' given the types of work they are involved in, they are an important economic force in the community, both in terms of the unpaid work they do and the income generating work. Factors to consider include:

- Analysing the time and resources that women devote to non-market activities is important since this is both a valuable (though often unrecognised) economic resource for the community as well as a constraint on their capacity to engage in remunerative work.
 - Analysis of the territory should look at the informal economy as well as the formal, since many women are concentrated in the informal economy.
 - When analysing local institutional capacity (Business Development Services (BDS) providers, microfinance institutions etc) there needs to be an assessment of the extent to which it serves the needs of women.
 - Detailed analysis of the socio-cultural constraints and different forms of direct and indirect discrimination in access to productive resources is also critical.
 - The availability of types of infrastructure which can support women's productive activities (childcare, transport, roads, sanitation, utilities etc) is another important issue to consider. These not only can generate employment within an employment-intensive approach but also can alleviate women's 'time poverty' and help them divert resources to remunerative activities.
- In the case of armed conflict, women may play an important role in making reconciliation possible, but they can also become the victims of violence and social exclusion; these crisis-related aspects have to be duly taken into account during an analysis of the territory and its socio-economic dynamics (further guidance is provided in the policy brief No. 12).

Sensitizing and promoting the local forum

Women's voices need to be heard as stakeholders within the territory and special efforts may be needed to ensure inclusion and gender balance in various forums associated with consensus building. Where there are strong socio-cultural constraints on women it may be necessary to organise separate forums for women to articulate their economic needs and understand their legal rights and entitlements. A separate forum for men and community leaders could help raise awareness of the benefits of women's economic participation in a community.

The local forum⁴ is responsible for the formulation of the LED strategy, the coordination of local resources, and the dissemination of information. It is essential that women's organisations are represented within such a forum and that attempts are made to ensure a gender balance. Terms of reference for forum members can also detail their responsibilities to integrate gender into all the work of the forum.

Design of an LED strategy and action planning

In order to understand the different impacts that the LED strategy may have on women and men, it is important to include gender analysis and planning in the design stage. A combination of mainstreaming and affirmative action is often required in each measure undertaken (these include strengthening the delivery of business support services, enriching the skills base of the community, and tapping new markets).

Information dissemination is also a key activity in this process especially when it reaches out to women who may have only limited access to sources of public information. The design of the strategy should include stimulating activities for the organisation of women in 'invisible' sectors; this is not only to ensure that they are able to participate in dialogue related to the implementation of the strategy, but also so that they are better organised to participate in and reap the benefits from economic initiatives.

The LED strategy can significantly contribute to reducing labour market segmentation by firstly, eliminating blockages in access to productive resources, and secondly encouraging women into new economic activities through incentives and new opportunities for skills upgrading.

Creating an enabling policy environment for enterprises helps the whole community and women in particular. Also, microfinance institutions can help tap into women's productive potential especially when they are accompanied by mainstreamed and affirmative action support from business services.

Measures to reduce women's domestic burdens (for example through (i) the provision of childcare, (ii) investment in labour saving technologies in the home, and (iii) infrastructural support) can be accompanied by a longer term strategy to reshape gender relations so as to ensure a more equitable distribution of non-market tasks.

Although the focus of the strategy is local, it is important to establish links to wider macro goals such as PRSPs, MDGs and national development strategies. Many of these place emphasis on promoting gender equality. It is worth noting that much of the theorising and planning related to the promotion of equality and other core labour standards is often done at the national level; so efforts need to be made to translate these into local practices within the LED strategy.

Implementation of the strategy

As with the local forum, the representation of women and other disadvantaged groups at all levels of the implementation structure needs to be addressed. Gender balance in implementation structures can be ensured through quotas or separate election of male and female committee members. This will ensure that women are not only beneficiaries of the strategies but also active partners in their implementation.

Proper communication of the LED process to the community is crucial to build acceptance and to help ensure public acceptance of the forum's decisions. Special measures to communicate with women should be taken when necessary (i.e. when literacy levels are low among women and in societies which restrict women's participation in the public arena).

It should be remembered that a key objective of the LED process is to use, promote and strengthen existing local implementation structures, and to work with and through them. From a gender perspective, this will imply mainstreaming gender concerns and issues not only within the LED process but also including them in the agenda of local strategic planning and policy making.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of gender sensitive indicators can help to take account of the effects of the LED strategy on women; it can also help in developing new interventions that may be necessary to address obstacles to women's participation and other unintended consequences. Implementers may need to continuously strengthen gender mainstreaming initiatives.

Integrating gender analysis within a typical six phase LED strategy as described above can help unlock women's productive capacities and can have large multiplier effects in terms of increased productivity and growth in a community.

¹ http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.Portal?p_prog=L
a useful site for getting an overview of LED

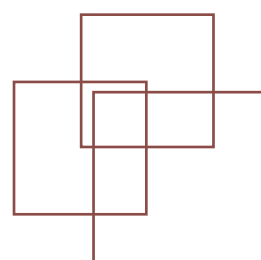
² <http://learning.itcilo.org/entdev/led/>

³ ILO: Gender equality and Gender mainstreaming through local economic development strategies. LED Programme and Bureau of Gender Equality. Forthcoming

⁴ Local Economic Forum: A coordinating mechanism set up to achieve the streamlining and improvement of local economic service delivery.

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Good workplace practices

This policy brief begins by noting that workplace practices affect women and men differently. It goes on to note that good workplace practice calls for policy responses at the national level as well as the enterprise level.

