



FAO-ILO-IFAD

CALL FOR PAPERS

Technical Expert Workshop on:

“Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty”

To be held in Rome, Italy during three days in the week of 30 March – 3 April 2009 (exact dates to be confirmed). Deadline for abstracts: 15 October 2008. Abstract submissions should be sent electronically to the attention of Eve Crowley (info@fao-ilo.org).

The Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development of the United Nations announce a call for papers addressing “*Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty*” to be presented at a three-day technical expert workshop in March-April 2009.

Rural employment is currently the subject of considerable discussion in international policy circles particularly in the context of the global food crisis, the drive to reduce poverty through the Millennium Development Goals and concerns about climate change impacts.¹ It is increasingly recognized that rural employment is central to achieving equitable growth and poverty reduction but offers different opportunities for, participation in and conditions of employment to men and women. This technical expert meeting can thus provide important follow up to these recent international policy discussions in terms of analyzing trends and issues, identifying knowledge gaps, and compiling innovative gender sensitive policy measures and good practices to strengthen rural labour markets.

Rural Employment may be defined as any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed by rural people by force or for remuneration, profit, social or family gain, in cash or kind, including under a contract of hire, written or oral, expressed or implied, and without regard to whether the service is performed on a self-directed, part-time, full-time or casual basis. This definition includes farmers, fishers, forest users, pastoralists, those performing domestic work, and other self-employed rural peoples; temporary, casual, piece-rate, own-account, migrant, and home-based workers (vegetable market vendors, day labourers, artisans etc.) in the informal sector; part or full time contract workers, farmers, sharecroppers, and tenants; small, medium and large farm, food processing, and off farm enterprises; and both unionized and unorganized

¹ Most recently, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Conclusions for promoting rural employment for poverty reduction. This was based on a tripartite discussion and vote by governments, employers’ organizations and workers’ organizations at the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference, 28 May - 13 June 2008. This new blueprint contains recommendations for governments, employers’ organizations and workers’ organizations for promoting gender sensitive rural employment policies.

workers. It also recognizes the global context and rural to urban continuum within which employment occurs, and that many workers and households obtain revenues from both rural and urban (small and large cities) areas and from multiple locations and countries.

Gender inequalities refer to disparities in opportunities in life between men and women, including participation in the public sphere. Gender equity denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. Gender equality is also affected by discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation and on the basis of marital status, which are likely to affect men and women differently. These concepts have different implications in different regions because they are based on different cultural constructions.

A number of broad framing conditions, community and individual characteristics, and socio-cultural factors, all of which evolve over time, define rural people's capacities to access and benefit from productive resources and related employment opportunities. Gender is a key determinant of access to resources, the intra-household division of labour, the value given to different types of work, and bargaining power, and thus a key determinant also of decent work outcomes. Although gender inequality is highly variable between regions and sectors, there is evidence that, globally, women's benefits from rural employment, including both self employment and wage employment, are less than men's in all decent work pillars (employment creation/enterprise development, social protection, standards and rights at work, governance and social dialogue). Furthermore, women's reproductive and care responsibilities, which are crucial to the maintenance of the household, family, kin group and community, not only limit the time and energy they can give to economic activities but are often not recognized or accorded economic value. The transfer of many of women's care burdens onto girls/daughters also tends to perpetuate cycles of impoverishment and gender disadvantage.

Gender inequalities are widespread within rural labour markets where multiple forms of employment are common, and where women and men may work in different combinations of employment, for example, as self-employed farmers, temporary waged workers, employers or unpaid family workers. Some positive trends in rural labour markets reveal gradual improvements in employment conditions (e.g. a shift from contributing family worker to waged and employer status) for both men and women in all regions over the last decade. Yet wage employment is increasingly based on casual, temporary and seasonal work, with the migratory workforces at particular disadvantage. As the joint ILO, FAO, IUF Report on Agricultural workers and their contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development (2007) states, "Waged agricultural workers - who account for 20- 40% of the total agricultural workforce - remain largely invisible to policy - and decision-makers in governments, agricultural and rural development agencies, intergovernmental organizations, science and research institutions, agricultural banks and credit institutions as well as to many civil society organizations and groups". Gender inequalities are also reflected in workers' representation, especially in organized labour institutions such as trade unions and traditional forms of collective action where women's representation is often weak.

