# Polishing the stone

A journey through the promotion of gender equality in development projects

**Rosemary Vargas-Lundius**
in collaboration with Annelou Ypeij

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CEDLA

Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty

IFAD

Cover
A young woman makes tortillias in El Manzano, El Salvador.


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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ADESCO | Communal Development Association (*Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal*) |
| AMCO | Peasant Women's Association of the East (*Asociación de Mujeres Campesinas de Oriente*) |
| CARC | Upper Basin of the Cañar River Rural Development Project (*Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural de la Cuenca Alta del Río Cañar*) |
| CARD | Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management Rural Development Project |
| CBO | Community-based organization |
| CDB | Caribbean Development Bank |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CEDLA | Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (*Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos*) |
| CIARA | Foundation for Training and Applied Research on Agrarian Reform (*Fundación para la Capacitación e Investigación Aplicada a la Reforma Agraria*) |
| CODERSA | Consultants for Rural Sustainable Development (*Consultores para el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible S.A.*) |
| CORREDOR | Development of the Puno-Cuzco Corridor Project (*Proyecto Corredor Puno-Cuzco)* |
| COSOP | Country Strategic Opportunities Paper |
| ECLAC (CEPAL) | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (*Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe*) |
| ECOSOC | United Nations Economic and Social Council |
| ERP | People's Revolutionary Army (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*) |

| | |
|---|---|
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FMLN | Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (*Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*) |
| GAD | Gender and Development |
| GED | Gender, Environment and Development |
| GOMs | Organized Groups of Women (*Grupos Organizados de Mujeres*) |
| G-REP | Grenada Rural Enterprise Project |
| ISDEMU | Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (*Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer*) |
| LAC Division | Latin America and the Caribbean Division |
| MARENASS | Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands Project (*Proyecto de Manejo de Recursos Naturales en la Sierra Sur*) |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MIF | Multilateral Investment Fund |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| ONUSAL | United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador |
| PCN | National Conciliation Party (*Partido de Conciliación Nacional*) |
| PREMODER | Reconstruction and Rural Modernization Programme (*Programa de Reconstrucción y Modernización Rural*) |
| PREVAL | Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of IFAD's Rural Poverty Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (*Programa para el Fortalecimiento de la Capacidad Regional de Seguimiento y Evaluación de los Proyectos FIDA para la Reducción de la Pobreza Rural en América Latina y el Caribe*) |
| PROCASUR | Regional Programme for Rural Development Training (*Programa Regional de Capacitación en Desarrollo Rural*) |
| PROCHALATE | Rehabilitation and Development Project for War-torn Areas in the Department of Chalatenango (*Proyecto de Rehabilitación y Desarrollo para Poblaciones Afectadas por el Conflicto: Departamento de Chalatenango*) |
| PRODAP | Smallholders' Agricultural Development Project in the Paracentral Region of El Salvador (*Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola para Pequeños Productores de la Región Paracentral de El Salvador*) |
| PRODECOP | Economic Development of Poor Rural Communities Project (*Proyecto de Desarrollo de Comunidades Rurales Pobres*) |
| PRODERQUI | Programme for Rural Development and Reconstruction in the Quiché Department (*Programa de Desarrollo y Reconstrucción en El Quiché*) |

| | |
|---|---|
| PRODERNOR | Rural Development Project for the North-Eastern Region (*Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural para las Poblaciones del Nor-Oriente*) |
| PRODEVER | Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (*Programa de Desarrollo Rural de Las Verapaces*) |
| ProGender (ProGénero) | Programme for the Consolidation of Gender Strategies in IFAD Projects (*Programa para la Consolidación de las Estrategias de Género en los proyectos FIDA*) |
| PROPESUR | South Western Region Small Farmers Project (*Proyecto de Pequeños Productores Agrícolas de la Región Sur-Oeste*) |
| PROSALAFA | Support Project for Small Producers in the Semi-arid Zones of Falcón and Lara States (*Proyecto de Apoyo a Pequeños Productores de las Zonas Semiáridas de los Estados Falcón y Lara*) |
| PROSGIP (PROFAGEP) | Programme to Support Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (*Programa de Fortalecimiento de los Aspectos de Género en los Proyectos FIDA*) |
| PROZACHI | Zacapa-Chiquimula Smallholders' Rural Development Project (*Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola de Pequeños Productores en Zacapa y Chiquimula*) |
| RUTA | Regional Unit for Technical Assistance |
| SISPE | System for Computerized Information on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| UFAG | Unit for the Strengthening of and Support to Gender Policies (*Unidad de Fortalecimiento y Apoyo en Género*) |
| UNCED | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| UNOPS | United Nations Office for Project Services |
| WED | Women, Environment and Development |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WID | Women in Development |

# Foreword

## IFAD

Achieving gender equality remains one of the greatest challenges of development. In most societies, there are still remarkable differences between the access women and men have to assets, decision-making, power and participation in productive and reproductive activities. Women's vulnerability is exacerbated by the cultural mores and political obstacles that regularly limit their ability to advocate for their own needs and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, the international community committed itself to promote gender equality and empower women. The Millennium Declaration confirmed the commitment to gender equality already embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform of Action, and presented new opportunities to link solutions to poverty with gender equality.

Understanding the many dimensions of poverty and how they can relate to gender is a critical step in our work. IFAD's Strategic Framework recognizes that for development to be effective, rural women and men need to be equally empowered to have the necessary skills, resources and confidence to overcome poverty themselves.

The disproportionate number of extremely poor rural women demands that we have a particular focus on their needs. IFAD-supported programmes and projects address inequalities by enhancing women's access to productive resources and increasing their participation in public decision-making processes. We have learned that when rural women are empowered, the benefits flow not only to women themselves but also to their families and communities, since women's economic status has a direct impact on overall poverty reduction and household food security.

Several years ago, gender mainstreaming was introduced as a means to systematically address gender equality and women's empowerment in rural development programmes. However, confusion still lingers about what mainstreaming means precisely, and more importantly, how it is achieved. *Polishing the stone* offers valuable insights into the concepts of gender equality and gender mainstreaming and provides concrete examples of how the two concepts relate to development. It illustrates how women and men are often not able to benefit fully from development programmes because different obstacles hinder their participation. This book shares the knowledge and experience that IFAD has gained and the lessons we have learned – from both our successes and our failures – in our efforts to involve and empower women and men equally to fully benefit from and participate in development initiatives.

These insights are based on the experiences of poor rural people, expressed in their own words, describing their daily lives and realities, and how they confront and deal with the challenges posed by gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities. *Polishing the stone* is a clear and honest account of how the pursuit of gender equality has opened up possibilities for poor rural women and men to improve their lives, and the lives of their families and communities.

I hope that this book will contribute to efforts to reduce the inequalities that lead to poverty and marginalization around the world, and encourage the adoption of measures to ensure that women and men are able to benefit equally from development efforts.

Lennart Båge
President of IFAD

# CEDLA

When the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) approached the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA)[1] in 2005 with the request to collaborate on a manuscript concerning gender mainstreaming, we were immediately enthusiastic. CEDLA is an institution that fosters research and documentation on Latin America, and although its context and aims are primarily academic, we firmly believe that it is important to disseminate the knowledge generated at CEDLA and by its counterparts, and to discuss the applicability of this knowledge in the daily reality of Latin American societies.

IFAD's proposal struck a chord within CEDLA in another way, too. Gender issues have been central to our research programme from the very beginning, and debates and research on gender issues are considered crucial if we are to understand the dynamics of Latin American society. In addition, the issue of gender mainstreaming is of crucial importance in terms of development intervention.

Of course, this book is not an academic exercise in itself. It is based on the experiences of one institution and its counterparts. The mainstreaming of gender practices in development cooperation has become an important issue in recent years, and many other institutions are acquiring experience with it. However, little has been published on the daily practice of these activities. This practice is not always easy: complex issues related to culture, values and human relations have to be solved, not so much as theoretical problems as in the day-to-day practice of the men and women who are trying to carve out an existence for themselves, their children and their community. These activities involve emotions, religious and moral dilemmas, and political decisions.

We really appreciate IFAD allowing us an insight into the possibilities and problems of gender mainstreaming in the practice of its work. It requires courage and a firm belief in transparency to allow outsiders to take such a close look at one's work. This is one of the great merits of this book: it provides insights into the daily practice of gender mainstreaming – a practice that is full of little victories and satisfactory outcomes, as well as of problems, discussions and frustrations. It shows us the ideas and ideals of men and women who, on a day-to-day basis, are trying to make this world a better place to live in.

CEDLA feels privileged to have been asked to be a part of this endeavour. We hope that this book will find its way to many practitioners, colleagues and other people who are convinced that more equitable gender relations will benefit both women and men. We also hope that it will serve as an instrument for solving the great problem of inequality and poverty in today's world.

Michiel Baud
Director CEDLA

Endnotes

1/ *Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos*.

# Acknowledgements

This book is the product of a collective effort: it could not have been written without the enthusiasm, commitment and support of a large number of people. To thank them all would require the production of another book. However, we are especially grateful to the women and men who live and work in the Latin American and Caribbean countryside. Without their knowledge, experience, generosity and support, nothing that is described here could have been accomplished. Some of them are mentioned in connection with interviews and testimonies, while others remain anonymous. We express our sincere gratitude to them.

The effort of Raquel Peña-Montenegro, former head of IFAD's Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Division, to pay proper attention to gender issues in project design has been important for the realization of IFAD's gender approach. Ingrid Schreuel has been involved from the very beginning in IFAD's initiative to mainstream gender equity in all activities, and her unflagging enthusiasm and professionalism were also a great asset during the entire writing of this book. She both provided a wealth of material and commentaries, and read and improved all drafts. Pilar Campaña, whose experience and knowledge have been crucial for the realization of the gender programme, read the first draft and provided input and recommendations for its improvement. Rodolfo Lauritto, Timoteo López, Claudia Ranaboldo, Ana Lucia Moreno and many others provided the authors with their views on different aspects and experiences that formed the basis of this book.

An important part of the book is based on fieldwork, which could not have been realized without the support of project staff or the generosity and

zest demonstrated by Reina Noemi Moreira in El Salvador and Percy Barrio de Mendoza in Peru. We have benefited from the field research carried out by Jan Lundius, whose inputs are particularly evident in the sociocultural analysis and the weaving of different topics important to this book.

At IFAD's headquarters, several country programme managers and other staff provided us with useful insights and comments. Annina Lubbock, Technical Adviser for Gender and Household Food Security, was very generous in sharing her knowledge and experience. Jean-Philippe Audinet, Officer in Charge of the Policy Division, has been very supportive, particularly during the final phase of our work and Gunilla Olsson, former Director of the Policy Division, also provided very helpful comments. Our special thanks go to Roberto Haudry de Soucy, IFAD Country Programme Manager for Peru; Antonieta Noli, Director of the Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands Project (MARENASS),[1] also in Peru; and Pilar Gil, Claudia Barrientos and Gisella Barbieri, Programme Assistants at IFAD.

This book has gone through an intensive review process. Although its contents remain our responsibility, we wish to thank Raul Alegrett, Roxana Calvalho, Ximena Flores Palacios, Roberto Haudry de Soucy, James Heer, Govind Kelkar, Anita Kelles-Viitanen, Rasha Yousef Omar, Carolina Taborga, Åsa Torkelsson and Vera Weill-Halle for their valuable insights and comments. We sincerely thank Eduardo Castillo, Frank Escobar, Norys Markeli Ramírez, Ana Miriam Monterossa, Reina Noemi Moreira, Manuel Ponce Cornejo and Guadalupe Torres for the information and support they provided. Special thanks to Carlos Sojo of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)[2] and Francisco Pichón of the World Bank, who reviewed the text and provided valuable suggestions and additions. The language was improved through the editing skills of Jeremy Rayner, Anna Sherwood, Brett Shapiro and Tatiana Strelkoff.

Finally, neither this book nor the actual gender mainstreaming initiative could have been realized without the grant that the Government of Japan generously provided to IFAD. Naturally the views expressed are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of IFAD or the Government of Japan.

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius
Annelou Ypeij

Endnotes

1/ *Proyecto de Manejo de Recursos Naturales en la Sierra Sur*.

2/ *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*.

# Introduction

In the 1970s and 1980s, insights from the women's movement started to influence the thinking and practice of development policies. Issues concerning gender equality increasingly attracted attention. Nowadays, the gender concept and its related discourse have profoundly changed the way development is perceived. Most international development organizations acknowledge that gender is of the utmost importance and respond to what has been labelled as a 'gendered reality'. An important expression of the significance that is attached to gender equality can be found in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs were formulated as a guideline for development organizations and were agreed upon by world leaders in September 2000. The third Goal specifically mentions 'gender equality and the empowerment of women' as a core objective.

It is now generally accepted that gender equity generates development. Women are potential wage labourers, producers and consumers of marketable goods. The integration of women in the market economy leads to higher gross national products. There is a risk that this message will be turned into a truism, such as 'Gender equality is good business!' or 'Development needs women'.[1] Nonetheless, gender isn't only about women. The concept deals with the relationships between men and women, which means that development and gender issues have much wider implications and connotations than economic growth alone. Development is primarily about people and their lives, about addressing the needs and expectations of individuals in a gender-equitable manner. Development organizations should bear this in mind and make the goal of achieving equality between men and women an integral part of their activities. In other words, development organizations should mainstream gender.