Key gender issues

Poor working conditions and pay and lack of mobility are concerns for many women in the world of work. At the same time the gender division of labour in many societies is such that they also struggle to combine family responsibilities with the need to earn an income. Workplace practices affect both these issues – women's labour force participation and the struggle to balance work and family life (productive and reproductive work).

Women's participation in the labour force has increased in the majority of regions of the world. But more jobs does not necessarily mean better jobs.

1. Workplace practices can have both positive and negative effects on women

Good workplace practices link the rights-based and efficiency-based arguments for equality. This is because although it is important to address various forms of gender disadvantage and discrimination as a matter of labour rights, it also makes very good economic sense to do so.

Some workplaces do not have policies and practices in place to promote equality of opportunity and to reduce various types of direct and indirect discrimination (see box). This can have a significantly negative affect on women's employment opportunities.

Issues that negatively affect women in the workplace include:

- wage gaps,
- sexual harassment,
- lack of maternity provision,
- lack of opportunities for training and promotion,
- glass ceilings impeding the upward mobility of women,
- unfair recruitment policies,
- lack of flexibility in managing working time with family life,
- lack of organisation and representation of workers, and
- the use of temporary and casual contracts to avoid paying the entitlements of more permanent work.

Other workplaces actively promote equality and family friendly policies. These have been proven to harness business benefits such as:

- less absenteeism
- greater productivity,
- greater loyalty by staff and customers,
- improved company image in the community,
- less staff turnover,
- greater innovation, and
- the increased ability of companies to hire the very best quality staff.

These benefits affect all companies whether large or small. While the costs of equality measures may be higher for smaller companies, there may be opportunities within the context of collective bargaining to negotiate for sharing of costs. An enabling environment at the national policy level can assist smaller companies to develop equality policies that can benefit themselves and their workers.

Women may find it difficult to even enter paid employment. This is because some employers believe that hiring women involves greater costs, or that women are more likely to leave employment because of family responsibilities. For women who are employed, employers may be reluctant to upgrade their skills and develop their potentials because of similar beliefs.

Part time work provides opportunities for some women to juggle their working and family lives - but this limits their opportunities for promotion and career development. This may be linked to women being under-represented in senior positions because of stereotyped assumptions, interrupted work histories, and few opportunities to upgrade their skills and qualifications.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

There is a wide range of ways of ensuring good workplace practices that benefit women, their employers and the economy as a whole. They exist at the national level, including institutional mechanisms. They also pertain to the enterprise level.

A. Promoting good workplace practices: the role of the national policy and regulatory framework

At the national level, policy and legislation can set the overall framework to provide equality of opportunity for women and men in the world of work. Two core ILO Conventions¹ provide guidance on developing effective strategies to address discrimination and promote equal pay not just in legislation but also in policies and programmes.

A major means of promoting equality of opportunity is **labour codes** which are a powerful basis for promoting equality of opportunity in the work place. Many labour law reforms need to be inclusive in that they provide equal treatment between women and men workers but also to include equal treatment of informal economy workers under the law and especially agricultural workers.

Another means of promoting equality at work is through **Equal employment opportunity policies and anti discrimination legislation**. This is a commitment to engage in employment practices and procedures that do not discriminate and that provide equality between individuals from different groups or of either sex. These can also include **Equal pay acts** which provide the legal basis for equal pay for work which is broadly similar. They also include **Affirmative positive action** is based on the recognition that the prohibition of discrimination alone may not be sufficient to level playing field in some cases. In such cases different treatment of a disadvantaged group maybe necessary until the causes justifying the adoption of these measures cease to exist. Another relevant area to legislation is **maternity protection and parental leave**.

The range of issues which can be promoted at the national level to promote equal opportunities in workplace practices is broad. The following table offers a sample:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Within the framework of wages and benefits, measures need to be put in place to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · equal pay for work of equal value, · job classification, · hours of work, · part-time work, · flexible working time, · pensions, · healthcare, · overtime benefits and · dependent allowances. | <p>In order to address non-discrimination and ensure equitable outcomes for women, strategies can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · affirmative action, · the right to organise collectively, · equal opportunities in hiring, training and promotion, and · addressing sexual harassment. | <p>Helping to develop a balance in work and family life for workers is vital for women in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · non-discrimination against pregnant and nursing mothers, · maternity leave, · job security, · paternity leave, · parental leave, · family leave, and · childcare facilities. |
|--|--|---|

Health and safety measures are also an important component of promoting good workplace practices. Working conditions and the working environment are sources of health hazards for both men and women. Health hazards of women workers have been traditionally under-estimated because occupational safety and health standards and exposure hazardous substances are usually focused on male populations and laboratory tests.² As such a gender responsive health and safety at work legislation that avoids a gender bias through a focus on industry and which pays attention to agricultural workers, informal economy workers such as home workers is essential.

One final key area is the rights of **non-permanent workers**, a large proportion of whom are women. Casual work, temporary, seasonal, contract and part-time work may disguise permanent work but with non-permanent status and few rights and benefits. Arranging for greater protection in these types of work categories, and upgrading their conditions and status, can significantly improve the position of women in workplaces.

