

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
United Nations Development Programme



IDEP



GENDER AND ECONOMIC POLICY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE—AFRICA



INTRODUCTION

Having introduced unpaid care work as a significant component of time and resource allocation in economic activity, this module introduces a gender analysis of employment and labour markets in an African context, including labour supply issues and the segmented structure of employment, to create a fuller picture of time and resource allocation. Definitions of informal employment are stressed, given its importance in most African countries. The module includes an employment mapping exercise and discusses employment policies from a gender perspective.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To consolidate participants' understanding of the relation between unpaid care work, labour and employment.
2. To enable participants to recognize the gender aspects of labour-force participation decisions.
3. To facilitate participants' ability to evaluate the diversity of Africa's employment structure.
4. To impart to participants a fuller understanding of specific policy issues facing women's employment in Africa.

OUTLINE

- I. What is employment? What is labour?
 - A. The SNA dividing line revisited.
 - B. Non-employment labour.
 - C. Two crucial institutions: labour markets and households.
- II. Labour supply
 - A. Labour force participation decisions.
 - B. Education, skills and experience.
- III. The structure of employment in African countries.
 - A. Agricultural employment.
 - B. Formal and informal employment.
 - C. Employment status.
- IV. Women and employment in Africa.
 - A. Labour force segmentation.
 - B. Discrimination and earnings inequalities.

DURATION

One day.

EXERCISE 1

Objective: to enable participants to discuss employment and gender segregation

Divide the participants into pairs. Write the following headings on flipchart paper: (1) jobs/employment—primarily women; (2) jobs/employment—primarily men; (3) jobs/employment—women and men about equal. Tell the participants to focus, for the time being, on paid employment, including both employees who work for a wage and the self-employed. Ask the pairs to come up with as many jobs (or specific types of employment) as they can under each of the three headings, based on the realities in their own countries.

After 15 minutes, tell the groups to stop working. Ask for each list and write up the jobs on the flipchart paper under the appropriate heading. If a particular job comes up more than once, place a check mark next to it each time it occurs.

After the lists are complete, discuss the results. Are there clear patterns in the paid employment opportunities for females and males? Which jobs are generally considered to be the better jobs? Do these jobs fall predominantly into the employment opportunities for females or males? Can women freely move from a traditionally female job to a typically male job?

When discussing these questions, the facilitator should note similarities and differences across countries.

I. WHAT IS EMPLOYMENT? WHAT IS LABOUR?

Objective: to consolidate participants' understanding of the relation between unpaid care work, labour and employment

A. THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (SNA) DIVIDING LINE REVISITED

- a) Module 3 on unpaid care work introduced the distinction between employment and unpaid care work. Here we examine the definition of employment more closely.
- In common usage a person is said to be employed when they are engaged in some form of paid labour. At times, employment is interpreted more narrowly as only referring to paid employees, excluding the self-employed.
 - As Module 3 demonstrated, both are inexact definitions of employment. The SNA defines individuals as employed—whether they are paid or not—when they supply labour contributing to an economic activity the output of which is counted in the SNA.
 - Thus some unpaid labour can be considered as employment. By this logic, self-employment, paid or unpaid, is employment when it contributes to economic activity that is counted in the SNA. A person working without pay in a family business is considered to be employed. People engaged in subsistence agriculture are also employed because they contribute to economic activity. Unpaid apprentices are still defined as employed. As Module 3 noted, technically speaking the collection of fuel and water should also be regarded as employment, but very few countries do this (e.g., Tanzania).

- Unpaid labour in the household or community not counted in the SNA is not considered to be employment. Module 3 defined this as unpaid care work.
 - As stressed in Module 3 the performance of unpaid care work is a precondition of any employment. So the terms and conditions governing the performance of unpaid care work structure an individual's ability to undertake employment as defined in the SNA.
- b) Labour force surveys, introduced in Module 4 on gender, data and indices, typically—and correctly, in International Labour Organization (ILO) terms—use the SNA dividing line to define the economically active and employed populations.
- c) In many African countries women disproportionately work in unpaid forms of employment as workers contributing to subsistence agriculture and family businesses. Self-employment is also common among women in many African countries. This represents a form of income-earning employment, and although earnings do not come in the form of wages, the employment is considered paid in the SNA.
- d) However, as discussed in Module 3, women spend a disproportionate amount of their time in unpaid care work, which in the SNA is defined as being among non-employment activities.