Setting development goals means establishing agendas, and when such agendas affect the lives of people it is always opportune to ask: Who is setting the agenda? How is it done and for what purpose? People in the South who have been confronted by development efforts conceived in the North often raise such questions. It is not uncommon to hear that the gender discourse is controlled by paid United Nations advisers and other donor advisers, consultants and development workers – something that has led to the professionalization and 'NGO-ization' of the entire gender concept.[2]

Nevertheless, there are few doubts that the creation of equal access to health, education, credit, livelihoods and employment opportunities, as well as the promotion of equality in the wider political domain, must rest solidly on grounds of gender equity and social justice.[3] Greater investments in women's health and well-being, greater access for women to paid activities, greater evidence that women participate in the political processes of their communities in situations where they were previously disenfranchised, are all critical dimensions in the process of changing conditions of choice and of promoting development.[4]

In this book, we analyse the growing importance of the concept of gender in development projects in Latin America[5] and the Caribbean. We especially shed light on the experiences of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and how it has promoted the mainstreaming of gender equality within the context of the rural projects it has supported in the region. When IFAD was founded as a special agency of the United Nations in 1977, its mandate was to provide financing for projects related to food production systems[6] and to work in close cooperation with governments. Throughout its existence, IFAD has been refining and redefining its methodology in order to attain its goal of poverty alleviation. The mainstreaming of gender within IFAD's projects should not be seen as an isolated goal, but should be placed in the context of poverty alleviation, a general increased sensitivity to grass-roots experiences and the development of participatory methodologies. A guiding principle for this book is IFAD's objective to enable '… the rural poor to overcome poverty – as perceived by themselves…'[7] – a statement that firmly establishes the Fund's intentions to be attentive to the voices of poor rural people. Gender equity requires that poor women and other excluded groups be able not to just gain access to valued goods, but to do so on terms that respect and promote their ability to define their own priorities and make their own choices. It is thus important for development organizations to learn to listen to the people who are going to benefit from and participate in development initiatives, and then to establish adequate methods and platforms to

facilitate such a dialogue. The development theorist Robert Chambers has described this process as the 'reversal of learning', by which he means interactive and experimental learning from poor people.[8] According to Chambers, development practitioners must be able to communicate effectively with local people, and to 'turn the spotlight around' and look at themselves.[9] The idea is to be perceptive of the insights, needs and critical views emanating from the 'margin', from the periphery of the dominant discourse, from people who often are excluded as 'others'. Such a process has been called by some theorists as 'reinventing ourselves as others'; that is, adapting ourselves to new ways of thinking based on the reality of the people we are trying to assist, rather than applying preconceived agendas.[10] Accordingly, IFAD has committed itself to a process of reversal of learning. The Fund aims to adapt all its activities to such a philosophy and to base them on the knowledge and perspectives of the projects' beneficiaries.

The processes described in this book should be understood from two angles: the increasing mainstreaming of gender and the reversal of learning. IFAD's aim is to help men and women in their communities to set their own agenda for the achievement of gender equity through joint actions and open discussions. Theories and gender action plans are being 'reinvented' based on what is really going on in the field and by taking into consideration the sociocultural dynamics encountered in each specific country. By giving voice in this book to the participants and beneficiaries of IFAD-supported development projects, we hope to contribute to the reversal of learning. In this book, we mix illustrative examples, theoretical discussions and testimonies with a rather straightforward record of an attempt to mainstream gender equity in development projects. We do not profess to offer guiding principles or ready-made solutions for the mainstreaming of gender equity, nor do we present an evaluation of IFAD's performance in regards to promotion of gender equality. Rather, we hope that by describing an example of the process of gender mainstreaming, the book will serve as a source of inspiration and discussion.

This book is based on field visits and interviews performed by Consultants for Sustainable Rural Development (CODERSA)[11] and on an analysis of relevant IFAD reports. In 2002 and 2003, in-depth interviews were carried out in El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. The interviews were conducted with the participants and beneficiaries of various IFAD-supported development projects, as well as with staff members and other relevant people. In addition, focus groups were organized, and meetings, working groups and training sessions were attended by the interviewees. For many of them, participating in this book project meant expressing their

opinions and being listened to. The fact that they requested that their full names be used can be seen as an act of reinforcing their identities as vocal actors. Although we are very pleased with their cooperation, we could not avoid a certain bias in the interviews. The majority of the interviewees are IFAD's partners, staff or beneficiaries. This means that they benefit directly from IFAD's activities and thus may have sketched an uncritical image of IFAD. In 2006, during the phase of completing this book, Annelou Ypeij (CEDLA) undertook an additional trip to El Salvador to collect the final data, check information that had been collected earlier and conduct additional interviews and conversations.

In this book, references are made to experiences in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. Nevertheless, the focus is on two countries, namely El Salvador and Peru. This enables us to contextualize the specific experiences of the IFAD projects and set them against the backdrop of the rural and gendered realities in those countries. Without some knowledge of the particular difficulties that people confront in a certain environment, it is very hard to appreciate the problems and achievements of a project. There are particular reasons for choosing El Salvador and Peru. The projects in El Salvador have to a high degree served as reference points for promoting gender awareness in IFAD-supported projects. On the other hand, the projects in Peru present some features that are quite unique in comparison with other IFAD projects, such as the direct transfer of funds to the participants and beneficiaries of the projects.[12] Both countries have recently experienced armed conflicts. This context partly explains the difficult sociocultural and political environment in which some of the rural development projects are carried out. At the same time, the countries represent examples of two different settings, in both a topographical and sociocultural sense, that obviously have an impact on the way that rural life is organized.

The organization of this book is as follows. In Chapter 1 we sketch the conceptual framework through definitions of gender as they are currently applied in IFAD's activities, and then turn to the concepts of machismo, family household and poverty. In Chapters 2 and 3 we describe the gender realities within rural areas in El Salvador and Peru. In our opinion, socio-economic change by necessity affects gender relations, and gender roles should always be understood and addressed within their specific environment. The chapter on El Salvador deals with such subjects as the specific gender relations in the Salvadoran countryside, social conflict and war, and the impact the war had on gender relations. We conclude this chapter with testimonies about the ways in which IFAD-sponsored projects have offered support. Chapter 3 is about Peru and, more specifically, the

Peruvian Andes. The organization of this chapter and the themes we deal with are comparable with those of Chapter 2.

In Chapter 4 we pay attention to the concept of gender mainstreaming and the theoretical shifts in the thinking from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) and gender mainstreaming. We also sketch the international developments of the four United Nations Conferences on Women, as well as the Decade for Women.

In Chapter 5 we deal with IFAD's LAC Division and the activities this division has organized to mainstream gender. We describe the division's gender programmes, which have brought together different experiences concerning the incorporation of a gender equity approach in IFAD-sponsored development programmes in the region. In Chapter 6 we put the efforts of IFAD's LAC Division into a broader institutional context and address the ways in which the concept of gender mainstreaming has spread in IFAD. One important outcome of this process occurred in 2003 when IFAD's Executive Board approved the Gender Plan of Action. In Chapter 7 we present some of the insights gained and instruments developed through IFAD gender programmes in the region. In Chapter 8, we identify a series of themes that are important for development work in the near future. These are reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, prostitution, child abuse, migration, labour possibilities for young rural women as domestic and *maquiladora* workers and the rise of woman-headed households.

## Endnotes

1/ Arnfred (2001), p. 77.

2/ For a critical approach to the concept of development and its often Eurocentric character, see Miles (1998) and Amadiume (1997).

3/ Kabeer (2001), p. 53.

4/ (Ibid.). A critical comment, though, is called for. A focus on women's issues may distort the fact that gender equality also applies to the rights of men, who may also suffer from the plights of rigid gender roles – for example, when it comes to socioculturally determined inhibitions that stop men from taking part in certain activities, like domestic chores or caring for children.

5/ Latin America comprises those areas of America whose official languages are Spanish and Portuguese.

6/ '… the Fund shall provide financing primarily for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and to strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies…' IFAD (1976), p. 4.

7/ IFAD (2002:1), p. 8.

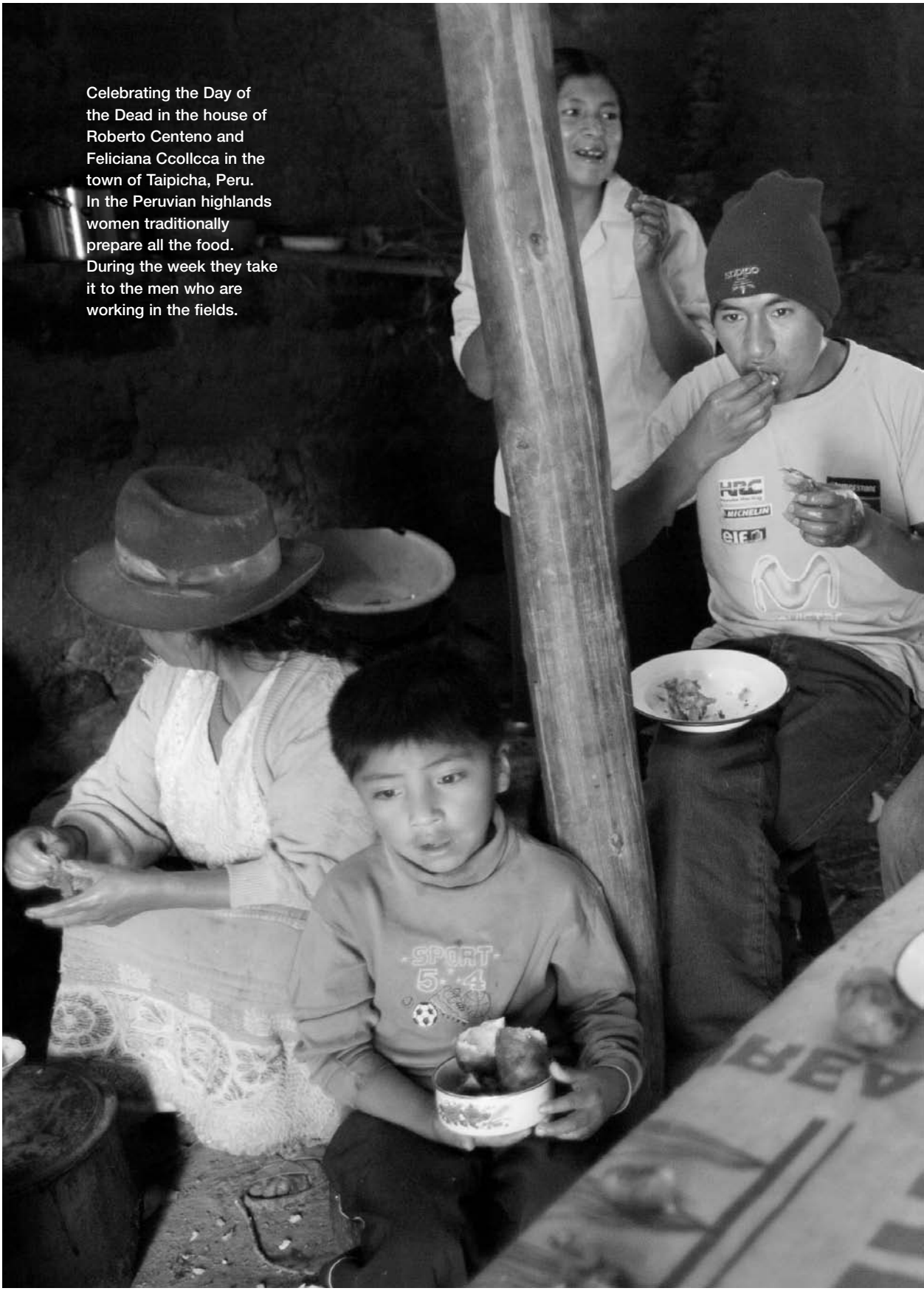
8/ Chambers (2002), p. 6; Chambers (1995), p. 40.

9/ Chambers (1995), pp. 6, 39-40.

10/ Harding (1991), p. 268.

11/ *Consultores para el Desarrollo Rural Sostenible* (CODERSA) is a consulting firm based in Guatemala. It works with analyses and information related to sustainable rural development, gender equity, and environmental management and protection. CODERSA not only carried out interviews for the purpose of this book, but also played a major role in the overall development of the gender approach of IFAD's Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Division. The firm was involved in the establishment of the division's gender programmes, the organization of seminars and the writing of manuals. It has also been engaged in the design and evaluation of certain projects in the region.

12/ For a description of Peru projects, see de Zutter (2004).




Celebrating the Day of the Dead in the house of Roberto Centeno and Feliciana Ccollcca in the town of Taipicha, Peru. In the Peruvian highlands women traditionally prepare all the food. During the week they take it to the men who are working in the fields.

Chapter 1

# Understanding gender, the family and poverty

The integration of gender into development work has gone through various phases, during which different gender concepts were invented, tested, redefined and – at times – rejected. This process has also taken place within IFAD. What is meant by 'gender'? How should we understand gender relations? What is typical about gender relations in Latin America and the Caribbean? What is the relation between gender and poverty? How are gender relations within families manifest? What are the best methodologies to apply when working with women and men? These are some of the many questions that have been raised during the process of gender mainstreaming in IFAD's projects.

In this chapter we start with definitions of gender, and then turn to some salient features of gender relations in the region. In Latin America, machismo appears in most discussions on gender roles. Although the meaning of this concept is often taken for granted, it is worth describing it in some detail, especially because of its importance for development projects. We highlight some of machismo's patriarchal, psychological and cultural meanings. As we argue, machismo has far-reaching implications for the daily lives of rural people.

