

*Promoting Gender Equality in the Labor Market for More
Inclusive Growth*

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**Promoting Gender Equality through
Employment Strategies:
ILO Perspective**

Naoko Otobe

ILO, Geneva





Topics of Discussion

- **Key challenges in advancing gender equality in the world of work**
- **ILO's perspective on gender equality in the world of work**
- **Gender dimensions of key employment policy areas (including macroeconomic policy and employment)**

Key challenges in advancing gender equality in the world of work

Trends in labour markets: gender gaps

- **Narrowing gender gaps:** women's participation in wage employment has increased over the last 20 years.
- But **wage gaps** persist with varying degrees.
- **Sex-segregation** in labour market also persists.
- Women tend to be **more under- and unemployed** than men. **Youth** – both sexes are equally affected by higher unemployment rates than adults.
- Women are more concentrated in jobs with **lower pay, security and prestige.**

- Women also grossly **under-represented** in executive positions.
- While much progress made, in many countries, women are **less educated** than men on average, or in mismatch of skills in labour market.
- Women also continue to bear more of **double burden of productive and reproductive work**— main providers of **Care**.

- Women's access to productive assets, resources and services **more limited** than for men.
- Persistent social institution dictating role of women and men at home, in the community and in the world of work.
- As a consequence, women are over-represented among the **poor**, and often in the **informal economy**.

Gender and working poverty

- Of 3 billion working population, estimated 455.8 million were in working poverty of living with less than US\$1.25/day (14.8% in 2011).
- Estimated 944.5 million workers were below working poverty line of US\$2/day (29.5%).
- Poverty has a woman's face: A large majority of the world's poor are women.
- Working poverty in developing regions: East Asia (7.8%), South East Asia + Pacific (11.1%), South Asia (35.9%), and Sub-Saharan Africa (38.1%)*.

* Global employment trends (ILO, Geneva, 2012)

- **Addressing gender dimensions in poverty alleviation --- critical.**
- **Laissez-faire approach to economic growth and employment creation will not automatically translate into poverty reduction of discriminated groups.**

ILO's perspectives on gender equality in the world of work

- **Rights-based rationale (human rights approach) & economic efficiency argument.**

- **Gender mainstreaming:**

“ *Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men, of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. **The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality**” (emphasis added). (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997)*

ILO's instruments of poverty alleviation: Gender dimensions

- Integrated approach: **Productive employment**, social protection, legal and policy reforms, and organization building.
- **Decent Work Agenda** covers these.

Gender equality and the world of work

- **Gender equality at the heart of Decent Work Agenda--- cross cutting priority**
- **Without gender equality, no Decent Work could be achieved**
- **Employment and LM policies are formulated for creating conducive environment for both women's & men's employment promotion.**
- **C. 122 – Employment Policy also includes non-discrimination/gender equality.**

- Grounds of discrimination under **Discrimination Convention** (Employment and Occupation) (no. 111): **race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, and social origin.**
- Women can face **double/triple discrimination**: sex and other grounds.

Employment Strategies: Gender dimensions

- **Various types of intervention for poverty reduction:**
 - ◆ Pro-poor and pro-employment macro-policies
 - ◆ Distribution of capital (fiscal policies):
 - ★ Social transfers and
 - ★ government-funded employment promotion schemes
 - ◆ Enhancing human capital
 - ◆ Promoting employment in rural and informal economies (+ transition to formality)
 - ◆ Increasing labour market access and reducing labour market vulnerability
 - ◆ Organization of the poor: voice and representation

1. Integrating gender concerns into macroeconomic policies

- **“Pro-poor” growth** = high employment content: **Gender dimensions** are crucial.
- Past neoliberal macro-policies implemented in poor developing countries – subject to much criticism.
- **Level of export** – pro-cyclical impact on women’s employment. Policies favouring exports – positive impact on women’s employment.
- But **trade liberalization** in general, involving import substitution – **the net engendered impacts could vary**, depending on where men/women are (due to gender segregation of LM).

- **Monetary policies:** frequently reducing inflation has a negative impact on employment growth – more negative impact on women's employment.
- **Fiscal policies:** bigger government spending – pro-employment growth, exp. - for public investment in social sector development (more women are employed).
- **Tax cuts and maintaining/enhancing public subsidies** for key basic foods and production inputs (such as fertilizer and fuel), are also useful.
- **Gender responsive budgeting** also useful.

2. Sectoral policies

- Given **gender segregation** of labour markets - gender differentiated impacts of sectoral development strategy.
 - ◆ Mining and heavy manufacturing sectors – more male dominated;
 - ◆ Labour intensive light manufacturing – more female dominated.
 - ◆ Social and service sectors – more female dominated.
- When women's unemployment rates are high, it would be worth considering developing some social and service sectors + skills development.

3. Investing in girls and women for enhancing employability

- Girls and young women should be targeted for education and skills development – ensure equitable/equal opportunities.
- Re-training of the retrenched workers, especially women in distress, also important – as part of active labour market policies.

4. Supporting women's access to credit and entrepreneurship development

- Governments can include a special window for providing **credits** to small and micro-enterprises (SMEs), and for business training for those who are retrenched, unemployed, or inactive, especially women.

5. Promoting employment intensive public investments: a gender-responsive approach

- Public investment can be used to create jobs, including for women:

Examples:

- ◆ India - National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) (specific provisions for women).
- ◆ Republic of Korea – post Asian financial crisis – increased women’s share among beneficiaries by relaxing the eligibility and including such sectors as social services and greening, etc.

6. Integrating gender concerns into labour market policies

- **Active labour market measures**
 - ◆ Public employment services
 - ◆ Training schemes
 - ◆ Employment subsidies
 - **More positive impacts on women** of such measures.
- **Passive labour market measures**
 - ◆ Unemployment Insurance
 - ◆ Social transfers/benefits
 - Timely payment of adequate **severance pay** – also important, in times of crisis.

7. Promoting women's equal access to social protection

- **Equitable expansion** of social protection for both women and men – important (women tend to work less hours and years in life, less accumulated benefits).
- In the aftermath of economic crisis, special measures to expand social protection - **automatic stabilizer and productive factor** for future.
- Targeting the **most vulnerable** – also important (poor FHHs, elderly, female migrant workers).

- We need both « **targeted approach** » and « **gender main-streaming** » across the board.
- An integrated approach for realizing Decent Work:
 - ◆ National institutions – capacity building of ILO tripartite partners
 - ◆ National level policies: integrating gender concerns into LM, economic and social policies - linking/complementing these policies.
 - ◆ Programmes and projects

Conclusions

- Women experience more Decent Work deficits and poverty than men in the world.
- Integrating normative principles (equal rights) in development and poverty alleviation: right thing to do.
- Need to pay attention to nexus between economic growth, employment trends and poverty reduction, especially **gender dimensions**.
- Important to keep track on “**engendered**” impact of macroeconomic policies on employment and LM, and unpaid work.

Conclusions

- **Urgent response/measures** needed in the post economic crisis to help the poor (especially women) in developing countries.
- Gender mainstreaming in the work of the ILO/ADB could potentially have a long term positive impact on gender equality and poverty eradication.
- An integrated approach can be tested in the framework of “Operationalizing” **Decent Work** at the national level – through **One UN approach**.



*Thank you for your
attention!!*

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