B. NON-EMPLOYMENT LABOUR

- a) There is an important distinction between standard definitions of employment and labour.
- Labour is supplied in all forms of employment.
 - However, labour is also supplied in unpaid care work. Therefore, labour is not the same as employment.
 - Both types of labour—employment and unpaid care work—are productive in the sense that, by transforming inputs of goods and services into outputs of goods and services, they add value to goods and services of economic and social use to the individual, household and community. As suggested in Module 3, in

principle it is possible to estimate the monetary equivalent of this value added.

C. TWO CRUCIAL INSTITUTIONS: LABOUR MARKETS AND HOUSEHOLDS

- a) As stressed in Module 3, households, as institutions, are by and large not free of gender concerns. The distribution of resources within households, the division of labour in household and non-household activities, decisions concerning individual and household consumption choices, and the use of individual and household assets are all influenced by gender dynamics between females and males in the household, which in turn are functions of unequal power between women and men.
- b) The labour markets where women and men seek employment are also, as institutions, affected by gender. Labour markets may be segmented between those jobs that are typically women's jobs and those that are typically men's jobs, as discussed in Exercise 1. This means that women and men have unequal access to employment opportunities. Hostile practices in workplaces, including sexual harassment, further disadvantage women relative to men in labour markets. These disadvantages both affect and are affected by inequalities in wages and earnings, of which there is ample evidence.
- c) Households and labour markets intersect in two ways:
 - In terms of resource allocation decisions, the division of non-employment labour between women and men within the household influences employment opportunities. As mentioned in previous modules, the performance of unpaid care work within the household, predominantly by women, structures both women's and men's abilities to take advantage of employment opportunities. Ingrid Palmer makes the point that, in effect, unpaid care work by women subsidizes men's employment because it provides a public good that has positive externalities for the economy as a whole.

- In terms of resource allocation outcomes, individual earnings from employment may or may not be pooled across the individuals within a household. When pooled within the household, even if only to a limited extent, overall earnings are often more important than individual earnings in shaping the allocation of unpaid care work and thus labour market and employment decisions; therefore household pooling decisions shape labour market operations. When not pooled, individual earnings still shape the allocation of unpaid care work and labour market and employment decisions, and thus, labour market operations. Household pooling decisions are themselves functions of gender dynamics between females and males in the household, which, in turn, are functions of unequal power between women and men.
 - In both instances, then, the structure of the household and its dynamics shape the operation of labour markets.
- d) However, much economic analysis and policy-making considers employment at the individual level, without accounting for household dynamics. This presents a highly misleading picture of labour market dynamics; as suggested in Module 3, it is crucial to account for the structure of the household and its dynamics when devising labour market and employment policies, if the aim is to raise living standards and reduce poverty.
- e) Labour market and employment policies cannot assume a limitless supply of available labour because of the role of unpaid care work in making labour available. Effective employment policies should arise from analysis of the allocation of unpaid care work and the development of a prior set of economic and social policies that reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.
- f) Time use surveys, of the type undertaken by participants in Module 3 and further discussed in Module 4, are an important means of providing the data necessary to inform policies that recognize the allocation of unpaid care work and the need to reallocate such work when formulating effective employment policies.

II. LABOUR SUPPLY

Objective: to enable participants to recognize the gender concerns in labour force participation decisions.

A. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION DECISIONS

a) The definition of labour force participation:

- Is that the total labour force equals the total employed population plus the unemployed population actively searching for employment (total labour force = total employed population + the unemployed).
- Typically equates labour supply with labour force participation.
- Defines it analogously to employment: a willingness and ability to supply labour to SNA-recognized economic activities.
- Also considers searching for employment to be a valid activity within labour force participation. Those looking for employment are defined as unemployed, and part of the economically active population.
- Excludes individuals, mostly women, who are only engaged in unpaid care work, as well as full-time students and those considered too old to work.