Unequal power relations determine the ways in which people are able to deal with poverty. It is increasingly recognized that knowledge of poor men's and women's access to assets and resources is crucial to understanding how these unequal power relations function in practice. Gender mainstreaming within poverty alleviation means that men and women ought to have their equal and guaranteed share in each and every one of these assets.

## Defining gender

As a result of a long process of learning, experimenting, refining and reflecting, IFAD has developed a series of interrelated concepts that form the basis and tools for IFAD's gender approach. IFAD's Gender Plan of Action (2003) presents the Fund's official standpoint regarding gender.[1] The gender concepts that are most widely used within IFAD's development projects and that are frequently used in this book are the following:

- *Gender* is defined as the culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviours of women and men. The term distinguishes the socially constructed from the biologically determined aspects of being male or female. Unlike the biology of sex, gender roles and behaviours and the relation between women and men (gender relations) can change over time.[2]
- *Gender equality* means that women and men have equal opportunities to access and control socially valued goods and resources. This does not mean that women and men should become the same, but that IFAD wants to promote women's and men's equal opportunities and life chances.[3] Gender equality, then, relates to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Within IFAD it is often regarded as a human rights issue and as a precondition for and indication of sustainable, people-centred development. In order to achieve gender equality, it may be necessary to empower groups of women and men.
- *Gender equity* means the equitable treatment of women and men according to their respective needs. In the development context, the goal of gender equity often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.
- *Gender mainstreaming* is the process by which reducing the gaps in development opportunities between women and men and working towards equality between them become an integral part of the organization's strategy, policies and operations.[4]
- *Empowerment* is about people taking control over their lives, pursuing their own goals, living according to their own values, developing self-reliance, being able to make choices and being able to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment may be a lengthy and complex process. For people to be empowered, conditions have to be created to enable them to acquire the necessary resources, knowledge, political voice and organizational capacity.

## Machismo: A cult of masculinity

Many of the stories collected for the purpose of this book are concerned with the gendered reality of male domination. An analysis of machismo may be helpful to put these experiences in a broader context. The cultural phenomenon of machismo is found throughout the world, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean.[5] Although the term machismo is frequently used in common parlance, it is a contested concept with diverse meanings. Machismo may refer to the cult of the macho – the 'real' man, the only masculine man[6] – based on the perception of male superiority and virility. Machismo is often approached in a stereotypical way that connects it with vices and negative attitudes, such as alcoholism, family abandonment, domestic violence and the negation of women's rights. As such, the concept is often juxtaposed with what are perceived as typical female virtues. This is illustrated by the following fragment taken from a typical guidebook on Mexican customs:

> ... machismo meant the repudiation of all 'feminine' virtues such as unselfishness, kindness, frankness and truthfulness. It meant being willing to lie without compunction, to be suspicious, envious, jealous, malicious, vindictive, brutal and finally, to be willing to fight and kill without hesitation to protect one's manly image. Machismo meant that a man could not let anything detract from his image of himself as a man's man, regardless of the suffering it brought on himself and the women around him. […] The proof of every man's manliness was his ability to completely dominate his wife and children, to have sexual relations with any woman he wanted, to never let anyone question, deprecate or attempt to thwart his manhood, and never to reveal his true feelings to anyone lest they somehow take advantage of him.[7]

In contrast to this undifferentiated and essentialist image of the typical male, recent research in Mexico City has revealed that fatherhood is a very important part of the identity of men. They cuddle their children, play with them and view fatherhood as a lifetime commitment.[8] Machismo should therefore be interpreted as a multidimensional representation of masculinity with many different meanings.

One dimension of machismo is related to connotations with procreation and fecundity. Sexual patterns that developed in rural societies in Latin America can be compared with the moral values that used to be upheld in several rural Mediterranean societies. In Andalusia, for example, an honourable man is often described as somebody who possesses *hombría*

(manliness). This expression is connected with his physical valour; that is, his sexual quintessence. A man with honour is a man with *cojones* (testicles),[9] while a man without honour is a *manso*, a word that means 'tame' and, by implication, 'castrated'.[10] A real man lacks the physiological basis of sexual purity or monogamy. He runs the risk of putting his masculinity and virility in doubt should he insist on remaining 'chaste'.

Closely related to this notion of the virile, sexually driven man is the ideological complex of honour and shame. Within this complex, the focus is on the control of the sexuality of women. The honour of a man is related to the shame of women, not of all women but of the women of his family. If women show shameless behaviour, their sexual inaccessibility and decency are questioned. This puts shame on the family and especially corrodes the honour of the men. A man has to defend the virtue of his mother, wife, daughters and sisters, with the aim of protecting the family's honour and his own honour. However, this does not mean that he has to watch his own sexual purity:[11] on the contrary, taking a mistress or supporting more than one family may be seen as a demonstration of superior masculinity, even if in theory both the community and the Church condemn it.

Apart from machismo, honour and shame, religious morals based on the patriarchal family are also very important to the understanding of masculinity. Men are considered to be the head of the family and responsible for its well-being. Thus, to 'be a man' also means to work hard, to have a good income, and to be responsible and obtain economic resources for the family. If a man is unable to achieve these goals, his frustration and feelings of hopelessness may lead him to affirm his masculinity by committing acts of violence or resorting to alcohol. These patriarchal notions are far from exclusive to Latin America. They are global phenomena, not in the least since most of the world's religions stress man's role as provider and protector.[12]

Notions of masculinity do not exist without notions of femininity. For example, the notion of the dominant man implies a notion of the subservient and passive woman. Nevertheless, one should not make the mistake of perceiving women only as passive and subservient to men: women are social actors in their own right who have many ways to deal with the machismo of their menfolk. Some authors relate the strength and power of women to *marianismo*, which can be considered as a cultural complex that functions as a counterpart to machismo. It is not a religious practice. Nevertheless, the Catholic image of the Virgin Mary has provided a central figure for the construction of femininity in which the idealization

of motherhood plays an important role. It offers an image of women as semi-divine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men.[13] Although the concept of *marianismo* has been heavily debated,[14] it makes us wary of one-dimensional images of gender. Machismo offers a stereotypical image of women as subordinate and passive, while *marianismo* offers one of women as morally superior to and stronger than men.[15] The contradictory character of these images of women enlarges some women's possibilities to manoeuvre and negotiate with their partners. They thus offer women some opportunity for the exercise of power and control.[16]

Alfredo Mirandé presents three theories about the roots of machismo within Latino culture.[17] The first is that machismo developed out of the Spanish conquest and the humiliation suffered by indigenous men, not only because they were defeated, but also because their women were raped. These experiences provoked intense feelings of powerlessness, impotence, inferiority and weakness. Overly aggressive attitudes and other forms of macho behaviour serve to mask and compensate for these feelings.[18] Another theory is that machismo was introduced by the Spanish conquistadores, whose Iberian culture was very patriarchal: it was based on notions of male honour, the inferiority of women and the strict control of women's sexuality by men.[19] These notions became exaggerated during the conquest, which was accompanied by brutal sexual practices against indigenous women, because these notions were mingled with racism. A third theory holds that machismo is a pre Columbian and more specifically Aztec trait.[20] The Aztecs were a military society in which men dominated women. Also, the word machismo may have an Aztec origin: in the Nahuatl language, macho meant 'image' or 'reflection of oneself'.[21] Against this argument one can raise the objection that the Aztecs were only one of the many indigenous peoples conquered by the Spanish. Nonetheless, macho behaviour was common among other indigenous peoples as well, and current practices of machismo can be regarded as a mixture of the notions from the Old World, the New World and local traditions.[22] As a result, every Latin American and Caribbean country has its own brand of machismo and various kinds of behaviour related to the concept. El Salvador and Peru are not exceptions. A common social phenomenon like male alcoholism is often related to machismo.[23] For example, a study carried out in the Peruvian Andes presents male alcoholism as a serious problem. Researchers estimated that in Mayobamba (an Andean village in the region of Lima), men spend up to one quarter of their time getting drunk, being drunk or recovering from drunkenness.[24] Despite the fact

that alcoholism should be considered as a social malady and can be seen as a kind of psychological escape strategy related to dire economic conditions, alcoholism may also be stimulated by the fact that, in certain groups, being a hard and fast drinker is considered a sign of masculine value, just as drinking bouts can be interpreted as male solidarity.

In El Salvador and Peru, as in most other countries, there is also an apparent connection between alcohol and violence, particularly since violent behaviour may be excused if it is performed by someone who is under the influence of alcohol. Macho culture has a tendency to encourage males to demonstrate their strength through fighting and/or exposing their ability to endure physical and psychological pain.

El Salvador has one of the highest homicide rates in Latin America. In 1997, there were 150 homicides committed for every 100,000 inhabitants. This compared with 6 in Costa Rica, 9 in Honduras and 18 in Nicaragua, while a notoriously violent country like Colombia had 90 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.[25] Such a high incidence of violent crime naturally mirrors a tendency, among certain groups, to use violence in human relations. El Salvador also has one of the highest incidences in Central America of violence against women. Between 1999 and 2005, 1,000 women were murdered and, of these cases, only 20 per cent were brought to court.[26] In 2004, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that 238 women had been murdered by their husbands in El Salvador during 2003 and there were concerns that this number was climbing.[27] Much of the blame for this extreme violence against women has been put on juvenile gangs, so called *maras*.[28] Within these groups women are often treated with open contempt, and female gang members are sometimes dealt with as if they were merchandise that could change hands between male gang members. Even if the majority of the killings are blamed on rampant street gangs, a great part of the aggression against women most probably comes from their own spouses, partners or ex-partners.

In Peru, violence against women is also a serious problem. According to the Survey of Demography and Family Health (ENDES)[29] held in 2000, over 40 per cent of Peruvian women have been pushed, beaten or attacked by their husband or partner. For the majority of them (over 80 per cent), this happens occasionally, while for 16 per cent of them, their husband or partner is aggressive on a frequent basis.[30]

While considering the relation between machismo and social violence, it may be worth mentioning the cultural attitudes that are fostered among both rural men and women by feelings of low self-esteem and low social status. Illustrative examples of machismo attitudes can be found in popular

music that is rooted in sociocultural settings dominated by male individuals who have experienced deprivation in the form of ethnic and racial discrimination, unemployment or other forms of social disgrace and outsidership. Lyrics that denigrate women are quite common within a wide range of music created on the American mainland and in the Caribbean. It suffices to mention the wide range of male chauvinist attitudes that one encounters in boleros, tangos, merengues, blues, calypsos, rancheras and similar expressions of male frustration in a world characterized by closed options and strong feelings of alienation. In addition, there are the negative sociocultural effects of a worldwide commercial culture that makes use of objectionable sexist attitudes to awaken interest in its products.

Traditional exploitation and oppression in the context of home and family – including domestic violence, unrecognized and uncompensated domestic work, and the treatment of women as second-class citizens – have for many years been facts of life in El Salvador and Peru (and in most other countries). The situation in the Latin American countryside may have been especially bad due to the hacienda system, abject poverty and the exceptional power of large landowners that characterized much of the 20th century. In rural El Salvador, girls were often married off at puberty, and in as late as 1971, the general census established that one third of all 14-year-old females had already experienced at least one pregnancy.[31] In 2000, the rate of pregnancy in El Salvador was 107 for every 1,000 women between 15 and 19 years of age. The equivalent rate for Latin America as a whole was 74.[32] In Peru, it is estimated that in eight out of every ten cases of sexual abuse, the abuser is part of the family environment, and that six out of every ten pregnancies in girls between 11 and 14 years old are the result of incest or rape.[33]

The importance of the concept of machismo for development is based on the fact that machismo is a relational concept. It receives its meaning within the daily interaction between men and women. It is important to underline that machismo is not only a contributing factor to social evils such as alcoholism, violence and sexual exploitation of women. Ideas of male superiority also have a negative impact on issues such as the division of labour, access to and control over resources and services, knowledge, and the needs and organizational capacities of men and women. The concept also sheds light on the fact that the relationships between men and women are often based on power differentials. Nevertheless, no one is completely powerless in every situation. On the contrary, women as social and vocal actors may develop strategies to deal with the daily reality of machismo and to create their own domains of power and change.

> With women working outside the home, it's not just a question of them having their own money now, as important as this has been. What's also involved is that women have met all sorts of different people, which has changed them forever. And this has meant that the men have changed, for if they don't, they're increasingly getting left behind by women. Let me tell you, this is what's happening.[34]

A change of attitude often comes about not only through personal decisions or sociological changes, but also through the help and influence of others. Heriberto Cruz, a Salvadoran farmer in Cantón Santa Lucia, explained this as follows:

> People attack us for being machos. However, machismo is a kind of trap that not everyone is fully aware of. I used to be very macho myself. Everyone was afraid of me, but I was trapped in something I couldn't control. I was deep in alcoholism as well, and that is a sickness of the mind. I was a disastrous person because I was not honest with myself. To become liberated from alcoholism you have to find the right solutions. You have to look into your life with a cold glance. I managed to come out of it. Then, I was known as *Bolo Berto* [the Drunkard Berto], now I am *Don Heriberto* [Mister Heriberto]. Machismo is also a kind of sickness. Women did not want to come to our meetings and now it is easy to understand why. Because there we were, we men, all of us telling the women that they had to stay in the kitchen and cook food for us. However, people came here and demonstrated the benefits of working with women. Our eyes were opened. I came out of the machismo, just as I came out of the alcoholism, through the help of others. When you find yourself immersed in a swamp you have to be dragged out, and you must accept the helping hand.