B. Promoting good workplace practices: the institutional mechanisms

Effective monitoring through **labour inspection** is critical for ensuring that standards are met and laws are implemented. An efficient labour inspection system is able to deal with antidiscrimination on daily basis. Labour inspectors can also play a role in preventing discrimination by providing information and advice to employers.³

Equal Opportunity or anti discrimination Commissions exist in a variety of powers, ranging from assisting individuals in taking actions to implementing action plans and recommending legal reforms. Some of these can be focused such as the pay equity commissions. Most of these commissions attempt to promote **Job evaluation methods free from gender bias**. This is an effective tool which requires comparing the value of two jobs that differ in content. A number of methodologies have been developed to this end.⁴

Child care policies are critical for enhancing female labour force participation. Childcare needs to be both available and affordable.

Governments can also provide **tax incentives** to promote equality measures and support smaller companies to comply with legislation. **Public procurement policies** can also be used to complement national laws on equality in employment. Procurement policies can secure equal opportunities in employment and equal pay for equal work.⁵

C. Promoting good workplace practices: the role of employers

There are three areas which pertain to the enterprise levels. These are employers responsibilities, work place policies, and complaints procedures.

Employers can invest in their staff as a key business resource. Putting effective good work place practices in place is actually good for business for the following reasons: It builds the morale and productivity of employees, it provides the employer with the possibility of getting the best people for the job, it minimises complaints and work disruptions. Nevertheless, employers are required to create a work place free of discrimination and harassment. These responsibilities are set out within a range of state laws in any given country.

At the enterprise level there are issues that affect women and men differently and employers, in some cases, can adjust to this. For example, **Working hours** have a disproportionate affect on women, as they are still the main care providers. In many countries around the world working hours makes it difficult to juggle work and family. Employers can measure outcomes of women and men workers rather than the hours worked. In this **flexible patterns of work** can be applied in some cases where it is beneficial for enterprises. This includes **part time work** and tele-working. Nevertheless, such patterns need not be associated with low status jobs and limited job benefits.

In terms of work place policies, employers may develop **voluntary codes of conduct**. Many large companies have done this as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Codes of conduct are designed to motivate all members of large organisations particularly owners, managerial staff and workers representatives in applying international labour standards to respect and guarantee workers' rights and improve the organization's performance. Often these codes of conduct are based on ensuring equality of opportunity, non-discrimination principles and the facilitation of work for workers with family responsibilities. These are usually developed through consultation and sometimes can be facilitated by equality commissions or other regulatory bodies.

Employers in many countries around the world have also developed **Guidelines or check lists for workplace environment**. These guidelines are usually designed to assist employers to meet their legal and moral obligations to obtain equality in the work place. They offer practical and detailed advice on how to establish and implement good workplace practices.

In terms of complaints procedures, in addition to developing internal guidelines and strategies, **collective bargaining agreements** are a key means of ensuring that equality provisions are established at the workplace - and they can even expand on existing laws by making fuller provision for women. Social partners have a key role to play in developing national policies that promote fair and equitable workplaces.

Key Requirements for family friendly to be gender equality friendly

- *Recognizing men's caring role: Offering paternity leave and making parental leave, after the initial maternity leave, available to both men and women and non-transferable.*
- *Making "normal" work more family-compatible: Flexible arrangements with regard to working schedules, rest periods and holidays; provision of annual leave, short leave for emergencies; (good) part time, flexitime, time banking, tele-working, reduction of daily hours of work and of overtime.*
- *Making family responsibilities more compatible with work: Availability of affordable and good-quality childcare for preschoolers and young children.*
- *Advocating for more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.*

Source:

ILO: *Equality at work tackling the challenges*. International labour Conference, 96th Session 2007. Report I (B). p. 78

¹ C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 and C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958. For a list of all the International Labour Standards, see <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/>.

² Safe Work: Information note on women workers and gender issues in occupational safety and health <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safe-work/gender/womenwk.htm>

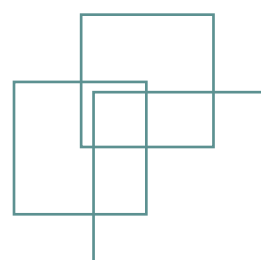
³ ILO: *Equality at work tackling the challenges*. International labour Conference, 96th Session 2007. Report I (B). p. 58

⁴ Ibid, p. 74

⁵ Ibid, p. 64

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Labour market institutions and policies

This policy brief begins by noting women's often inequitable position in the labour force in relation to men and the considerable potential they have for promoting economic development. The brief goes on to highlight some of the roles that appropriate passive and active labour market policies might play in overcoming the inequities and achieving the potentials.

Key gender issues

Labour market policies mediate between supply (jobseekers) and demand (jobs offered) in the labour market and their intervention can take several forms. There are policies that contribute directly to matching workers to jobs and jobs to workers (public and private employment services, job search assistance, prospecting and registering vacancies, profiling, providing labour market information), or enhancing workers' skills and capacities (e.g. training and retraining), reducing labour supply (e.g. early retirement, supporting education), creating jobs (public works, enterprise creation and self-employment) or changing the structure of employment in favour of disadvantaged groups (e.g. employment subsidies for target groups). Labour market institutions include a wide variety of institutional arrangements and which differs across countries. They are: labour administration, training systems, wage-setting boards, social security systems tripartite councils/committees, dispute resolution mechanisms, training institutions and so on.

This sub-section highlights some women's labour force patterns and how these often put women at a disadvantage. The section outlines arguments for designing more gender sensitive labour market policies and institutions.

Women's participation rates in the labour force are determined by social, cultural and economic structures linked to gender relations within a particular society.

1. Women's labour force patterns

A striking feature of labour markets over the last several decades is the increasing participation rate of women. The total number of women in the global labour market in 2006 was some 1.2 billion (either employed or unemployed). This trend is linked to a range of factors (see box).