EXERCISE 2

Objective: to enable participants to evaluate labour force participation data and better manipulate the quantitative data first discussed in Module 4

Give the participants the following breakdown of the population, which uses simplified numbers to make calculations easier (alternatively, actual labour force statistics from an African country could be used). Ask the participants to use this information to calculate the total labour force, labour force participation rates, total employment, and unemployment rates. Review the calculations in plenary.

TABLE 1. POPULATION DATA			
	Total	Men	Women
Population	20 million	10 million	10 million
Working age population (15+)	12 million	6 million	6 million
School/university attendees (15+)	1 million	600,000	400,000
Retirees/pensioners (15+)	500,000	300,000	200,000
Only engaged in non-SNA household work (15+)	1 million	100,000	900,000
Wage employees (15+)	1.9 million	1.5 million	400,000
Own-account workers (15+)	4.9 million	2.5 million	2.4 million
Employers (15+)	100,000	100,000	0
Unpaid contributing family workers (15+)	1.6 million	400,000	1.2 million
Unemployeed	1 million	500,000	500,000
CALCULATE			
Labour force			
Labour force participation rate			
Employment			
Unemployment rate			
Labour force participation rate = economically active population/ working age population			
Unemployment rate = unemployed/labour force			

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What are some of the limitations and problems with the standard labour force indicators?
- Do these data say anything about the quality of employment? Do they say anything about underemployment, as opposed to unemployment?
- If women are classified as economically inactive when they lose a job instead of unemployed, how does this affect labour force participation and unemployment rates?
- How do the data reflect child labour (workers under 15 years old)?

b) Women's labour force participation:

- Typically, women have lower labour force participation rates than men because the burden of unpaid care work falls on women in most countries as a result of gender dynamics and unequal power relations in households.
- In most (but not all) sub-Saharan African countries, women's labour force participation rates are high compared to other countries in different regions of the world. This means that African women in many countries work in both paid employment and non-employment activities; they typically do not specialize in either unpaid care work or paid SNA work. For years, this has been referred to as the double burden of employment and unpaid care work, borne predominantly by women.
- However, this is not true across the African continent. In North African countries, women's labour force participation rates are low by international standards.

c) Deciding to participate in the labour force:

- Neoclassical economic theory argues that individuals participate in the labour force if they expect to earn a wage greater than a reservation wage, the minimum wage they are willing to accept.

If wages increase, so should labour force participation, as depicted in Module 3.

- Recent studies of economic crises, such as the 1997 East Asian crisis and the 1998 crisis in Argentina, have shown that women's labour force participation increased as real wages—the wage adjusted for inflation—fell. This is also likely to be the case for the global economic crisis that started in September 2008. Through inflation, lower real wages reduced the purchasing power of household incomes and prompted women to seek employment. Pressures on household income may cause women to increase the amount of time they dedicate to income-earning activities or the number of income-earning activities that they pursue simultaneously.
- However, in many African countries the response may be different. Women already have high labour force participation rates and bear the aforementioned double burden, and so may not be in a position to increase labour force participation even in the context of declining real wages. The argument that women's labour force participation increases when real wages fall might also have limited salience when most employment is not for wages and much employment does not earn an income. Finally, in South Africa some research has shown that women's labour force participation increases when male unemployment increases at the household level.
- Contrary to economic theory, the relation between women's labour force participation and real wages is not clear in the African context.

B. EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- a) Labour supply is not only characterized by the number of individuals who are economically active. Education, skills and experience are also important in determining the quality of the labour supply.
- b) There are gender-based differences in education and skills:

- Gender gaps in the educational opportunities and outcomes available to girls and boys as well as women and men lead to gender-based inequalities in employment opportunities and outcomes.
 - Even when girls and boys as well as women and men have comparable levels of education, across all countries where it has been measured, women still earn significantly less than men.
 - Women's average earnings from paid employment often fall below those of men; that is, there is a gender wage gap. This gap is also apparent between self-employed women and men. The gender wage and earnings gaps can be used as an implicit rationale for not investing in women's education and skills development because the returns from such investments are lower than they are for investments in men. This reasoning limits women's earnings and employment choices, reinforcing existing gender inequalities in the labour market.
 - Also, if women are expected to work primarily in unpaid care work there may be less investment in their education because education is perceived to be unnecessary. Indeed, girls may be pulled out of school to help out in the household. This also limits women's earnings and employment choices, reinforcing existing gender inequalities in the labour market.
- c) There are gender-based differences in experience:
- Because of the unequal burden of unpaid care work, women often leave employment temporarily to care for children, particularly when children are very young, reducing their experience. When this is repeated over a number of children, the result can be experiential gender gaps that are a consequence of the distribution of unpaid care work.
 - Because of the duties associated with unpaid care work, women are less able to work in the evenings and over weekends, or to travel far from the home. This further limits their labour market experience, earnings and attractiveness to potential employers, reinforcing experiential gender gaps.