## Conceptualizing the family household

Traditionally, the family household is at the centre of most peasants' endeavours.[35] Thus most organizations that support rural development projects, including IFAD, usually state that their efforts are directed at 'rural families'.[36] This indicates that if sustainable development is to be achieved, all members of a family – the men, women, youth, children and elderly people – have to be given equal access to the means that are needed to liberate themselves from the poverty trap. Therefore, gender equity issues must be an essential part of all programmes that are intended to alleviate

rural poverty. Rubén Darío López, a small rural businessman in El Salvador, stressed the importance of the family and, more specifically, of the unity of the family:

> Now I understand that we're a team and that we have to involve the entire family in the struggle against poverty. Because of that, I say that capacity building is important and ought to be done by both man and wife. They are a team; we do not only talk about the woman, we do not talk only about the men, we talk about solidarity and democracy. I say we should not talk only about women, but also about the family and then we will progress.[37]

When development agencies discuss rural households, they sometimes treat households as undifferentiated units and make references to the 'household's interests' or the 'household's decisions'. Hence, the household runs the risk of being treated as an 'individual by another name', and thus any behaviour exhibited by that individual may de facto be interpreted as motivated by household interests.[38] Such a conceptualization of households is based on the assumption that households are harmonious units, the members of which strive collectively for the same goals. In reality, however, the members of a household may have conflicting interests and struggle with each other to realize their personal goals.[39]

Household food security has become an important goal for many development efforts. Although it is certainly a useful approach, if the concept of 'family' or 'household' is generalized rather than specified in relation to particular situations and settings, it could easily give rise to various misconceptions. For example, in project design it has been quite common to assume that all heads of rural households are supposed to act in a similar way. If households are perceived as cohesive units there is a risk of viewing rural realities through some kind of idealized mist. The problem with such consensual images is that they may miss intra-household relations of power, subordination and perhaps conflict and dissent. If the family is viewed as an essential unit in rural production, it is important to realize that each family is composed of different individuals. General assumptions of household cooperation might obscure the fact that household members may not always exhibit altruism, but rather engage in 'passive non-strategic or overtly resistant, antagonistic, ambivalent, anti-strategic or even multi-strategic behaviour such as laziness, greed, selfishness, revenge or egocentrism'.[40]

An effective gender analysis that takes into account different roles played by family members may result in efforts that activate and empower each individual, inspiring them to act within their specific sociocultural setting. Such an approach may be helpful in exposing the plight of people who have been immersed in the household concept to such an extent that they have become 'invisible', which has often been the case with women and children. It is important to visualize women and children and to address the subordinate position they may have towards their husbands, fathers and brothers.

There are different types of household composition: nuclear family household (parents with children); single-parent nuclear family household (one parent with children); and extended family household, which may include the nuclear family plus one or more individuals or other nuclear households.[41] Two concepts are important to understanding the ways in which family households function internally. The first concept is the division of labour based on gender. Often, domestic and child-rearing chores are ascribed to women and girls. This may mean strenuous work, which demands an enormous time investment, especially in circumstances of rural poverty. This puts limits on the mobility of women and girls and on the time they can invest in other activities, such as education, income-generating activities or organizational work. The second concept concerns the male domination of intra-household cash flows.[42] Generally speaking, men exercise greater control over these cash flows than women do, and this can reveal itself in various ways. A man can decide whether or not to share with his wife information about the level of his income. He can decide what percentage of his income he will give his wife for housekeeping and what percentage he will keep for personal spending or pocket money. He can reduce his contribution to the housekeeping as soon as his wife starts generating her own income. He can also decide how to give the housekeeping money to his wife (for example, per day, per week). Finally, he can control the housekeeping money even after he has given it to his wife; for instance, he can 'borrow' it. Women, on the other hand, often put their entire income into the housekeeping and have much less financial autonomy than men have.[43] There is no female equivalent of pocket money. While men may see pocket money as a right, women may feel guilty about spending money on themselves.[44]

'Secondary poverty' is a term used to describe the situation of women and children in poor family households, where the unequal power relations mean that the man does not spend all his income for the benefit of his family.[45] For example, a family may be undernourished because the man has

withheld part of his income for personal expenditure. The same situation of dire poverty may also prevail in woman-headed households. However, research indicates that within such families it is common that more of the income goes towards the household. Some women heads of family state that they have been better off financially since their husband died or deserted them.[46] Many women who have lived with volatile husbands have stressed that they could never budget efficiently because of the unstable amounts of money their husbands gave them for housekeeping each week.[47] Marta Alicia Martínez, president of the Peasant Women's Association of the East (AMCO)[48] (Quetzaltepeque, Guatemala), explained this as follows:

> I've been living alone with my three children for 17 years now. My husband was an alcoholic and was killed in a bar brawl. Unfortunately, it has been a tradition around here that men drink. If you're not able to handle alcohol, you're not a real man. Even kids drink so that they appear as men. It was desperation and necessity that pushed me on. When you do not have the necessity, you do not really see the possibilities. Being a widow forced me to find solutions to everything and made me sharp and clever. I joined organizations, seeking out possibilities for improving my life and the well-being of my children. I set myself a goal: all my children will be professionals and I will work for that. I have 10 *tareas* [1.5 acres] of land to support my family. My father gave it to me when my husband died. The land is irrigated and I grow corn and beans on it. One of my girls is studying to become an engineer; the other one will become a teacher. The boy is more complicated and seeks his freedom, but he will eventually become a professional as well.

There is an inherent danger that women may be rendered invisible within the fold of the family: in some cases, they are non-existent in the eyes of the state and the authorities, since they lack social registration and/or legal documents that prove their existence and legal status as a citizen.[49] For example, in rural Brazil approximately 4.5 million women lack any type of documentation. This becomes evident particularly when it comes to land registration: if a woman is not legally registered she cannot obtain a land title through land reform programmes; the same applies to situations when husbands die or desert, or in relation to the inheritance of land. Lack of land and civil registration is a formidable barrier to women's access to resources and benefits, as well as to their possibilities to organize and start businesses of their own.[50]

## Perceptions of poverty

IFAD's interest in gender equity stems from its mandate to help poor rural people to overcome poverty. However, the concept of 'poverty' – just like gender and other concepts that constantly recur in all development debates – has been redefined and refined. In this process IFAD has moved away from classical and more abstract definitions of poverty that are exclusively based on quantitative measurements of levels of income. The definition that is currently being used within IFAD is based on three indicators: i) exclusion and discrimination; ii) access to basic needs and services; and iii) family income.[51]

When poor people are asked to describe what poverty is, they usually describe it as a state characterized by limitations or a harrowing lack of possibilities. Poverty is often described as a trap, most of the exits from which are either locked or non-existent. The following citations of poor people from different parts of the world illustrate this point.

> You're poor when nothing works for you. When you work, but your effort does not yield anything. When you go to the market but cannot sell your products. When you are always in need and cannot find anything to nourish your children with.
>
> (Valentine Tsogo, smallholder in Abondo, Cameroon)[52]
>
> I'm not poor. Poor people are those who don't think of their families and don't preoccupy themselves with improving economically.
>
> (Hipólito Kcala Yuca, smallholder in Pomacanchi, Peru)
>
> Worst of all is when you have no income, because it makes you unable to realize any dreams.
>
> (Ibrahim Omar Ali Zahm, smallholder in Almarawaa, Yemen)
>
> You're poor when you cannot find a job and are incapable of sending your children to school, when you're sick and unable to get any care and attention. What makes poverty most difficult is when bad luck strikes, for example when you fall ill and cannot get any proper attention.
>
> (Nkolo Ndzana, smallholder in Abondo, Cameroon)
>
> I become sad when I want to do something and ultimately fail in spite of all my efforts.
>
> (Nadira Islam, artisanal fisherwoman in Aruakandi, Bangladesh)
>
> You're happy when you have power. Power over yourself and things around you.
>
> (Jackson Ndiegi, smallholder in Mara, United Republic of Tanzania)

That most poor people are reluctant to be defined as such is probably due to the fact that being labelled as 'poor' implies a permanent state of affairs and thus easily invites attitudes characterized by pity and charity.[53] Most poor people seldom ask for charity, but search for opportunities to gain access to credit, land, skills, means of production, information, water and health services, as well as to be able to influence decisions and have peace and security.

> It's important for me to be a good worker and to maintain my family without asking for financial support from others.
>
> (Simon Toma, smallholder in Bushkash, Albania)
>
> I'm most proud of the good coordination I'm maintaining with my colleagues, that we're able to work together for a future in which we will no longer have bad economy, but really obtain a daily income.
>
> (Hipólito Kcala Yuca, smallholder in Pomacanchi, Peru)

Certain components of IFAD projects, like those of many other development organizations, are aimed at addressing needs and demands by promoting initiatives from and the participation of project beneficiaries, and creating opportunities by mobilizing skills and possibilities inherent in rural communities – an endeavour that nowadays also includes women.

While discussing gender issues it nevertheless happens that development workers may state that 'We have a practical approach to gender mainstreaming. If it doesn't serve poverty alleviation, we won't apply it.' As Annina Lubbock, IFAD's Technical Adviser for Gender and Household Food Security, stated:

> Strangely enough, such opinions may be aired within IFAD as well. I usually react strongly when I have to listen to them, because in my opinion such views reflect a very limited realization of what poverty really is. Such notions probably arise from a point of view that restricts the concept of poverty to purely economic connotations. However, if we listen to the opinions of the poor themselves, we soon realize that poverty also has to do with lack of possibilities, influence and probably most essentially – lack of power. Gender is very much a question about not only access to certain tangible assets, but also about power and influence. Accordingly, there does not exist any real dichotomy between gender mainstreaming and poverty alleviation.

In the mid-1970s, the main concern of development practitioners was that many households did not have enough income or resources to meet their food needs. This realization led to a shift from national food security to a concern with the nutritional needs of households. This new approach provided a broader perspective, and gradually the focus changed from food security to sustainable livelihood:

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and if it contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in both the short and the long term.[54]

According to Chambers, the objective of development is well-being for all. By using the concept of 'well-being', he stresses the fact that unlike wealth, well-being is open to a wide range of human experience – social, mental and spiritual, as well as material. Although extreme poverty and ill-being go together, amassing wealth does not assure well-being. Chambers considers livelihood security to be the basis for well-being. Livelihood is secured when rights and access to resources, food, income and basic services are guaranteed. People's capabilities, created and supported by learning, practice, training and education, are essential if they are to achieve a sustainable livelihood. The poor, the weak, the vulnerable and the exploited should be at the centre of any development effort. Accordingly, equity should be taken into consideration in all development initiatives. Equity includes human rights and inter-generational, ethnic and gender equity. Since equity is a basic requirement for obtaining sustainable development, it must be considered in all contexts of development work. Equity is the basis for development, and its goal is sustainability.[55]

Ideally, the capital generated by a development project should comprise not only financial capital (for example, income, financial security, credit, investments), but also natural capital (efficient care and use of soil, water, forests and biodiversity), productive capital (access to land, infrastructure), cultural capital (language, rituals, world views, traditional agriculture), social capital (reciprocal relationships, social networks, group activities, communal decision-making), political capital (leadership, voice, power, inclusion) and human capital (the status of individuals: local knowledge, education, health and self-reliance). Women and men ought to have an

equal and guaranteed share in each and every one of these capital assets, not only because it is a human right, but also because the equal participation of women and men is crucial for achieving the objective of development projects: poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood.[56]

It is an established fact that gender inequalities hinder development and that the full costs of such inequalities are borne by everyone. Nevertheless, gender disparities in education and health are greatest among poor people. Any society's capacity to attain economic growth and a rise in living standards is hampered by denying certain groups' access to resources, public services or productive activities. The relation between gender equity and economic growth has been emphasized by the World Bank:

> Rising income and falling poverty levels tend to reduce gender disparities in education, health and nutrition. Higher productivity and new job opportunities often reduce gender inequalities in employment. And investments in basic water, energy and transportation infrastructure help reduce gender disparities in workload.[57]

In addition, if women's schooling and income improve, health and nutritional standards generally change for the better. The effects of gender equity reforms on development are still not thoroughly investigated, but all information available so far points in the same direction – no development effort can afford to ignore gender equity issues.

Nowadays, the most common answer to the question 'How can one integrate gender equity in development projects?' is 'Through mainstreaming' – which generally means that gender consciousness must be an integral part of all activities and a cross-cutting concern in all components of a rural development project.

## Endnotes

1/ IFAD (2003:3), p. 3.

2/ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) uses a similar definition: 'Gender refers to the socially constructed rather than biologically determined roles of men and women as well as the relationships between men and women in a given society at a specific time and place. These roles and relationships are not fixed, but can and do change in the light of evolving needs and opportunities' (UNDP (2003), p. 3).

3/ A World Bank report distinguishes 'equality under the law, equality of opportunity (including equality of rewards for work and equality in access to human capital and other productive resources that enable opportunity), and equality of voice (the ability to influence and contribute to the development process)' (World Bank (2001), pp. 2-3).

4/ All definitions are taken from IFAD's Gender Plan of Action (IFAD (2003), p. 3).