However, women's labour force patterns are not the same across countries. Participation rates are determined by social, cultural and economic structures linked to gender relations within a particular society.

Factors in women's increasing participation in the workforce include:

- lower birth-rates,
- delays in marriage and childrearing,
- rising female education levels,
- changes in social attitudes,
- growing demand for female labour, and
- the inability of some households to survive without women's paid income.

Some regions such as the European Union may have rates as high as 80 per cent while other countries in the Middle East and North Africa may have rates as low as 37 per cent. In some countries women are restricted to their homes while, in others, women may be increasingly involved in non-traditional work.

In many developing countries where there are dual labour markets, women are concentrated in the informal economy - and often at the lower end, where skills, productivity, income and protection are the lowest.

In many developed countries there are more women than men in part-time, temporary and casual work. This is in order to balance their work and family responsibilities; but this does not offer the wage and non-wage benefits of permanent work.

2. Women in the labour market are often in a position of disadvantage and discrimination

The position of women in the labour market in general is characterised by disadvantage and discrimination. Labour market segmentation is common in all labour markets no matter the level of income of the country. The economic opportunities and choices of women are often limited by both horizontal and vertical segregation; this is a result of:

- the gender division of labour and social norms,
- discrimination in access to education, training, recruitment and promotion, and
- levels of wage inequality.

Labour market segmentation is common in all labour markets no matter the level of income of the country.

Some other points about disadvantage and discrimination include:

- Women are often concentrated in female dominated occupations with very little opportunity to move upward within the sector or into new occupations. Such segregation is linked to labour market rigidity and economic inefficiency.
- Official unemployment rates are often higher for women than men. This often disguises (a) the high levels of discouraged workers who are women, and (b) the labour market inactivity of women due to irregular participation rates linked to child rearing and reproductive work.
- Evidence from a number of countries has shown that women are highly vulnerable in economic downturns. A built in 'male breadwinner bias' often means that women are the first to lose employment in the formal economy during a financial crisis.
- Even when women work, this is not a guarantee for getting out of poverty as is shown by the fact that a significant proportion of the working poor are women.
- Women also cut across some of the most discriminated groups within the labour market such as youth, older workers and the disabled - this adds further layers of economic vulnerability and disadvantage linked to gender.
- In many labour surplus countries, women are even less likely to find work than men and are now making up the growing numbers of unskilled workers migrating for temporary work.

These are some of the existing structural inequalities in the labour market position of women. But there are also new issues emerging that are linked to globalization, competitiveness, changing structures of production and technological innovation. Labour forces around the world are struggling to adjust to new demands and there is an increasing push towards labour market flexibility that

may be at the expense of security and of core labour standards. In some cases women's labour market participation has increased with labour market flexibility. This is due to the deterioration of the quality of jobs and the increase in sub-contracting and hence more workers on an informal work arrangements.

3. Women's contribution to economic development needs to be better recognised

Clearly, despite increasing numbers of economically active women, position and status of women in the labour market in general is weak. This is problematic not only for women themselves but for the efficient functioning of the economy.

Improving how the labour market works, particularly by enhancing gender equality, is a critical element in reducing poverty, enhancing human capital, ensuring efficient labour allocation and innovation, and encouraging growth and development.

The position and status of women in the labour market in general is weak. This is problematic not only for women themselves but for the efficient functioning of the economy.

Labour market policies are a means by which policymakers can level out imbalances in the supply and demand for labour, and ensure equitable outcomes.

In order to design interventions to counter economic inefficiency, policymakers analyse supply side factors and relate these to labour market demand. Labour market policies can be powerful tools to change the economic position of a country.

Labour market policies which provide appropriate supports to encourage women's labour force participation can have the immediate effect of increasing productivity and output while at the same time, through its reduced fertility effects, profoundly influence the quality of future human capital formation and the size of the future working population.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

Labour market policies cannot ignore the gender dimensions; they have to take specific account of the supply of and demand for women workers -- both because women are economic agents whose human resource potentials should be fully tapped for achieving the goals of efficiency and growth; and because they continue to be victims of discrimination or have become more vulnerable or marginalized by labour market processes, meaning that the goals of social justice and equity are not being met.

This sub-section considers some of the ways in which labour market policies and institutions can strengthen women's position in the labour market.

Policy makers have a wide-ranging set of passive and active labour market policies that can be used to improve labour market functioning and contribute towards greater gender equality.

A. Gender sensitive Labour market policies

Labour market policies should address as much as possible the causes of gender discrimination and not merely to compensate for them; but at the same time, they have to be seen in relation to the **enabling or disabling environment** in which they are supposed to operate. Comprehensive strategies for providing full, productive and freely chosen employment for women would have labour market policies as an integral component but would also have to **include legislative reforms, advocacy and sensitization, macro economic, budgetary and financial policies, institution building, group mobilization and organization**, etc.

Referring specifically to the design and implementation of labour market policies and programmes, the challenge would be to distinguish where a gender mainstreaming approach would be appropriate or where gender specific approach is needed. The approach in addressing these gender differentials should be one that balances economic efficiency considerations with social justice and equity and that promotes gender de-segregation and opportunities for men and women to work together in the labour market.

In particular **employment policies and/or strategies** have a significant role in promoting gender equality at work. Article One in ILO's convention 122 (1964) on Employment Policy states that "With a view to stimulating economic growth and development, raising levels of living, meeting manpower requirements and overcoming unemployment and under-employment, each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment. As such countries develop the plans it is important to undertake a gender analysis of the various actions and ensure that there are gender sensitive indicators of the outcomes.