Significant gender, age and ethnic differences in employment by sector suggest the need for targeted policies but, in view of the lack of reliable gender-disaggregated rural employment data in most developing countries, it is unclear which sectors should be targeted and which approaches and policies used to best reduce gender inequalities. These are likely to vary by country or region, on a case by case basis, and include policy initiatives, legal reforms and social, economic and employment programmes that reduce gender inequalities in access to productive resources (e.g. land, credit, technology, information, business advisory services, and education/skills), enhancing self-esteem and incomes as own-account workers or employers in agriculture or rural enterprises. Public policies and legislation can have an impact on customary socio-cultural practices, beliefs

and values that generally underlie gender inequalities, including in participation in public life, and there is therefore a need to document also good practices and innovative policy solutions in these areas.

Rural producer and workers' organizations can play a vital role in negotiating fairer and safer conditions of employment, including more remunerative and fair product prices and wages, and promoting gender equity and decent employment for men and women. Yet the prevailing vertical and horizontal institutional arrangements (i.e. producer organizations, cooperatives, workers' unions, out growers' schemes) are generally controlled and managed by men. There is thus an urgent need for effective empowerment of women among the membership and leadership positions in these organizations to ensure rural women have greater voice and decision making power. Analysing differences in women's and men's position in sub-contracting and supermarket chains is also critical in identifying opportunities to increase their bargaining power and improve labour standards within value chains for specific agricultural products.

A key underlying theme of this workshop is the differentiated paths out of poverty. Women comprise a significant proportion of the working poor in rural areas, but, importantly they can also be instrumental in breaking poverty cycles. Empirical evidence demonstrates that increasing women's incomes, productivity and empowerment is one of the most powerful tools in the development process. Impacts can be seen on all the multiple dimensions of poverty, in ways that are not as evident from only increasing men's income: from children's education, mortality, health and nutritional status through to impacts on disease control, income levels, human capital development, productivity, and economic growth. Thus, investing in equality in agriculture is not only important for considerations of social justice but also because it makes good economic sense.

To this end, FAO, ILO, and IFAD invite papers to address any of the following issues:

- **Analysis of gender inequalities as a factor influencing employment constraints and opportunities in rural areas of developing countries** (breadth and depth of importance relative to socio-economic status, age, ethnic identity, geographic location/distance from markets/urban centres, education, language, production/employment systems, contractual conditions, etc.)
- **Globalization and trends in rural employment** (demographic, economic, social, rights-based, regional, capacities/skills, responses including migration; and trends in rural investment)
- **Measures to strengthen rural labour markets** (including wage workers, especially casual, temporary, seasonal, migrant worker/employment and labour hired through contractors and subcontractors, and elimination of child labour. Also measures to strengthen income and wage generation where farmers are both wage workers and self employed farmers during the course of the year)
- **Gender differences in rural occupations and off- and on-farm incomes** (incomes, access to land and other productive resources, intra-household division of labour, women's reproductive and care responsibilities, technologies, enterprises, occupational safety and health, conditions of work, migration experience; also identify those areas in which men suffer from greater disadvantages; interrelations between gender, migration and agricultural and non-agricultural employment)
- **Implications and impacts of different types of institutional arrangements** (both vertical and horizontal) (i.e. producer organizations, cooperatives, workers' unions, outgrowers' schemes, sub-contracting, supermarket chains; demonstrated strategies and good practices for strengthening women's participation and effective leadership within and empowerment through these arrangements; mapping value chains to analyse gender disadvantage; gender differences in employment patterns within agricultural export production)

- **Best practices and policy options** that have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing gender inequalities in/through employment, including means of application, adoption, upscaling, replication, enforcement; supportive legal and regulatory frameworks that complement/strengthen women's position in customary law; creating an enabling policy environment to promote women's entrepreneurship; policies, laws and programmes that improve gender equity in access to productive resources and public services that affect employment opportunities, including social programmes that influence socio-cultural beliefs, values and practices that determine customary access to resources; innovative measures to both quantify women's and men's unpaid work in rural areas and find ways to alleviate unpaid care work burdens in the household; rural infrastructural development which can especially alleviate reproductive work burdens; the comparative advantages/roles of different social actors, i.e. workers, employers, NGOs/CSOs, traditional leaders, social movements, religious bodies/organizations, governments, UN agencies.