5/ Notions related to male domination are far from being exclusive to Latin America and the Caribbean. Misogyny, 'hatred of or strong prejudice against women', is an age-old and global phenomenon that more and more has been recognized as a political and cultural ideology justifying and maintaining the subordination of women by men. There exists a vast literature on misogyny. Studies of the phenomenon within a Christian context include Brown (1988), Warner (1976) and Ranke-Heinemann (1990). Much has also been written about the concept within a Muslim context. For a sustained analysis of Qur'anic formulations of gender and the historical gender debate within Islam, see, for example, Ahmed (1992). Rogers (1966), Dijkstra (1986), (1998) and Showalter (1990) provide interesting examples of misogyny in Occidental culture (literature, art and ideology).

6/ Stevens (1973), p. 90; Steenbeek (1995), pp. 42-48, see also Lancaster (1992) on Nicaragua.

7/ de Mente (1996), p. 175.

8/ Gutmann (1996), see also Chant and Craske (2003), p. 14.

9/ The overwhelming importance of male virility and the central position of the *cojones* in the popular culture of Spain is well illustrated by Cela (1969) in his *Diccionario secreto I*, which is entirely dedicated to words, expressions and concepts related to *cojones*. For an extensive analysis of masculine metaphors in Spanish folk speech, see Brandes (1981).

10/ Pitt-Rivers (1971), p. 90.

11/ Steenbeek (1995), pp. 48-49; Pitt-Rivers (1977), p. 23.

12/ Highly influential scriptural religions such as Christianity and Islam often reflect patriarchal notions. In the Bible, for example, one can read that wives have to submit themselves to their husbands, at the same time as the husbands have to love and take care of their wives. Ephesians 5:22-33, The Bible, King James Version.

13/ Stevens (1973), see also Chant and Craske (2003), pp. 9-10, and Warner (1976).

14/ See, for example, Navarro (2002).

15/ The concept may be considered as double-edged in the sense that it both sanctifies and demonizes women. An ideal *marianista* woman can be described as emotional, kind and self-assured, but might just as well be characterized as docile, compliant, instinctive, vulnerable and unassertive. A *marianista* woman is generally considered to be pious and endowed with high status if she has children and acts like a caring mother (see Stevens (1973), p. 35). Accordingly, her counter-image is the 'whore', i.e. an imperfect woman considered to be base and vile, worthy of contempt and abuse.

16/ Steenbeek (1995).

17/ Mirandé (1997); Chant and Craske (2003), p. 15.

18/ Mirandé (1997), p. 36.

19/ Mirandé (1997), p. 45; Chant and Craske (2003), p. 15.

20/ Mirandé (1997), p. 49.

21/ Francoeur et al. in Mirandé (1997), p. 142.

22/ Chant and Craske (2003), p. 15.

23/ A study carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) indicates that most violence against women is related to the spouse's alcoholism, and that most of these men had a history of domestic violence during their childhoods (Arriagada (2004), p. 57).

24/ Morris et al. (1968) in Bourque and Warren (1981), pp. 106-107.

25/ Correia and Pena (2002), p. 7.

26/ UNIFEM's web portal: 'Women, War and Peace'. http://www.womenwarpeace.org (visited July 2006). In a BBC broadcast aired on 4 May 2006, Norma Cruz, a human rights activist, commented upon a similar situation in Guatemala: 'There is no fingerprint database, no DNA testing, no profiling of the victims, or of the murders themselves. There is no ballistics database, no cross-referencing.' She hinted that this state of affairs is a result of neglect of women's rights. See, Olenka Frenkie 'Killer's Paradise: Murder Mystery in Guatemala', 4 May 2006. http://www.bbc.co.uk (visited July 2006).

27/ Ibid.

28/ *Maras* generally originate from lower middle class, urban settings. Three fourths of the gang members are male with an average age of 18.5 years and the great majority of them come from single-parent homes. There are estimated to be 30,000 members in Salvadoran *maras* (Correia and Pena (2002), p. 9). Some *maras* have their origin in the United States. Gang violence has been a common urban feature throughout United States history, particularly thriving within marginalized migrant communities. At present, there are approximately 500 Sureno Hispanic gangs in Los Angeles, representing over 50 per cent of overall gang membership in that city. Most notorious is Mara Salvatrucha, composed of mostly Salvadorans and other Central Americans. The gang has a uniquely international profile, with an estimated 10,000 members in the United States and tens of thousands more in Central America. Campo-Flores (2006).

29/ *Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Familiar*.

30/ INEI (2000), see also Boesten (2004), p. 214.

31/ Barry (1990), p. 122.

32/ Correia and Pena (2002), p. 4; IFAD (2001:2), p. 2.

33/ UNICEF, ¡Los chicos siempre ganan!
http://www.unicef.org/peru/media/noticias_017eng.html (visited May 2006).

34/ Fidel Aguirre cited in Gutmann (1996), p. 239.

35/ There is a debate around the term 'peasant' (*campesino* in Spanish). In an English-speaking context, the use of the term is sometimes avoided because it is considered derogatory. However, in economic and anthropological literature 'peasant' is mostly used as a separate, analytical category, different from, for example, farmers. 'Farmer' is used in a wide sense, denoting an agriculturalist who generally owns land and runs an 'agro-business', meaning that the farmer does not necessarily have to subsist directly on his/her own produce. A peasant is defined as a member of a social class constituted by small farmers, tenants, sharecroppers and labourers living on, or nearby, the land where they form the main agricultural labour force. Their basic production unit is the family, or household, which traditionally consumes what it produces, though a portion of the output may be sold or exchanged for certain rights and services (see Lipton (1968), Shanin (1979) and Dalton (1972)).

36/ When using a concept like 'rural families', it is important to keep in mind that family structures differ and are preconditioned by cultural contexts. Latin American and Caribbean family structures are often characterized as 'Creole' to indicate that they originate from a patriarchal, Christian, European cultural conglomerate, which gave rise to a specific economic system controlling plantations, mines and landed estates, with a

workforce constituted by African slaves or indigenous serfs. Accordingly, Creole society was a product of an unequal relationship between a dominant class of European colonizers and a dominated class constituted by Africans and Native Americans. Creole kinship systems are characterized by the coexistence of traditional 'Christian' marriages and mainly matrilineal, often extended, households. These specific Creole family/household patterns developed into two subdivisions originating from concubinage and extended family patterns – an Indigenous-Creole type of cohabitation that, for example, became dominant in Paraguay, where by the mid-20th century between 40 and 45 per cent of all births were extra-marital, and an Afro-Creole type, where the Jamaican society became most prominent, with 70 per cent of extra-marital births. Cultural traits developing from such constellations are still influencing gender relations and kinship structures in several Latin American and Caribbean societies (Therborn (2004), p. 25).

37/ FIDA/ProGénero/Promer (2003), p. 31. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

38/ Folbre, (1986), p. 5.

39/ For an analysis of the misconceptions related to the concept of households, see, for example, Harris (1984) or Wolf (1997).

40/ Wolf (1997), p. 129. Other misconceptions on which the conceptualization of households may be based are: i) all households consist of a nuclear family comprising husband, wife and a number of children; ii) all households function as a socio-economic unit within which there is equal control over resources; iii) the division of labour within the household is always based on the male breadwinner and the dependent female caretaker (Moser (1993), pp. 16-17).

41/ Benería and Roldán (1987), p. 23. In a Latin American context, several subdivisions are usually employed. The following categories were used in a comprehensive survey of 16 different countries, carried out by ECLAC in 2002: i) nuclear bi-parental with children (42.8 per cent); ii) extended bi-parental (14 per cent); iii) nuclear single-woman-headed (9.8 per cent); iv) single person (8.4 per cent); v) nuclear bi-parental without children (7.7 per cent); vi) extended single-woman-headed families (7.6 per cent); vii) families without parental nucleus (4.8 per cent); viii) nuclear single-male-headed (around 1 per cent); and ix) extended single-male-headed (around 1 per cent) (Arriagada (2004), p. 46).

42/ Benería and Roldán (1987), pp. 113-123.

43/ Ibid., p. 120.

44/ A study of two villages in the Peruvian Andes supports these insights into male domination of intra-household cash flows. Although married women may be temporarily responsible for keeping the money, men could always claim these savings and spend them as they see fit. The men in this study often spent these savings on drink (Bourque and Warren (1981), pp. 106-107).

45/ See Chant (1997:2), p. 157, see also Chant (1997:1).

46/ Chant (1997:2), p. 157.

47/ Ibid.

48/ *Associación de Mujeres Campesinas de Oriente*.

49/ IFAD (1998:4), p. 47.

50/ Projeto Dom Hélder Câmara (2003), p. 18. Several IFAD projects have focused on this and have helped women to register themselves.

51/ Quijandría and Peña-Montenegro (n.d.), p. 3.

52/ This and the following commentaries were collected by IFAD's Publication Unit in 2002 in various communities that were involved in projects supported by IFAD. Local extension workers were requested to select ten men and women within a rural community in different parts of the world and ask them a set of questions, among them 'What does poverty mean to you?'

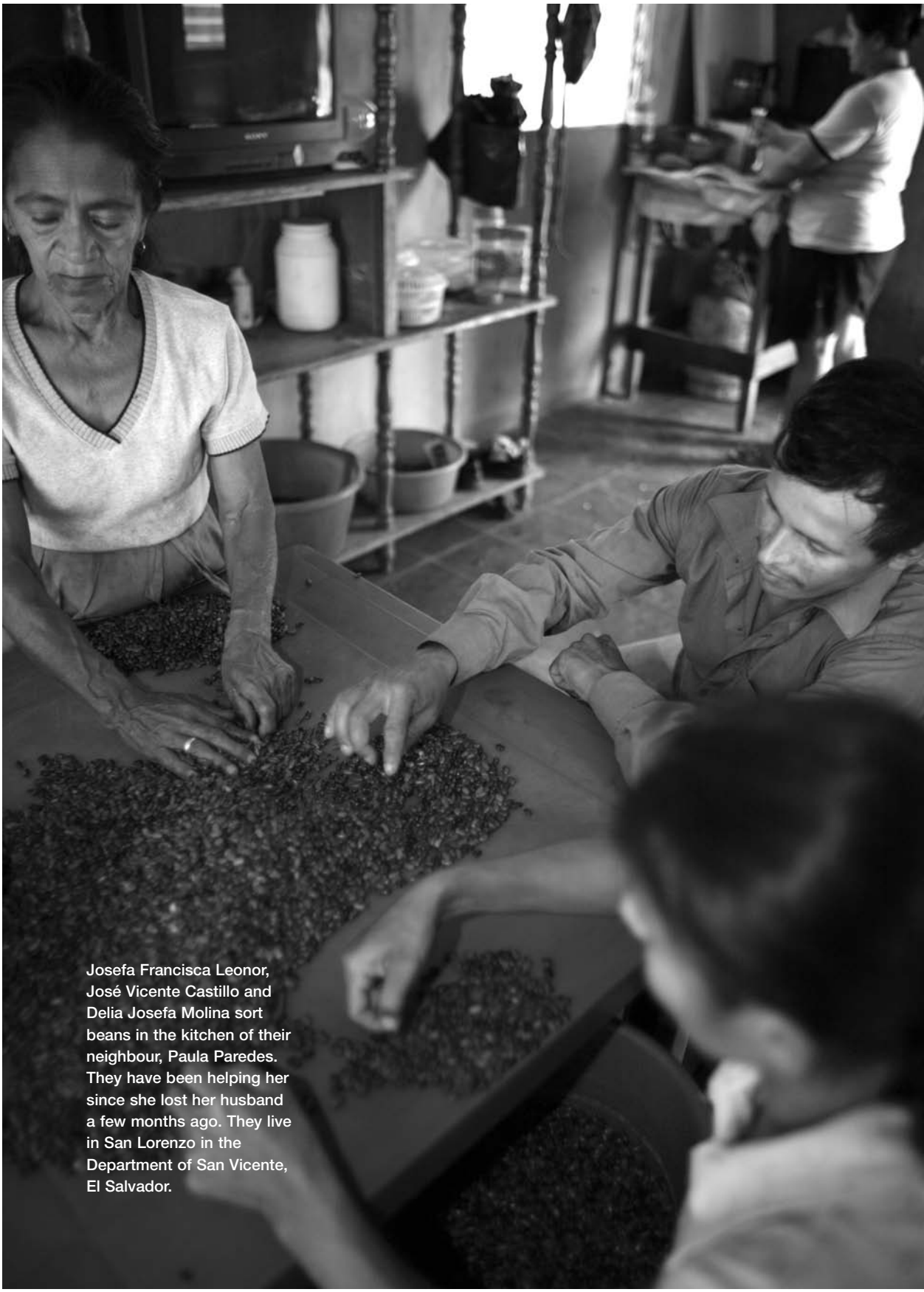
53/ Such attitudes are common in mainstream religious thinking. For example, some Christians point to Jesus' statement that 'You will always have the poor among you' (John 12:8) and indicate that even if compassion demands that true believers have to share their wealth with more unfortunate neighbours (see Matthew 25:32 46), poverty will not disappear.

54/ Chambers and Conway (1991), p. 6.

55/ Chambers (1997), pp. 9-10.

56/ See for discussions on capitals and assets, for example, Bebbington (1999) and Moser (1998).

57/ World Bank (2001), p. 2.



Josefa Francisca Leonor, José Vicente Castillo and Delia Josefa Molina sort beans in the kitchen of their neighbour, Paula Paredes. They have been helping her since she lost her husband a few months ago. They live in San Lorenzo in the Department of San Vicente, El Salvador.