- Lower earnings from employment sustain the idea that women should specialize in unpaid care work, deepening gender-based differences in labour market experience and buttressing experiential gender gaps.
- Cumulatively, women's experience in paid employment is often lower than men's. Depending on the nature of employment, this may lower their earnings from paid employment. It also has important implications for social protection mechanisms (e.g., pension benefits) where such exist, because such mechanisms are often tied to earnings.

EXERCISE 3

Objective: to consider the relation between policies, unpaid care work and employment

This short in-class debate has the facilitator set up the discussion as follows: "Some argue that providing maternity benefits and breastfeeding time off from paid employment each day would help reduce gender inequalities in labour force participation and experience. Others make the case that such benefits would discourage employers from taking on women." Ask the participants what they think. What are the pros and cons? Can an equitable maternity leave (or breastfeeding) policy be designed? What about provisions for paternity leave?

III. THE STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Objective: to facilitate participants' understanding of the diversity of Africa's employment structure

The structure of employment is its distribution across different activities, sectors and arrangements that currently exist in any given country. The structure of employment will be very different for women compared to men because of gender-based biases in the allocation of unpaid care work and the implications that such an allocation has for the taking up of employment opportunities. So knowledge of the existing structure of unpaid care work and its relation to employment is essential when devising any employment policy: For women's employment to rise, unpaid care work has to be reduced or redistributed. Time use surveys, discussed in modules 3 and 4, are an important tool in this regard.

A. AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

- a) In most sub-Saharan African countries, agricultural employment accounts for the majority of all employment. Non-agricultural employment is not as significant, particularly for the poor.
- b) Women's employment in agriculture varies across countries, but it is common to find that women disproportionately work as unpaid contributing workers on family farms and plots and as own-account small holder producers. It is also common in agriculture, as well as in family businesses, for the woman to be named in surveys as the unpaid family worker, while the husband, doing more or less the same work, is named as the own-account or self-employed worker.
- c) Earnings tend to be lowest and poverty risks highest in agricultural activities. This is more pronounced for females compared to males working in agriculture.

d) Employment policy issues:

- If agricultural employment accounts for the majority of all employment, then access to land is a key issue for employment. But land tenure arrangements differ widely across Africa and it is not possible to generalize. Land arrangements are governed by different legal systems, which have been directly influenced by the legal systems of the former colonial powers. As British and French legal systems differ, so the institutional setting for land tenure issues differs between francophone and anglophone Africa. In both instances, though, gender inequalities usually are more pronounced when women have no rights or lesser rights to private, public or customary land, or more insecure tenure arrangements over such types of land compared to men. If women do not have rights over land, they may not be able to determine which crops to grow or receive all the earnings from the crops they do grow.
- Access to non-land inputs is mediated by gender relations and affects the earnings from agricultural employment by facilitating gender-based agricultural productivity differences on the land that is operated; the same is true of financial services, as discussed in Module 11 on gender and access to finance.
- The types of crops produced are also important determinants of the earnings from agricultural employment. In many cases women specialize in crops with lower returns in income-earning potential than men, as they are responsible for performing unpaid care work that may use the non-cash crops that they produce as an input in the household consumption for which they are principally responsible.
- It should not be assumed that earnings from agricultural employment are pooled within households. Ample evidence suggests that when women and men in a household in agricultural employment in sub-Saharan Africa farm different crops, they often have separate earnings that are not fully, and at times not even partially, pooled.