Labour market policies can play a vital role in ensuring equity, social justice and diversity in the labour market as well as eliminating discrimination.

Gender mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy (EES)

The European Employment strategy has adopted a dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific measures. Since the beginning of the Strategy, Member States have made considerable efforts to strengthen gender equality policy in the employment field. These efforts include actions to increase the employment rate of women, to decrease women's unemployment rate, to tackle the segregation of the labour market and to close the gender pay gap.

A central role is given to policies of reconciliation between work and family life for both women and men, especially through the provision of services for children and other dependants. Also important is the reintegration of women returning to the labour market after an absence. Moreover, there has been a reinforced commitment to integrate the gender equality objective in all employment policies. It is important to mention that the guidelines on strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men did not only address Member States, but also aimed at involving social partners to reduce the gender gaps.

Source:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>

B. The role of passive labour market policies in promoting equality at work

Policy makers have a wide-ranging set of passive and active labour market policies that can be used to improve labour market functioning and contribute towards greater gender equality.

Passive labor market policies include unemployment insurance, income support, and a legislative framework that should strike a balance between economic efficiency and labor protection. An **appropriate legislative framework** will include provisions on issues such as minimum age, maximum hours and overtime, labor contracts, industrial relations, special protection appropriate for new mothers, and antidiscrimination provisions to protect women and minorities. **International labor standards**, when ratified, are also part of the legislative framework.

An important area for passive labour market policies is **social protection** especially as the majority of women are in the informal economy. The heterogeneity of the informal economy does not allow for proposing uniform solutions for extending social coverage, nevertheless, there are basic elements which need to be pursued such as:

- Expanding access to basic health care through diversification of the national system that consist of taxed financed components, social and private insurance and community-based components;
- A system of family benefits that facilitate the school attendance of children;
- A system of targeted basic cash transfer programmes that provide some degree of income security for people in active age groups, i.e. social assistance associated with public work programmes and similar labour market policies (e.g. cash for work programmes).

All of the above will benefit disadvantaged women and men who are in the informal economy.

C. The role of active labour market policies in promoting equality at work

ALMP are critical for ensuring the protection of workers from the negative impacts of structural change, globalization and technological advances, and also for helping them to adjust to changing labour market demands.

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) include:

- efforts to generate employment through employment intensive public works schemes,
- hiring subsidies,
- the promotion of SMEs and self-employment,
- vocational training and retraining,
- skills and employability development programmes.

ALMP also includes the efficient functioning of institutions and job-search services to link labour supply and demand. ALMP are critical for ensuring the protection of workers from the negative impacts of structural change, globalization and technological advances, and also for helping them to adjust to changing labour market demands.

Policies need to be informed by accurate and disaggregated data by sex to understand existing differences as well as differential impacts of policies on women and men.

Some other features of ALMP include:

- ALMP are important for women because of their high rates of working poverty, unemployment and levels of inactivity linked to their reproductive work. Given these factors it is important that, when designing ALMPs, policy makers **focus on the working age of the population** rather than purely on unemployment rates.
- A significant effect on breaking down labour market segmentation for women can be managed through ALMP that deal with:
 - opportunities for training in high demand skills,
 - literacy training,
 - incentives for non-traditional occupations,
 - job placement,
 - work experience,
 - enterprise promotion
 - measures to reduce time allocations in domestic tasks.
- In developing countries, a focus on the **informal economy** and women who are amongst the working poor will enable ALMP to ensure an equitable gender balance among beneficiaries. An essential element for the success of any ALMP is to assist in **reducing domestic barriers** to women's participation. ALMPs must address transport issues, childcare and household responsibilities in all training programmes and job placement.
- In the design of policies, analysis must be made of structural inequalities and the range of labour market failures concerning women. Policies need to be informed by accurate and **disaggregated data by sex** to understand existing differences as well as differential impacts of policies on women and men. This is particularly the case when targeting disadvantage groups such as youth and the disabled since women make up a large proportion of the most vulnerable in these groups.