Chapter 2

# Rural and gendered realities: Voices from El Salvador

Within the development literature, gender refers to the socially constructed roles of women and men, and to the relationships between them. These gender roles and relationships are not fixed but change constantly in the light of evolving needs, opportunities, changing environments and societal developments. According to such a definition, gender cannot be studied and addressed without taking into consideration its specific sociocultural setting at a specific moment in time. We therefore chose to reflect changing gender roles through descriptions of aspects of rural life in El Salvador and the Peruvian highlands. The fact that El Salvador and Peru represent quite different topographical, agro-technical and cultural settings may help us to understand that gender relations and constructions are locally specific. Nevertheless, in spite of variations in the social and geographical environment, gender issues are always relevant in any discussion and strategy concerning development.

In this and the following chapter, we shed light on the rural realities in El Salvador and Peru based on voices from the field. The interviews and testimonies presented here were held especially for the purpose of this book with participants and beneficiaries of IFAD-sponsored projects. In their narratives, the interviewees reveal the gendered character of their daily lives. They talk about the division of labour between women and men, poverty and violence, as well as about the impact IFAD-supported projects have had on their lives and how these projects have helped them to improve their living conditions and strengthen their self-esteem.

We begin with the testimony of Rosita Mélida Leonor. We then put this testimony in its social and cultural context by focusing on gender roles and divisions in the Salvadoran countryside, the impact the civil war has had on daily rural life and the way the war has contributed to changing gender relations. Although we focus on El Salvador in this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that many of these topics are not in any way specific to El Salvador. Certainly, El Salvador has had its share of social unrest and a fierce civil war, but since the fighting ceased and a peace process was initiated, the efforts of the Salvadoran people and the country's authorities have been admired throughout the world.[1] In spite of the scars left by internal conflicts and natural disasters, progress and positive changes have taken place. The achievements of El Salvador have been quoted as a model for peace processes in other parts of the world, and the openness and pragmatism of the Salvadoran people are easily perceived by anyone who visits the country's rural areas.[2]

## Rosita Mélida Leonor's story

Rosita Mélida Leonor is married, has five daughters and lives in Cantón Santa Lucia. She is a beneficiary of and participant in the IFAD-sponsored Smallholders' Agricultural Development Project in the Paracentral Region of El Salvador (PRODAP),[3] through which she has obtained credit.

> In my parents' home, there were six sisters and only one brother. My father liked my brother better than my sisters and me. He wanted him to behave just like him, to dominate all the women of the household. My mother was submissive and, like all women around here, she tended the house. I liked going to school and made it all the way to the ninth grade, but then my father asked me if I wanted to marry or study. To continue the studies could be costly, so I married. My husband wanted a son, but I only got daughters, five all together. My husband became very frustrated by this. It turned into an obsession. He said that if he was deprived of sons, he would be unable to show his manliness. He grew angry and bitter, constantly stating that women are good for nothing. I started to feel worthless as a woman. During weekends he was drinking heavily. Often he became extremely grumpy and he used to mistreat me when he was drunk.
>
> Then came the war and it changed the lives of all of us. We could not sleep in our homes and had to live in secluded places, far away. The people were terrorized. Unknown people were moving around in the darkness of the nights. Explosions were heard, people died and disappeared. Corpses were found scattered in many places, but no one

explained why they had been killed. It felt as if monsters were roaming the countryside. The dawn always came as a relief. We could not move around, we could not talk. The men were unable to work in the fields. They did not plant beans or maize. Poverty grew instead of crops.

We did not know anything about politics. They [the Army] called up my only brother, and he was killed the day before he would have turned 18. We found his headless corpse. His head was never found. In those days my father was not around. Most of the men had disappeared. My husband had fled and I was left with a newborn baby. They killed six men by the canal. After those killings, two helicopters appeared and the soldiers ordered us to bury the dead.

Rosita Mélida Leonor. At 52 years of age and after a hard early life, Rosita Mélida now has a successful chicken-breeding business. She owns her own house and is a respected community leader. Her husband died seven years ago and she now has a younger partner.

I lived alone in the house with my daughters. We were starving because it was hard to work without a man. After the war various organizations appeared. They called us to meetings, instructed us and taught us self-respect. After a while my husband returned. He had not changed his manners and just as before he beat us when he was drunk. However, as my self-respect grew, my mind eventually cleared. I became motivated and realized that every human being has the right to be proud of herself and has the ability to become productive and thus turn into a real benefit for her home and family.

I remember how I feared that particular word. It was so strange and mystifying: 'credit'. I wanted very much to improve my life. I had learned many things and wanted to start a small business, selling pastries and bread. However, when I went to the bank, they asked me: 'Where is your husband?'

Finally, PRODAP came and I was able to get a loan. For me, the 65 dollars was a very big loan indeed, a great credit. I was so proud and was filled by a great sense of responsibility. Everyone warned me. They said I would go to jail if I could not pay my debts. My father told me: 'Girl, never put yourself in this debt. It is dangerous for yourself, for your husband, for your children.' Nevertheless, my daughters believed in me and they helped me. It was the only solution we could find for trying to escape from our poverty and misery. Our poverty had reached the last stage. We did not have enough clothes, no shoes, not even underwear. My husband dedicated himself to his drinking, constantly telling me: 'It seems that destiny has sentenced me to a miserable life in the company of women that I have to support all my life.'

With the credit I bought a hen, vitamins and food. Oh, my hen was a beautiful creature and soon several chickens hatched. When my husband saw my success and happiness, he became jealous. He poisoned my chickens. That was the last blow. I had always been a submissive woman, but when he attacked the chickens that I had got through my own personal credit I became furious and left him. I took the hen and the surviving chickens with me to my parents' house. He had only succeeded in killing four of them.

I sold my first chickens and earned 300 *colones*. Soon, I could buy 100 chickens and within eight months I paid off all my debt. The people who had sold me the chickens were astonished when they saw my progress and they congratulated me on my achievements. The bank told me that I had become a reliable client and offered me more credit. I suddenly turned into a small business entrepreneur, and my increasing self-respect made it possible for me to return to my husband. Finally, he began to feel somewhat proud of the women in his house. He started to count the money we provided. My husband wanted me to involve him in the family business, as well. So I told him, very proudly: 'Sir, if you ever put your hands on me again, I will defend myself. You cannot mistreat me anymore. I am a woman in my own right. You count, but I count as well and so do our daughters!' I had proved myself to be an independent woman and my husband understood what it meant. He asked me: 'Please, can't you help me to get some support for my farming and I will let you continue undisturbed with your business.'

PRODAP had called us women to several meetings. Their support had been very helpful. Here, we all have this immense problem in common. We are all suffering from it. It is the poverty and it causes lots of mistreatment and agony. We have to find a way out of our misery and great help can be found in this beautiful word – equity! It has shown me a way out of my misery by informing me about the fact that men and women are of equal value. I am so proud of my development as a person and I have been able to become an honourable head of my family! I am now very proud of myself. Lately, I have also been learning to understand my husband and realize why he behaved as he did. I am even becoming proud of him too.

All my five daughters have gone through high school and life has changed for the better. My message is that self-respect is a most precious thing in a person's life. Every home ought to have it written in big letters on one of the walls!

## Gender roles and divisions of labour in rural El Salvador

In the Salvadoran countryside, as in most rural societies, the family is extremely important, both as a production unit and as a point of reference. This fact is even more accentuated among indigenous peoples in neighbouring countries. For example, in the language of the Chortis,[4] who live on the Guatemalan side of the border, 'family' is *mactak*, in which *tak* comes from *takar*, which means help, assistance, to work together. The family is essential for an individual's survival, and most Chortis think that a man without a family is not really a man ('He's a good-for-nothing') and – perhaps needless to say – the same goes for women.

The day of a typical peasant family usually begins before sunrise. It is Venus – visible some time before the sun appears – that signals the breaking of a new day of hard labour. In Central America, Venus is also called the Tortilla Star, since for most women living in rural areas its appearance means that it is high time to start making the tortillas.

During pre-Columbian times, tortilla making was considered a sacred occupation. The Plumed Serpent was once the most important god for people living in Mexico and Central America. He was called Quetzalcoatl in Nahuatl; the Maya knew him as Kukulkán, and the Quiché as Gukumatz.[5] A symbol of death and resurrection, Quetzalcoatl was believed to have burned himself to death. However, his heart survived the bonfire and became the Morning Star. Together with his twin brother, the Evening Star (Xolotl), Quetzalcoatl now watches over humankind and his most precious gift to humans: maize.[6]

Mayas called maize 'God's holy sunbeams'. Popul Vuh, the sacred book of the Quichés, states that humans were formed from a paste of maize, and the name for humankind in several Central American languages is 'children of the corn'. In Nahuatl the dough used for making tortillas is called *toneuhcayotl* ('our flesh'). At the beginning of time, the gods failed to make humans from animals, clay and wood. It was only when Quetzalcoatl decided to bake them from maize that the gods finally succeeded in creating human beings. Accordingly, the making of tortillas was a daily re-enactment of God's creation of woman and man, a symbolic act that mirrors women's life-sustaining tasks.[7]

Thus, even today, when the Morning Star becomes visible over El Salvador's lush, green fields, its cloud-misted hills and volcanoes, women rise to initiate the complex task of making tortillas. A short description of the process may help to visualize this extremely important female task: You take white corn grain and set it to a low boil in a covered pot together with

some slaked lime or wood ashes, until the 'skins' float on the top of the liquid. It takes approximately one hour to cook the grains, and it has to be done just before making the tortillas (if the mixture is left standing, it ferments and becomes acidic). The surplus liquid is drained off and the remaining kernels and germs are washed. The paste is put in a *metate* (stone mortar) and worked with a pestle. A jug of water has to be kept by the side. The water is needed to keep the mixture humid and pliable. This takes 15 to 30 minutes of hard labour. When the dough is ready, it is worked into small balls, from which the tortillas are shaped.

Shaping and baking the tortillas are the steps that require the greatest skill. The trick is to use only so much water that the resulting tortilla becomes soft and pliable. One has to work fast, otherwise the dough dries out. Both sides of the tortilla have to rest on the hot griddle for 30 to 60 seconds. If air bubbles form in the dough as it bakes, or if it becomes too wet and pasty, or too dry and burns, or is toasted, then the tortilla is completely ruined.

Tortilla making is an extremely time-consuming and complicated process, demanding at least two hours of work each time it is done. Since it is repeated three times a day, it takes up much of a rural woman's valuable time. Nevertheless, the general opinion is that no industrial tortilla can compare with the freshly baked tortillas of the countryside. In El Salvador it is an indication of dire poverty to eat hard tortillas. To give someone a hard tortilla is often considered to be a sign of lack of care and love among the rural communities.

Tortilla making is traditionally considered to be exclusively a woman's task. It serves as a symbol of femininity and thus forms part of a complex of gendered meanings. The art of making good tortillas is an important skill for adult women and an expression of being a 'good' woman, in the sense of being a skilled housewife. Accordingly, women who serve hard, cold or tough tortillas are not considered to be 'real' women. These cultural meanings attached to femininity are interrelated with meanings of masculinity. A man needs a wife to get his tortillas made. If a man cannot provide himself with his 'own' tortillas, it is a crucial sign of his incapacity to form a family of his own and his masculinity is subsequently in doubt. It is generally believed that a man is unable to make tortillas: 'A man needs a loving wife to make him fresh tortillas every day; otherwise his life is truly miserable.'[8]

The example of tortilla making may serve as an illustration of the intricate web of social and cultural meanings that forms part of traditional, gendered labour division in El Salvador. Customarily gendered tasks in the Salvadoran countryside may be described, somewhat simplistically, in the following way: to make the tortillas many

rural women have to get up as early as four o'clock in the morning; men usually rise at about five o'clock. Women also tend to go to bed later, since they have to clean up after dinner. Generally, a man goes to bed at around eight o'clock in the evening, while women go to sleep an hour later. Women are traditionally responsible for preparing food for their family; they fetch the water, collect and carry firewood, cook the meals and dispose of waste and rubbish. In short, their activities tend to centre on the homestead and its immediate vicinity. Accordingly, women take care of small poultry, pigs and other domestic animals that breed around the dwellings. They cultivate the family garden and are often engaged in making clothes, utensils for storage and cooking, and other handicrafts that can be made in or around the house. They oversee most of the work and education of their children and are responsible for their health and that of other members of the household, meaning that women often provide medicine and collect and prepare medicinal plants.

In rural El Salvador, men traditionally tend the fields. Soil preparation and the cultivation of basic grains are often considered exclusively male occupations, as is the construction of houses. Often women and children may help to sow, weed and harvest the crops. Men usually take care of the larger animals, such as horses and cattle. In general, they leave for the fields in the morning and return at around three o'clock in the afternoon, when many of them help their wives with the family garden and with collecting water and firewood. Since firewood has become increasingly scarce in some rural areas and now has to be fetched from further away, many men have taken over the task of collecting it and transporting it to their home. Men operate the machinery, and process and commercialize the produce. Men are also traditionally active in decision-making within villages and the district.[9] Most Salvadoran villages have an *asociación de desarrollo comunal* (communal development association), known as ADESCO. Although more men than women are engaged in communal work, women's access to these organizations is increasing rapidly. Men also take part in activities outside the homestead and deal with 'strangers'. Traditionally, the man procures credit and serves as the family's legal, political and official representative.