- In some countries labour migration out of the farm economy is an important issue as men leave the rural family home to seek non-agricultural employment elsewhere. In some cases this has resulted in a feminization of agriculture, as the prevalence of female labour in agricultural employment increases. However, in an increasing number of countries, female migration out of the countryside has also become more frequent.
- Among rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa, households increasingly construct an income from an assortment of employment activities: farming, earned income and petty trading, to name but three. In this regard, the importance of earned income in rural sub-Saharan Africa tends to be underestimated, in large part because it is within the informal economy (discussed later) and such waged labour has significant gender dimensions. Gender dynamics have a strong bearing on the employment options and earning opportunities available to individuals in rural households seeking to construct a livelihood from a diversity of rural farming and non-farming activities. As above, women's responsibilities for unpaid care work will limit the employment options available to them.

e) Employment policy priorities:

- Should the goal be to raise earnings and productivity in agriculture, including lowering women's risk, by strengthening women's control over land and tenure rights? Or should the goal be to move people—including women—out of agriculture into employment with better terms and conditions, which in turn requires policies to improve non-agricultural employment opportunities?
- In either instance, policies that seek to alter the terms and conditions of female agricultural employment must be predicated upon recognizing the linkages that exist between the requirement to undertake unpaid care work and the ability to undertake employment. Public policies that ignore the unpaid care work that women provide are likely to have only a limited

effect on female earnings. But public policies that reduce unpaid care work, or redistribute it, will increase the ability of women to undertake employment that increases earnings and household livelihood security.

- Public policies that reduce or redistribute unpaid care work can be broadly divided into:
 - Economic policies, infrastructural investment in particular.
 - Social policies, social and human capital investment in particular.
- Public policies that reduce unpaid work and increase female earning opportunities are likely to beneficially affect economic growth, as demonstrated in Module 7 on gender and macroeconomics.

B. FORMAL AND INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

- a) Formal employment is employment that is governed by government regulations, laws, or formal social protection such as paid leave, employment insurance and pensions. It takes place within the framework of corporate private and public sector establishments codified in law.
- b) Informal employment is employment not governed by government regulations, laws, or formal social protection such as pensions and paid leave. Informal workers are often excluded from participating in a variety of formal economic institutions (e.g., financial institutions) because of the informality of their earnings. Also, the sources of the earnings of informal workers are often not obvious; employers may deliberately hide them to bypass government regulations.
- c) Domestic workers are often included as informal employees, regardless of any social and legal protection that may exist. Increasingly, countries are developing legislation to cover domestic workers. In some contexts it is possible to speak of formal and informal domestic workers.

- d) In principle, informal employment falls within the domain of the SNA, so unpaid care work is not a form of informal employment. But the scale and scope of both informal employment and unpaid care work may not be adequately recognized in economic and social policy-making, in part because of a lack of adequate data.
- e) The International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) has issued recommendations on the formal statistical definition of informal employment and the informal sector. These terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same.
- The *informal sector* is an enterprise-based concept. An enterprise is considered to be part of the informal sector if that enterprise is not formally incorporated as a legal form of organization, does not maintain separate finances from those of the household and is not registered, or is of small size—typically less than five paid employees. In practice, complete information is not available to define informal enterprises. Often the size criterion or registration status is used as a short cut for measurement purposes.
 - *Informal employment* is a jobs-based concept that uses a different definition for the self-employed and wage employees. Self-employed individuals are considered to be informal if their enterprise is informal using the above definition of the informal sector. Wage employees are considered to be informal if they lack a core set of social or legal protections; the exact types of social and legal protections may vary from country to country. Typical indicators of social protection that are absent in informal employment include employer contributions to social security funds, the existence of a pension linked directly to the job, the existence of an enforceable written contract and access to paid leave. As a consequence, informal employment for waged employees is casual, irregular, unpredictable and unstable. Far fewer countries have statistics on informal employment than on the informal sector.