The papers should be evidence based and can be theoretical, empirical or policy oriented, and can approach the issues from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Authors may wish to structure the discussion under each of the issues according to the classification given in the World Development Report 2008, i.e. gender differences in rural employment in agricultural-based economies, in commercial agriculture (contract farming and agribusiness) and in transforming economies. The remit of the workshop is global: experiences and issues from any part of the world are welcome.

Results of the workshop

The workshop is designed to:

- generate new thinking in rural employment and identify elements of a longer term research agenda to fill critical gaps in knowledge on these issues, through rigorous analysis and sound data;
- identify policy implications and recommendations for action by different stakeholders to promote more and better jobs for rural men and women, including gender equitable policies and actions to promote decent rural employment within FAO's, ILO's and IFAD's rural development, rural employment and poverty alleviation strategies and for meeting MDG1; and
- create the basis for a network of concerned policy makers, researchers and practitioners committed to promoting gender equitable rural employment in mutually reinforcing ways, including building on/reinforcing attention to gender equitable rural employment in relevant existing networks.

Outcomes. Based on the comments received and quality of submissions, the papers presented at the workshop would be revised/finalized and considered for publication as an edited electronic series accessible on the FAO-ILO and IFAD websites, as well as for secondary FAO publications in the form of fact sheets, policy briefs, or web summaries, and joint publications with ILO and IFAD. The papers presented at the workshop may also be considered as a possible input for a future publication of the *State of Food and Agriculture* or other FAO publication.

Logistical arrangements

The workshop is being organized the Economic and Social Development Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.. The organizers invite submissions of completed papers or substantial abstracts (2-4 pages or 1000-2000 words)

addressing the themes of the workshop (see selection criteria below). Abstract submissions should be sent electronically to the attention of Eve Crowley (info@fao-ilo.org). The target length for final papers will be 20-30 pages. The language of the workshop will be English, but papers may be submitted in English, French or Spanish along with an English abstract. One author from each paper selected will be invited to present the paper at a technical expert workshop to be held in Rome in March/April 2009. Participants are expected to bear the costs of participation, although funding is being explored to support travel expenses of qualified participants, particularly from developing countries, on a case by case basis.

Selection Criteria

1. paper is an original, unpublished submission
2. relevance of paper topic to the conference theme
3. paper presents findings from original data analysis (papers that analyze comparative data sets drawn from different countries or different times are particularly welcome)
4. paper fills a critical gap in knowledge or policy, a fundamental problem of significant scale, or an emerging issue (such as soaring food prices, emergence of supermarkets, trends towards temporary employment and emerging labour arrangements along value chains, responses to reduced labour opportunities in agriculture, feminization of agriculture, climate change, labour migration and markets etc.) or presents a robust analytical model
5. evidence base is reliable and of high quality
6. findings relevant to a low-income developing country policy agenda are made explicit, including practical suggestions to inform either policy, behavioural, or regulatory/institutional changes.
7. paper incorporates a gender and development rather than a women in development focus, giving due attention to age factors
8. paper is written in English, French or Spanish, with an English abstract

The **time frame** for the abstracts, papers and technical expert workshop is as follows:

October 15, 2008	submission deadline for abstracts
November 6, 2008	decision on selection communicated to authors
February 1, 2009	submission deadline for full drafts of selected papers
March 30-April 3, 2009	workshop held in Rome, Italy (the workshop will last three days - precise dates to be confirmed)

Please note that this is not a general invitation to attend. It is a call to submit paper proposals for a small technical workshop. Attendance is restricted to one author per paper selected for the workshop.