Considering the routinized and often busy schedules of rural women, additional activities tend to be an extra burden, particularly since the responsibility for domestic chores can seldom be left to others. Although grandparents and children can do some of the work, the responsibility for the maintenance of the house and family rests with the wife. The introduction of various household utensils may lessen the workload for

rural women; for example, small *nixtamal*[10] mills may minimize the time spent on making tortilla dough, while improved stoves may shorten cooking times and thus reduce firewood consumption. New ways of thinking may also change traditional gender roles in the sense that when men and women become more willing to share their workload in an efficient way, family income increases, thus benefiting all family members. Nevertheless, in El Salvador, women's tasks have increased over the years due to the fact that many men were involved in the war, and in more recent years more men than women have migrated north, searching for economic opportunities.[11]

## Conflict and change

In El Salvador, land and other natural resources – which are the basis for rural income – are under increasing threat of being depleted. Current models of development have contributed to the generation of an environmental crisis. Natural resources are squandered by unsuitable methods of exploitation and extraction. The disappearance of forests, the extinction of species, the degradation of the soil, and the scarcity and pollution of natural springs of water are all contributing to increasing the plight of those who have to make a living in a rural area. The land is intensively cultivated and less than 6 per cent of the country remains forested. Many of the country's river systems are suffering from pollution, and estimates have been made indicating that at the current rate of contamination, the country runs the risk of being without drinking water in the near future.[12]

El Salvador has potential for effective agricultural production because of its fertile soil and suitable climate. However, most of the fertile soil is already exploited and, despite land reform efforts, the distribution of land remains unequal. During the 1970s, there was a considerable increase in the number of farms covering less than a hectare of land. These farms were situated on very poor soil, often on steep hillsides that are prone to erosion, and many were rented rather than owned.[13] By 1980, approximately 65 per cent of the rural workforce was landless and dependent on temporary or full-time wage labour; more than half the rural families depended on wage work for over half of their income. Poverty and unemployment often resulted in the splitting up of families, a particularly acute problem among landless labourers, who often had to move to find work.[14]

Migration and displacement, while having dramatically increased during the 1980s, have long been one way that Salvadoran society has adapted to landlessness and repression. In the 1950s and 1960s, the

expansion of agro-export production displaced thousands of rural families. Large estate owners pushed sharecroppers off the *latifundios* (large farms) and thus the sharecroppers became more dependent on seasonal wage labour. The tensions between El Salvador and Honduras that caused the outbreak of a short war in 1969 led to the expulsion of tens of thousands of Salvadoran peasants living in Honduras. Later, the 1980-1992 civil war resulted in 500,000 internally displaced persons and the emigration of 750,000 Salvadorans.[15]

In 1980, a land reform process was initiated that was aimed at limiting landownership to 254 hectares and at sharing out the surplus among the needy. However, the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population still owns 87 per cent of the land.[16] By 1999, about 21 per cent of rural households were headed by women,[17] partially as a result of men leaving the family unit in search of work.

Over the years, social unrest has triggered many violent conflicts in El Salvador, and for long periods political power rested in the hands of the armed forces.[18] An incident that occurred in 1932 particularly traumatized the country. A peasant uprising resulted in the murder of several landlords, and the insurgents then established a collective regime. General Martínez, who two months earlier had risen to the presidency after a coup,[19] unleashed a wave of repression, which is still referred to as the *matanza* (massacre). It took only three days for the army to regain control of the rebellious areas in the western parts of the country; afterwards the peasants were executed en masse by firing squads. Estimates of the victims range from 2,000 to 40,000. Recent research has established a figure of around 10,000.[20] The repression 'had the desired effect of smothering the dissident popular sectors in a blanket of blood'.[21] The terror was especially aimed at the indigenous population. After this bloodshed, expressions of indigenous identity were largely abandoned. Indigenous dress and haircuts were dropped by most people and only Spanish was spoken in public. Though some indigenous customs may still be important for the rural population – such as tortilla making by women – only some 400,000 out of a population of more than 6 million are considered to be indigenous.[22] Mestizos constitute the great majority of the Salvadoran population.[23] During the last decades, some efforts have been made to retain and promote indigenous culture and a certain number of Lenca speakers can still be found, but the usage of Pipil (Nahuatl) is rapidly dwindling.[24] During the 'counter-insurgency war' of 1980-1992, some army officers wanted to imitate General Martínez' ruthless way of 'pacifying' the countryside. Particularly during the early stages of the war,

scorched-earth tactics, aerial bombing and forced relocations became an integral part of the warfare. The horrible massacres of innocent civilians along the Sumpul River in Chalatenango[25] and El Mozote in Morazán[26] stand as tragic reminders of this way of acting and thinking.

During the 1960s and 1970s, El Salvador had experienced a period of economic growth that mainly benefited the political and economic elite. In the 1970s, opposition arose against the ruling National Conciliation Party (PCN)[27] that had been in power since 1962. In 1977, the PCN swept the elections as most opposition parties refused to participate after years of violent suppression. Guerrillas of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP)[28] began to appear along the borders with Honduras. Factions of the oligarchy turned to terror squads, while the Catholic clergy, supported by newly formed Christian base communities, spoke out against the old order. In 1979, a revolutionary junta seized power but failed to curb mounting human rights violations by security forces and death squads. In 1980, a coalition government was formed with the Christian Democrat Napoleón Duarte as president. In the elections of 1984, the Christian Democrats gained exclusive control over the government and various social and economic reforms were initiated. However, the country had already moved into open civil war. Feeling that they had been denied the gradual reform that the Christian Democrats had advocated, several politicians and activists joined the guerrillas or their political organizations. In 1980, five guerrilla groups were united into the umbrella organization Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN).[29]

A bloodbath enveloped the country. In 1988, it was calculated that more than 70,000 people had been killed. The United States administration accused Nicaragua and Cuba of assisting the Salvadoran guerrillas and, despite United States Congressional objections, increased military aid to the government, even though its human rights record remained unchanged.[30] Military violence and political assassinations hit all social classes and few families were untouched by the violence.

In January 1992, a peace agreement between the guerrillas and government forces was signed. An unarmed United Nations force, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), ensured that all parties involved stuck to the terms of the peace accord. The agreement was aimed not only at achieving reconciliation between the warring factions, but also at dividing up land between returning refugees, former soldiers and guerrilla fighters. Several reforms were carried out within the judiciary and electoral systems.[31] However, even if nearly one third of the FMLN negotiators were women, gender equality was not incorporated into

El Salvador's peace agreement. This contrasts with the Guatemalan peace process, where women also participated in negotiations carried out at the same time as the Salvadoran ones. In connection with the Guatemalan peace accords (signed in December 1996), women gained the right to equal access to land and credit, a special health programme for women and children was established, legislation penalizing sexual harassment was enforced, and a National Women's Forum and an Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women were established.[32]

The most war-torn area of El Salvador was Chalatenango. After the signing of the peace treaty, ten rural settlements were recognized as concentrations of the displaced population. Eight of these settlements were located in Chalatenango and gave shelter to approximately 4,000 families.[33] The reincorporation programmes for ex-combatants included land, credit, training and technical assistance. In Chalatenango, 1,927 men and 1,043 women, formerly linked to the forces of the FMLN, benefited from such programmes (an indication of the presence of female activism within the ranks of the guerrillas).[34] However, the plots proved to be too small (3 hectares) to allow a family to make a living, and the provision of credit and technical assistance was scarce and uncoordinated.[35] Chalatenango and other war-torn areas were later included in IFAD-supported development projects.

In El Salvador, as in many other war-torn areas where there were a great number of female ex-combatants,[36] it sometimes proved difficult for women, especially those who had had support roles (for example, nurses, cooks, messengers) during the war, to prove their active participation to the authorities; consequently, they were often not included in the assistance programmes. The distribution of land occasionally proved to be discriminating against women since many women had difficulties proving that they were 'farmers'. Many lacked legal documentation and if they possessed such documents they often stated 'housewife' as their occupation, even if they ought to have been characterized as 'farmers'.[37] Many women across social classes, in both urban and rural areas, insisted that they had been marginalized and faced significant discrimination during the reintegration processes. Local authorities sometimes assigned land to female ex-combatants under the name of their husbands, and some women failed to participate in the rehabilitation programmes since they could not meet the standards, many of which were established locally, such as literacy and the provision of specific documentation.[38] Gender equity issues remain underestimated and marginalized in most international peace operations, relief efforts and integration programmes. Women are largely absent from decision-making on issues of war and peace, despite the fact

that in modern warfare, the entire civil population – men, women and children – are severely affected by aggression and the destruction of the social fabric.[39]

## War and gender

Men, women and children who experienced the fierce Salvadoran civil war in the rural areas are all profoundly marked by their experiences. Their stories are about the suffering and the pain, and about how gender differences seemed to disappear in the face of the many atrocities that they had to confront. Argelia Castro, who lives in Barrio San José Alcatao, recounted the following during an interview:

> I entered the war as a little girl. I was only 12 years old when they put a rifle in my hand. My younger brother, who was only eight, was killed. I had to be a part of all that. After three years as a fighter, I asked them to serve as a cook instead. We learned to share, to help one another and show solidarity. Men and women were equal, but it was horrible. All the smoke, the bullets and suffering, the dying, the wounded. So many died and I suffered a lot. I tried to run away, but they brought me back. I grew up in all that and it changed us all.

Women helped the war effort by providing their traditional caring tasks, but by performing combat actions they also crossed gender borders. The same holds true for the men who, when necessary, were engaged in the 'female' task of preparing food. Santos Marquez Martínez, a smallholder in Segundo Montes, stated:

> During the war, I stayed behind to fight. The fighting became part of my life. Women were with us all the time. They were nurses, teachers, brought in food and equipment, cooked the food and many of them also joined the fighting. They were just as motivated and fierce as the men. A lady called Roxana commanded an entire platoon. We all lived close together and learned to share all tasks. I cooked maize and washed, but I was already used to that, since my mother was a widow. In a war, men and women feel the same anguish and pain. We were all the same. During the war, men like me learned to respect women, and for us men it is now only natural that they have equal rights. The war was a horrible experience. We learned new things, but it was all very painful.

Basilia del Carmen Blanco, who at the time of the interview was vice mayor of Villa El Rosario, Jocoatique, narrated how she entered the war as a child and how women became stronger because of the war:

> I entered the war when I was 12 years old. I washed, took care of the wounded and carried equipment from Honduras. Later on, I participated in the fighting. The war came about due to inequities in society. We were not conscious of our real situation and did not know that something could be done about it. My father was a respectful man, but many other men did not have any respect for women. When the war came, we could not live here, not cook the food and not till the earth. Attack planes came and bombed our village, burned it out with napalm. I stayed 12 years in the war. When I came back, our village was completely destroyed. There were no people around, but they came back, one by one, and with the help of loans and hard work we built up the village again. Here are some women living by themselves in their own houses, taking care of their children. We women became stronger. We know what we can do and that we can change things. Not all men learned from the war, many remain *machos*, particularly those who did not participate in the fighting. Here we all know that hate makes our wounds deeper and so we cooperate with our former enemies. No one succeeds by changing others. You must trust in your own efforts and cooperate with others. Development is everything that you, as a man or a woman, can contribute with to your society. It is not a clean street or a tidy house. It is a way of being.

As in all social upheavals, gender roles were highly affected by the changes brought about by the civil war.[40] Post-conflict rural areas of El Salvador exhibit several characteristics that have been observed in other areas of the world. A report from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) observed the following in 2000 in war-torn areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador and Georgia:

> In the absence of men, women took on leadership roles in both civic and political institutions. Women took an exceptionally active and visible role in peace processes and reconciliation efforts. Following brief periods of disenfranchisement after the signing of the peace accords, women dramatically increased their participation in the post-conflict political arena.[41]

Due to the profound transformation of the traditional gendered division of labour, women's organizations tend to blossom in post-conflict situations, and women's increased participation in public life and their discovery of new opportunities make them unwilling to return to the status quo.[42] The collapse of traditional gender structures tends to open new possibilities for women. Even if on various occasions it has been observed that traditional gender roles are resuscitated after a war and may even be strengthened for a while, it appears that women's participation in decision-making still advances after peace has been settled in most war-torn societies. In El Salvador, women city counsellors increased from 3 per cent during the conflict years to 14 per cent in the 1993 elections, and their numbers almost doubled in the 1999 elections.[43]

## IFAD-supported development projects in El Salvador

In a rural society, any far-reaching intervention is bound to affect the social fabric and, accordingly, the gender roles. When comprehensive development projects enter areas that have a particular experience and history and a specific social setting, changes in behaviour and work patterns are bound to occur. This is especially true if the projects have an expressed focus on alleviating the plight of those who lack adequate access to resources and social services. However, in order to be sustainable and beneficial, changes brought about with the assistance of external actors must be supported and carried out by those people who will be affected by them – they cannot simply be introduced and enforced from the outside. In any development process, it is extremely important to include women, as well as men, in all activities that are aimed at amending problems that have arisen from armed conflicts and at constructing a new society that will ensure the rights and livelihoods of all citizens.