- f) With formal employment often constituting less than 15 percent of total employment, informal employment is more common in Africa than formal employment (exceptions include Namibia and South Africa) The public sector dominates formal employment in Africa.
- g) Informal employment in Africa varies from country to country. Some broad generalizations in Africa are that:
- Applying the above definitions, the vast majority of agricultural employment in Africa can be considered to be informal. However, most measures of the informal sector exclude agriculture or even rural areas.
 - Informal employment is often the most important form of private non-agricultural employment in Africa. The relative importance of informal self- and wage employment also varies from country to country. In many cases, employment as an informal non-agricultural own-account worker accounts for a significant share of women's employment, although this is not always the case.
 - In general, earnings are highest in formal employment, but earnings in informal non-agricultural employment tend to be higher than earnings in agriculture. This can justify movement out of agriculture and into informal non-agricultural employment. But exceptions to this general pattern exist. It is not uncommon to find that informal employers who hire others earn more than formal wage employees. However, a still relatively small proportion of men work as informal employers. Very few women work as informal employers; most informally self-employed women work as own-account workers and contributing family workers.
 - Services often account for a large share of informal non-agricultural employment, including work in street trade, other forms of trade, personal services (e.g., hair salons), repair shops, waste collection and informal transportation. Informal construction work is also common; this tends to be dominated by men.

h) Policy issues with regard to informal employment:

- Informal employment is often not included systematically in national employment policy formulation, despite accounting for the majority of employment in most African countries. Indeed, sometimes policy is openly hostile to informal workers. For example, efforts to clear cities of informal workers such as street traders explicitly undermine the livelihood of the informal workforce, which may be subject to strong gender dynamics. There is an overarching need to bring informal employment issues into the policy sphere.
- Women in informal employment continue to undertake this type of work because of its flexibility: It allows combining employment with unpaid care work.
- However, by definition, labour laws do not cover informal workers or are not enforced. As a result, informal female and male workers often do not have access to employment-related national social protection systems, rendering them more insecure.
- Policies to bring informal employment into the policy arena and formalize informal employment should seek to reduce or redistribute the amount of unpaid care work that women must carry out, which can push them into informal employment. For women, informal employment policies must be tightly aligned with unpaid care work policies if the former are to be successful.
- The extent of informal employment may be a function of the extent of formal employment, in the sense that informal employment produces low-cost goods and services that act as inputs for enterprises that generate formal employment. In this sense, the formal-informal division should not be seen as a strict duality. Gender-based earnings differentials could be an important factor in sustaining informal employment by providing more cost-competitive goods and services for use by formal

employers. In this way, gender dynamics affect the relation between informal employment and formal employment.

C. EMPLOYMENT STATUS

a) Self-employment:

- In many African countries, forms of self-employment are much more common than wage employment (exceptions exist; e.g., South Africa). Self-employment includes own-account workers, employers and unpaid workers on family enterprises. Informal self-employment is particularly common in Africa.
- By definition, labour laws often do not cover informal self-employment, they are restricted to formal wage employment.
- In many cases, wage employment accounts for a much smaller share of women's employment than does self-employment. Self-employment is more important for women because
 - Unpaid care work limits access to wage employment.
 - Wage labour markets are strongly affected by gender concerns.
- Self-employment often gives women much more scope to combine unpaid care work with paid employment activities.
- Policy discussions often assume the presence of a wage employment arrangement (e.g., minimum wage policies or calls for labour market flexibility). Such policy discussions exclude self-employment and its gender dynamics.

b) Wage employment:

- In many African countries, wage employment accounts for a larger share of men's employment than women's. Wage employment may be more accessible to men because they typically spend less time in unpaid care work.
- However, in some African countries women's wage employment in informal activities in the countryside, when combined with other rural earning activities both on and off the farm, is crucial

in maintaining the livelihoods of household members.

- There is typically a strong correlation between short-term, seasonal and casual employment and informal wage employment.
- If women are employed in wage employment it is more common for that employment to be informal and hence insecure. However, women may be better able to combine informal wage employment with unpaid care work than to combine formal wage employment with unpaid care work. Employment options and choices may reflect the need to perform unpaid care work before wage employment is undertaken.
- Policy discussions that assume the presence of a wage employment arrangement fail to accommodate the relation between unpaid care work and the gender dynamics of wage employment. This may explain the failure of wage employment policy in parts of Africa, including those places where rural informal wage employment is an important component of household livelihoods.

IV. WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA

Objective: to enable participants to gain a deeper understanding of specific issues facing women's employment in Africa

A. LABOUR FORCE SEGMENTATION

Use Exercise 1 as a reference.