- Although all workers irrespective of sex are affected by structural change, ALMPs also need to target female dominated sectors and trades that may be in decline. Enabling women to learn new skills and **adapt to changing technological demands** can give countries a competitive edge in attracting future Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), since this is often attracted to women's labour.
 - ALMPs in labour surplus countries need to address high levels of discrimination and disadvantage of women, many of whom are forced to seek temporary work overseas. To policy makers in out-migration countries, **migration** may appear to be a solution to unemployment and the low skills base of women. But it is an unstable course for an economy in the longer term. **Employment creation** is essential (i) to ensure that migration is a genuine choice for women and, (ii) to avoid the high social costs related to temporary migration.
 - Some countries have used **bridging programmes** targeted specifically on women who have been out of the labour market for long periods and which help to improve their employability skills.
 - Other countries have been increasingly **promoting self-employment and SME development** for women through creating a favourable policy environment and enhancing their access to credit, land, property, technology, markets, information and networks.
 - **Pre-employment and on-the-job training and retraining in vocational and technical skills** which includes setting targets for girls in various training programmes especially in skills that are stereotypically for males; special measures to facilitate the entry of workers with family responsibilities; flexibility in the design, delivery of training courses including location and time.
 - The role of **employment services** is crucial in linking women to the labour market. There are a variety of activities which can promote job equity. This is through providing counseling and mentoring to women job seekers to encourage them to break labour market segmentation and enter new fields of work and through tackling employers discriminatory hiring practices. In both cases, capacity and efficiency of staff involved in a crucial element.
 - Another important ALMP tool is **labour intensive public works schemes** related to infrastructural development. These can often be less costly than capital intensive schemes and, at the same time, can add valuable infrastructure to poor communities. The gender dimensions of these schemes are discussed in the box that follows.
- ¹ Labour market flexibility includes deregulating labor markets to increase flexibility in working time; hiring and firing, and making wages and labor costs more responsive to market pressures; weakening employment security provisions and unemployment benefit systems; and introduce active labor market policies – training programs, job-finding assistance to workers, subsidies to employers to hire the long-term unemployed, and special programs for youths leaving school. For a full review of this debate see S. Cazes: Flexicurity in Europe: A short note on moving forward. Paper presented at the High level Tripartite dialogue on the European Social Model in the context of globalization. International Training Centre of the ILO Turin Italy 1-3 July 2008.
- ² Supply side factors include the demographics of sex, age, fertility, urban/rural, migration, and active/inactive populations.
- ³ Labour market demand is influenced by such things as sectoral growth, wages, private sector promotion, public investment, formal/informal employment, expanded trade and FDI.
- ⁴ Core labour standards include such things as (a) freedom of association and collective bargaining, (b) elimination of forced and child labour, and (c) elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.
- ⁵ or more on this topic, see Policy Brief on Employment Intensity of Growth.

Gender and Employment Guarantee Schemes

Public employment schemes are an important way of addressing poverty and stimulating effective demand through the guarantee of minimum levels of work for the poor. The participation rate of women in employment guarantee schemes around the world varies due to a number of factors. In the same way as their participation in the labour market is contingent on gender based constraints such as the unpaid reproductive work, this is also the case with guarantee schemes. Employment schemes are often linked to the building of physical infrastructures such as roads, schools and community buildings, often heavy physical work which may be perceived as ‘men’s work. Such perceptions are untenable in many contexts since, even where there are cultural restrictions on women, they are often involved in hard physical labour in many developing countries. At the same time however, there needs to be sensitivity to the physicality of work, particularly given women’s poor health status in some contexts.

Factors which contribute to the successful participation of women in works schemes include daily transport, particularly to remote work sites, and the provision of childcare. This may pose some additional costs but these are often minimal since older women can be hired to care for young children.

The wage characteristics of guarantee schemes also often determine women’s participation rates. Establishing a wage rate that encourages the poor and women to participate is often difficult since issues of wage gaps and discrimination can come into play. Nevertheless if wages are set too high, then men and the non-poor may dominate participation. Some women may prefer piece rates since it offers flexibility with their household tasks, while other women many prefer a daily wage if the work is particularly arduous and hence their piece rates would be low. Payment in food also attracts many women given their responsibilities for food provision in households.

Another determining factor of women’s participation is eligibility criteria. When guarantee schemes are targeted to the heads of households or where only one member of the household may participate, women may be excluded or self excluded. Where schemes have directly targeted women, they have had the most success, and where community based organisations play a role in selection, women often have a higher chance of being selected.

Source:

G. Swamy: Gender Dimensions of Public Employment Schemes, World Bank, Gender and Development Group, Washington, D.C., Draft, 2003.

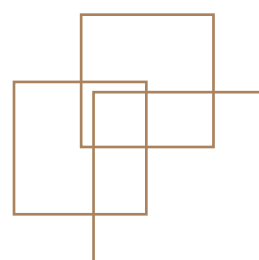
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Crisis Response and Reconstruction

This policy brief begins by highlighting three gender issues that relate crisis response and reconstruction. It then considers four broad themes that might be involved in gender responsive policy making.

Key gender issues

In this subsection four key issues relating to challenges of post-crisis employment are considered.

Decent work matters in crisis.

It is a powerful, tested rope that pulls people and societies out of crises and sets them on a sustainable development path. Decent and stable jobs offer crisis-affected people not only income, but also freedom, security, dignity, self-esteem, hope, and a stake in the reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities.

1. Crises impact women and men differently

The social changes brought about by war -including displacement- disrupts normal gender roles and can profoundly affect women's and men's livelihoods strategies in the aftermath. Armed conflict may mean that an individual's ability to make a living is compromised, but it can also have the effect of forcing people to learn new skills. Evidence from the field shows that, while conflict can allow women to take on work that was formerly considered to be exclusively reserved for men, men generally show less flexibility in post-conflict settings about accepting work that is usually done by women. As a result of the war, demographic patterns and household structures change. The adult male population decreases as a result of army mobilization, migration, disability or death. The number of women heads of households increases, and women become sole providers and caregivers.

Crises affect men and women, boys and girls differently given the different roles society ascribes to them. As such, gender is a complex yet key dimension in effective crisis resolution, recovery and development.

2. Gender issues related to access and control over resources

The most striking effect of disasters on women is the loss of economic resources and deterioration of economic status. Women on the margins of survival, living under the poverty line before, during, and after natural disasters, are especially vulnerable.

Self-employed women and home-workers lose vital workspace, supplies and other productive assets (e.g. land, seeds, livestock, and tools) in disasters. Due to such losses, micro-scale, undercapitalized, insecure enterprises often fail, among them many run by women and women's collectives.

Earning an income to replace lost crops, livestock or business equipment (recapitalization) is essential for women and men alike in post-natural disaster situations. However, when public transportation systems shut down and day care centres and hospitals close, women's dependent care responsibilities make them less able to work, less mobile than men and less able to migrate outside the impacted area to earn income.

All the above implies far-reaching and long-lasting consequences on the food security and the survival capacity of the whole household.

Crises impact women and men differently. A comprehensive gender analysis that carefully assesses roles, relations, needs and priorities should be carried out to ensure that gender-aware employment and reintegration programmes are set up.

Households are not always unitary associations in which resources are distributed equally. Investigations of famine (a slow onset disaster) reveal that women's bargaining position in the household weakens as their assets are depleted, their income-earning options become inferior, and they are less mobile, leaving men in crisis in a stronger position. The household entitlements may be contested.

In post-conflict settings, traditionally, men are normally the primary beneficiaries when it comes to land allocation, credit and formal employment schemes. The re-engagement of male ex-combatants into civilian life is seen as an important stabilizing process, but the focus on male ex-combatants often has a distorting effect on the household and the community as a whole. Women's work to sustain their families can be severely disrupted when men are favoured in economic reconstruction.¹ Focus on ex-combatants also affects men who are not former combatants. Men's disaffection not only affects their well being, it may also increase sexual and domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, especially when women have become wage earners and assert their right to control their income.²

Women slower to recover from Hurricane Mitch

In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, women who typically have smaller plots and less access to extension services and credit were “dropping out” of agricultural production. In the worst case, the topsoil was completely washed away and replaced with sand and rocks from mudslides. In these instances, women, who are less mobile than men and more socially and culturally constrained to remain in their place of origin, may suffer greater negative consequences than men, who appear to be out-migrating from those areas which suffered the most topsoil damage.

3. Crises can change gender roles and offer a window of opportunity to question gender stereotypes

Pre-crisis unequal gender roles often change in crises, as women and men can step out of their socially ascribed roles in their coping strategies. Engaging in construction, mechanical and other “male” occupations, creating small enterprises, contributing to reconstruction discussions, acquiring more education while externally displaced, and having no traditional “male” and “female” roles in the absence of men, empower women in terms of economic independence, ability as family providers, decision-making and social position. Positive changes in gender roles need and deserve support. For this to actually continue and thrive, women need sufficient and truly empowering recovery assistance.

4. Women usually play a significant role in crisis and recovery periods

Women have been found to be more proactive than men about mitigating hazardous conditions and preparing households; they take more concrete steps in the household to protect possessions in the event of earthquake aftershocks; they volunteer more in neighbourhood and school education and preparedness programs; and are more active disaster communicators who assess and share hazard information through their extended social networks. Finally, women in good health and not limited by family responsibilities are generally involved in physically protecting homes and businesses, for example, constructing dikes and sandbagging in a flood.

Women are also generally successful in organising themselves efficiently into groups and able to make contributions. Indeed despite cultural barriers to women in some contexts, they are active staff and volunteers in essential relief programs and they are important to female survivors. Others respond professionally, for instance working extended hours to help battered women impacted both by flood and domestic violence. There is ample evidence that women also participate in debris removal, clean up, and household repairs to help restore homes and neighbourhoods. They are also involved in search and rescue activities and in providing emergency assistance to the injured; several cases have been reported of women intervening well before official male responders arrive.

Women can be the engines of recovery. They display resilience and resourcefulness in extreme conditions, self reliance and willingness for proactive community work. They are society's last safety net.

Case studies often find women actively involved in organizing community celebrations of survival which increase community solidarity. Women also interpret disasters culturally, using quilting, poetry and music to help people and communities make sense of catastrophe. In some cases they have proven to be able to mobilize and involve the communities for equitable access to post-disaster construction jobs, housing equity issues, and, more generally, equitable access to resources, aid and opportunities. Women's jobs in education, health, and social service fields provide them ample opportunities for disaster response. Mental health counsellors, anti-violence crisis workers, primary school teachers, and personal care workers in nursing homes or halfway homes for the disabled, among others, are drawn directly into waged disaster response and recovery work.

Gender Responsive Policy Making

Addressing gender inequalities and supporting measures that empower women in a crisis or post crisis situation require a long term combined effort. Employment and re-integration related policies should systematically be preceded by a livelihood recovery opportunities assessment for women and support their efforts to build new social relationships and governance systems to promote women's rights.

This sub-section considers five key themes that might inform the process of making policy for gender-sensitive crisis response and reconstruction.³

Communities should be supported in reducing work and care-giving burdens for households where possible, so that women and men have equal opportunities to earn a living through self-employment or waged labour, in the local private or public sector. In addition, women should be supported to market skills for informal sector activities, such as selling food, or domestic labour at least in the short term.

A. Gender sensitive Labour market policies

When supporting more sustainable employment opportunities at the local level, gender equality can be promoted by consistently advocating for well-being at the household level, rather than focusing on individual gains. This means for instance that communities should be supported in reducing work and care-giving burdens for households where possible, so that women and men have equal opportunities to earn a living through self-employment or waged labour, in the local private or public sector. This can be supported through setting up informal or formal day-care centres for children and assistance for the elderly and those disabled by war. Support is especially needed for female headed households, and for those burdened with the care for disabled family members. In rural settings, programmes should make special efforts to reach women, particularly to assist them with land access, new information and agricultural support services, tools and seeds. Support mechanisms will also allow women to participate in training and take up employment activities outside the home. Experience shows formalized training provided through micro-credit schemes provides opportunities for women to move into formal employment.