- a) As mentioned above, women tend to be concentrated in employment with low and volatile earnings, high risks of poverty, and limited social protection.
- b) Mobility from one type of employment to another is limited for many women because of:
 - Discriminatory social norms and institutions.
 - Responsibilities for unpaid care work.
 - Household dynamics, unequal power relationships and restrictions on women's movements.
 - Gender inequalities in terms of education, skills and experience (although in an increasing number of countries women are becoming more formally educated than men when they are able to obtain an education at all).
 - A lack of assets, including limited access to finance.
 - The limited transferability of skills from one sector to another.
- c) While improving employment outcomes for women requires policy that removes the barriers to labour mobility, a prerequisite is the

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abovementioned reduction or redistribution of unpaid care work. Policies that reduce or redistribute unpaid care work and increase paid employment can be strongly complementary, in that a reduction of unpaid care work can increase the employment opportunities available to women.

B. DISCRIMINATION AND EARNINGS INEQUALITIES

- a) Segmentation is not the only source of gender inequalities with regard to employment.
- b) As already noted, within similar kinds of employment women earn less than men. Two factors are important here:
 - *Hours of work.* Because of the burdens of unpaid care work, women tend to take part-time rather than full-time work, reducing what they are able to earn.
 - *Earnings inequalities.* Expressed as an hourly rate, which controls for the number of hours worked, women still earn less than men when performing similar jobs. In wage employment, this can be due to employer discrimination. But the same pattern often holds for self-employment, indicating that women face disadvantages in a variety of labour market transactions. One reason internationally is because of occupation and sector clustering—that is, women and men cluster into particular occupations and specific subsectors of economic activity.
 - Lower earnings in wage employment can give rise to employer preference for women employees; as their labour costs less, with a uniform level of revenues, they can contribute to enhanced profitability. An example is the dominance of women workers in labour-intensive export sectors, and while these patterns are often discussed in the context of Asia and Latin America, African examples exist and may grow in the future.

EXERCISE 4

Objective: to roughly map the structure of employment and introduce policy possibilities

Divide the participants into small groups (two to three per group). Giving them sheets of flipchart paper to work with, ask them to develop a rough mapping of the structure of employment for their own countries. In terms of the distinctions discussed in this module (agricultural/non-agricultural, formal/informal, self-employment/wage employment, public/private), participants should map out, either through a diagram or an outline:

- The major categories of employment in their countries (e.g., public wage employment, agricultural self-employment, non-agricultural informal self-employment).
- The relative size of the different categories, in terms of the approximate number of people or percentage of the labour force.
- Categories of employment with a disproportionate number of women or men.
- A general sense of the quality of employment, as evidenced by earnings.

Give participants about 30 to 45 minutes to complete the mapping, then discuss the mapping in plenary. Once the general structure of employment in African countries has been discussed, ask participants about the appropriateness of different policies to improve employment conditions in Africa. For example:

- Labour market regulations (e.g., minimum wage policies).
- Export promotion.
- Improving access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (which often does not include own-account workers).
- Improving certain types of infrastructure (e.g., roads, electrical services to households, water infrastructure in communities).

Other policies can be added to this list. Participants should explicitly consider the relation between different policies that would improve employment conditions and the need to ensure the provision of unpaid care work.

Ask the participants which types of employment would benefit most from these policies. Which individuals would not benefit (e.g., minimum wages typically do not apply to self-employment)? Given the structure of employment and the need to ensure the provision of unpaid care work, will employed men benefit more than employed women? Can we begin to identify the elements of a more gender-equitable employment policy?

- a) As discussed in Module 3, gender inequality in labour markets and employment opportunities outcomes reinforce and are reinforced by existing gender dynamics and inequalities within households. So the household division of labour, women's economic independence, investment in women's education, reproductive choices and an ability to exit an abusive situation both reinforce and are reinforced by labour market employment patterns and outcomes.
- b) Policy designed to improve women's employment opportunities in labour markets must commence by recognizing how gender relations shape unpaid care work within households and the constraints that these place on female labour force participation. The policies themselves must be predicated on economic and social policies that reduce the unpaid care work performed largely by women.

READINGS

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