Temporary jobs or cash-for-work programmes should deliver quick peace dividend to targeted high risk youth, men and women, and those with urgent needs or running a high risk of exploitation or abuse.

Encouraging women to participate in these types of programmes can expand their marketable non-traditional skills for later employment opportunities.

This can be promoted through practical measures such as child-care, safe mobility to and from the worksite, etc. Since these programmes provide temporary employment only, women's commitment to provide for families should be protected by avoiding a situation where men feel threatened or excluded. Also, a return to pre-conflict stereotypes about 'men's work' and 'women's work' should be avoided. From UN experience in Rwanda and Eritrea, women acquired construction skills and built childcare centres, giving many temporary employments. In the process, they gained skills to work in the construction sector, traditionally seen as a male-dominated sector. Liberian women refugees in Ghana and Ivory Coast acquired new skills in rehabilitation of schools, pit latrines, wells and other community service building. However, in Eritrea the formal sector employment did not recognize or absorb the newly acquired skills of women who during the conflict served as mechanics, barefoot doctors, etc.

B. Include women and men equally in reconstruction planning

It is critical to include women and men equally in reconstruction planning, implementing and monitoring bodies and discussions, to ensure that their strategic interests are represented and familiarize them and society with their full participation in decision-making.

It is also important to ensure the gender implications of crises are fully considered and reflected in planning and programming. The use of gender analysis, gender disaggregated statistics, and community-based participatory methodologies can help highlight the distinct impacts of crisis on women and men. It can also serve to point out past imbalances and disparities that should be corrected. Planners themselves should be trained in gender issues and analysis, especially with reference to the crisis-affected environment.

C. Break down occupational segregation between men and women

Women might have transcended occupational gender segregation out of necessity during a situation of crisis. This needs to be capitalized on after any crisis. For example, skill development programmes should not revert to traditional female skills. Any interventions should reflect opportunities in the emerging labour market in order to build on the changes that have occurred. Support should also target the increasing number of women working at home or in the informal economy in times of crises, often invisible.

In short, skills training and related programmes should be designed to ensure women have access to work opportunities at all levels, including supervisory and managerial roles, and enable women to access decent work outside their traditional activities. Non-traditional job training may be needed to enable women's participation in immediate reconstruction and recovery.

Supporting the positive changes in gender roles that might have occurred also involves the participation of women in labour-intensive programmes. Women can and should contribute to the reconstruction of community facilities and homes destroyed during a conflict or by natural disasters, as full participants in decision-making, planning and implementation. Flexible working hours, child-care facilities and similar services facilitate women's participation.

Employment-intensive works are a powerful means to create emergency jobs and inject cash into the economy in the aftermath of a crisis and gender sensitive policies are essential. In post conflict Liberia, road rehabilitation was a major priority. This has created 21 thousand short term jobs which were based on equal remuneration of both women and men. Some women were also promoted to management positions.

Employment-intensive works are a powerful means to create emergency jobs and inject cash into the economy in the aftermath of a crisis. A rapid analysis of the gender-based impact of the crisis within the social and economic life of a community is a pre-condition to design meaningful and gender-sensitive policies for emergency job creation. Such an analysis should primarily consider any possible redistributions of productive and reproductive roles between men and women that may occur as a consequence of a crisis. In some cases, such as in post-conflict settings, many households may be headed by women, who have to continue their usual care giving function and intensify their involvement in productive activities. Changes may happen abruptly, which requires the introduction of emergency measures and the creation of a significant amount of jobs which can fit women's profile.

D. Promote social dialogue and build on the work of existing women's groups

It is essential to promote wide social dialogue in order to restore confidence in institutions, facilitate dialogue between different factions in society (particularly in the case of armed conflict), reorient the social dynamics towards constructive purposes, and reinforce a sense of ownership and social inclusion of the different groups and communities affected by crises. It should involve a wide range of civil society bodies, including at the grassroots level. This process will have to include women. This helps ensure that reconstruction and recovery also reflect women's strategic interests, and helps familiarize them and society with their full participation in decision-making.

Efforts should also be made to build on the work of existing women's groups which were active during the crisis. It is crucial to strengthen the work of women's organizations and help bring their voices in the formulation of national policies. Partnership can extend to diverse groups: working women's associations, environmental groups, grassroots advocacy organizations, female-dominated NGOs, and other community-based women's groups.

E. Adopt an inclusive community based approach

Any employment generation response to a crisis should adopt an inclusive community-based approach. Segregating women and men has often the effect of reinforcing assumptions of women's vulnerability and victimization, as well as creating gender conflict and competition.

Community based responses should enlarge opportunities to include women in local economic revival, especially the increased number of them who are heads of households. Guidance in small- and micro-enterprises and cooperative development, micro-finance and other business support services are important to help provide sustainable income generation for women. Investment is also needed in projects promoting human and social recovery, and increasing jobs for women in education, health, social, and human service fields.

¹ UN country experience in Eritrea, for example, shows that women lost their jobs or regressed to lower paying jobs in an environment with few job opportunities and slow economic recovery in which the employment of male ex-combatants was prioritized by donors.

² This section draws on UNDP field experience and a significant literature on gender and employment, including Bannon and Correia, *The Other Half of Gender* (World Bank, 2005); and the UN Integrated DDR Standards (<http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/>). For a full definition of gender-based violence, see CEDAW Committee General Recommendation 19 on Violence Against Women at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom19>.

³ T. Tutnjivic: *Gender in Crisis Response: A guide to the gender-poverty-employment link*, ILO, Geneva, 2003.

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