> After conflicts, resources are depleted, infrastructure is destroyed, and social, economic and political relationships are strained. Successful reconstruction depends on the use of every available resource. Women, who have held together social and economic fragments, represent the most precious and underutilized of these resources.[44]

Development workers in the war-torn Salvadoran department of Chalatenango were aware that women's roles had been extremely important during the war and that women had a great potential to contribute to development projects implemented in the post-war period. As a staff member of an IFAD-sponsored project recounted:

> Chalatenango was hard hit by the war. The male population was forced to leave. The army was conscripting people by force, interrogating and constantly checking on the population. There was much oppression, much suspicion. Many villages ended up in the middle of the crossfire between government troops and guerrillas. Some of the men fled abroad or into towns, others joined the guerrillas. They took their sons with them and the female population was left behind. However, in some places entire families left for Honduras, or areas controlled by the guerrillas. The women who remained behind had to shoulder the tasks that men had been in charge of. Already during the war, several NGOs were active in the countryside and more appeared when the fighting ceased. When the men returned, several women had already had a good experience of working with government institutions and NGOs. They had gained knowledge of credit management, improved field labour techniques, communal decision-making and many other areas that until then had been dominated by men. During the hardships of war, the urgency to survive and find viable solutions in extreme situations had empowered several women. A common feeling among aid workers and other development agents has been that since the war, women have shown a greater capacity than most men to integrate themselves into communal development efforts.[45]

Various nationally executed IFAD-cofinanced projects in rural areas of El Salvador have been implemented since the war. All of them had a significant impact on the lives and activities of the participating women and men. One of the first projects – the Rehabilitation and Development Project for War-torn Areas in the Department of Chalatenango (PROCHALATE)[46] – was especially designed for the reconstruction of the Salvadoran department that had suffered most from the war.

> The project aimed at reducing rural poverty, an issue deeply rooted in the civil conflict, and targeted a civil population that suffered deprivation that went far beyond rural poverty [...]. 'PROCHALATE has helped people who *were afraid* and *didn't trust anyone* to regain confidence by seeing with their own eyes the benefits of community commitment, grass-roots solidarity and mutual support'.
>
> When the project was designed and approved, the situation was appalling: the vast majority of the male labour force were soldiers who were used to following military commands, men who knew how to use

> weapons but had virtually lost their working skills and habits. These men had to be reconverted into farmers and workers, had to learn again to take decisions independently and not to use weapons as a means of solving disputes. The women, the elderly and the children had been displaced from their homeland for years. They lived in refugee camps that provided for their subsistence with the aid of external donors, following a migratory pattern that adjusted to war developments. Women played an important role in the rule and organization of these camps.[47]

PROCHALATE ran from 1994 until 2002 and was initially supported by a gender expert from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Although the importance of women was acknowledged, the project did not yet have a clear methodology for integrating women as participants and beneficiaries. PROCHALATE gave around 5,700 loans to 2,900 farmers and microentrepreneurs, of whom only 15 per cent were women. Although in other areas the project was more successful in reaching women, it is stated in the project's final evaluation that it was not sufficiently successful to benefit from the great potential of women.[48] Another IFAD-supported project – PRODAP – was the first IFAD project in Latin America and the Caribbean to appoint a full-time gender expert. This project ran from 1993 until 2001.[49] Although PRODAP also faced a number of difficulties and constraints, not in the least because the project had taken it upon itself to develop a gender approach, its impact on the daily lives of the people living in rural communities has been considerable, as illustrated by the narrative of Rosita Mélida Leonor presented at the beginning of this chapter. The testimony of Petrona Leonor – a single mother of three who, like Rosita Mélida Leonor, lives in Cantón Santa Lucia – also reflects the impact of PRODAP:

> Tears come to our eyes when we remember the sufferings of war. We are all trying to forget the hard times, little by little. Most of us had to leave the village. People were killed all around us, in an unjustifiable manner. Most of us were not involved in politics. We went to the priests in San Vicente and asked them: 'Why is all this happening to us? Why do things have to be like this?' They told us not to be lost in our sufferings. We had to get help.
>
> After the war they helped us to come into contact with various organizations. The war had left us impoverished and bewildered. With PRODAP we learned to know ourselves. We realized that women are

people, just like everyone else. Before, men took all the important decisions and took care of all important aspects of life. They met, talked and decided. I have always nurtured a wish to take part in the social aspects of life and so I participated in meetings arranged by PRODAP. I trembled nervously when I spoke up for the first time. However, I am now part of the board of the association for communal development.

Petrona Elida Leonor. She is 51 years old and a single mother of five with her own sewing business. In the 2001 earthquake she lost her house, and she and her family had to live in a plastic tent for a long time. Her business is doing well and she has been able to rebuild her house. Petrona Elida is also a member of the city council.

I am a single mother with three children. I grew up without parents, and I was watched over by a very strict grandmother. I wanted to study, but my hopes came to nothing due to the war. I know I will never be able to go to any university. However, I have grown and changed due to the training I received through PRODAP. I have learned that communal action helps not only society, but individuals as well. I am a woman with few resources, but I have learned to sew by hand and on the machine. With the help of the credit and instruction I received through PRODAP, I have been able to increase the yields of my fields and I now have a house of my own. A house! That is my happiness. I see everything related to my house – what I have achieved through my own efforts, the future of my children, what I am living and working for. When I rise from bed in the morning, I look around and see my house. I want my children to consider me as a strong and independent woman. Who would have believed that I would end up as a government representative? Together with two men, I am representing my village in San Vicente and I might end up as a mayor. When I think of my life, I perceive myself as a rough stone that was polished by PRODAP and I shine in such a way that it makes me and other people happy.

Another IFAD-sponsored project in El Salvador is the Rural Development Project for the North-Eastern Region (PRODERNOR).[50] It ran from 1999 until 2006 and operated in the most war-torn areas of Morazán. Like other IFAD-supported projects, it had as its goal to generate income through the increase and diversification of agricultural production. Particular attention was given to microentrepreneurship.

In Morazán, cattle breeding is a widespread activity that is traditionally done by men. PRODERNOR has encouraged women to become engaged in cattle breeding, and there are some cases in which women are engaged in all the tasks related to cattle, including artificial insemination. The project also promoted the establishment of microenterprises based on dairy products. The story of Elena Benítez represents the enthusiasm of several enterprising women who have been able to benefit from the project. She is currently a member of the executive committee of the Agricultural Market of San Miguel, a marketing association that has enabled rural small producers to sell their products directly to consumers, instead of to wholesalers. Sixty-eight small producers founded the association in August 2003, with the support of PRODERNOR and the Mayor's Office in the town of San Miguel. In the beginning, the project provided transport of the merchandise to the market. However, the success of the initiative made it possible for the association to soon pay for its own means of transportation. The association's executive committee is made up of eight people who are in charge of the logistics of the producers' market, as well as the ordering and clean up of the marketplace, publicity, approval of new members, regulation of prices and the collection of fees, which vary according to the volume of goods that are transported and sold.

Ms. Benítez has been a member of its executive committee from the outset. She grew up caring for the cattle of her parents, and when she married she continued with cattle breeding together with her husband. In the past, Ms. Benítez, in close cooperation with her husband, had done everything in her power to support her family and improve the well-being and potential of her 11 children. Apart from assisting her husband with the work in fields and pastures, she prepared and sold corn cobs, bread and cakes, as well as manufactured clothes and straw mats. When asked how she had been able to learn how to do so many things she answered simply: 'Hunger taught me.' Ms. Benítez is proud of the fact that all her children have survived and that she now also cares for six grandchildren.

When a technician from PRODERNOR visited the family in 2001, Ms. Benítez was able to provide him with ample information about the household economy. Nevertheless, she became surprised when she realized that the cattle breeding was far from profitable. She described how the technician convinced her that she and her husband had to rethink how they managed their resources:

> It's time to act, the technician from PRODERNOR told me, and I took him at his word and involved myself in capacity building, during which they taught me how to use improved pastures and make feeding blocks, about animal health and how to take care of the cattle. I learned it all through training and by participating in field schools.

Ms. Benítez was able to apply what she learned. She found that the efficient methods she and her husband applied while producing yellow maize and improving their pastures almost immediately resulted in higher productivity and lower investment costs. Milk production increased and so did the yields. Ms. Benítez started to make cottage- and cream cheese and sold it at the producers' market. In 2003 she sold a cow, bought a mould and a press and started to produce the particularly tasty cheese her father taught her to make. She participated in the opening of the producers' market in San Miguel with US$100 worth of dairy products, but her sales reached only US$5 on that day. Nevertheless, she did not give up, but insisted on turning up with her cheese the following Saturday. She was convinced her cheese was good and gradually people realized that Ms. Benítez was right. By 2005 she had a steady clientele and each Saturday she easily sold more than US$300 worth of cheese. Elena Benítez is keen to acknowledge the benefits she has been able to reap through her association with other producers, and her story serves as an example of how women and men are able to prosper if they are offered efficient training that makes it possible for them to change their lives in ways that are meaningful to them.[51]

## Endnotes

1/ For a critical account of the Salvadoran peace process, see Sprenkels (2005).

2/ For an eloquent example of how the people of Chalatenango have worked with the backing of the government and the international community to improve their situation since the war, see *Letters from Chalatenango* – a video produced by Orizzonti in collaboration with IFAD (IFAD 2002:2).

3/ *Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola para Pequeños Productores de la Región Paracentral de El Salvador*.

4/ The Maya-speaking Chortis, Chorotegas and Pokomanes once constituted, together with the Pipiles and Lenkas, the population of the territory that has become El Salvador (Spahni (1982), pp. 73-76).

5/ There are 32 Mayan languages, divided between seven subdivisions of which Quiché belongs to the 'Quichean' group. Kukulkán is the name of the god used on hieroglyphic inscriptions from the late classical Mayan period (250-900 A.D.). See England (1994).

6/ For more on Quetzalcoatl, see Piña Chan (1977).

7/ For the importance of maize in Central American culture, see Rojas Lima (1988).

8/ These observations were made by staff of PRODERNOR.

9/ This description about the gendered division of labour in rural El Salvador is mainly based on results from the participatory workshops organized during the design process of the second phase of PRODAP (IFAD (1999:1)).

10/ A paste of dried and partially cooked maize.

11/ An estimated 2 million Salvadorans, which represents one fourth of the entire population of El Salvador, live abroad, and 90 per cent of them live in the United States. The share of women in these figures is not exactly known due to the fact that most of the migration abroad is undocumented. A study on the use of remittances in Central America found that among the families with migrants abroad, the incidence of woman-headed households was much higher than among families without migrants. The study found that in El Salvador, 48 per cent of remittance-receiving households were headed by a woman (Torres (2000)).

12/ Karlsson (2002).

13/ In 1999, in the department of Chalatenango (the area covered by one IFAD-supported project), 60 per cent of the agriculturists were leaseholders, while 40 per cent owned their own land. Eighty-nine per cent of the land properties belonged to men, while women owned 11 per cent (IFAD (1999:1), p. 8).

14/ In 1988, a few years after a land reform had been initiated, El Salvador had a landless rural population of 41 per cent, compared with 26 per cent in Honduras, 21 per cent in Guatemala and 19 per cent in Nicaragua (Mozder and Ghimire (2001), p. 196).

15/ Barry (1990), pp. 128-30.

16/ Figures and facts are based on Karlsson (2002). The Salvadoran agrarian reform covered approximately 20 to 23 per cent of the agricultural land and benefited 17 per cent of the rural population (Mozder and Ghimire (2001), p. 200).

17/ IFAD (1999:1), p. 2. In El Salvador, as in other Central American countries, the number of women who actually obtained direct access to land during the land reform was very low. Nevertheless, El Salvador paid some specific attention to woman-headed households, and approximately 11 per cent of the beneficiaries of the agrarian reform were women, compared with, for example, 3.8 per cent in Honduras. Several studies show that Central American censuses generally have underestimated female participation in the rural active economic population (Mozder and Ghimire (2001), p. 210).

18/ There have always been both liberal and conservative factions within the military, and the pendulum has swung from side to side, providing for some movement towards social and economic reform.

19/ General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez gained the presidency in 1932 and maintained control over the country until 1944, when he was toppled by a mostly non-violent popular uprising. He was a rigid, charismatic and austere man whose politics, characterized by paternalism and *mano fuerte* (strong hand), gave rise to persistent admiration among certain groups of the military (Parkman (2003), pp. 49-61).

20/ Anderson (2001), pp. 252-253. The insurgents killed around 100 people.

21/ Barry (1990), p. 4.

22/ There are no reliable figures on the percentage of El Salvador's population that is currently regarded as 'indigenous'. What is certain is that the indigenous population of the country is not very visible, partly due to circumstances that can be traced back to the government-executed 1932 massacre (Barry (1990), pp. 127-28).

23/ Spanish-speaking people of mixed ancestry who do not consider themselves to be indigenous. The reduced numbers of indigenous populations in El Salvador are in part related to discrimination and the fact that a process of *mestizaje* – mixed descent or culture – may have been forced upon the indigenous peoples (Gould (1998), pp. 283-284).

24/ Barry (1990), pp. 127-28; see also Sprenkels (2005), p. 20.

25/ On 13 May 1980, the Salvadoran Army, supported by a paramilitary group called ORDEN – Nationalist Democratic Organization (*Organización Democrática Nacionalista*) – drove the population of the municipality of Las Vueltas towards the river Sumpul on the border with Honduras. Those fleeing were caught in crossfire between Honduran and Salvadoran forces. People were drowned or machine gunned. After the massacre in the river, the Honduran forces delivered 250 survivors to the Salvadoran Army – who executed them all. The total number of victims is estimated at 600 (Ascoli, n.d.).

26/ In early December 1980, more than 500 civilians – including many small children – were killed in the village of El Mozote. The killings lasted for several days. The atrocities were organized and carried out by an army unit called Atlacatl. It was part of an operation called 'Hammer and Anvil' that a month earlier had pushed rural people into the village of Villa El Rosario that had been destroyed by a huge artillery barrage. Military sources defended the operations by saying: 'We were going to make an example of those people.' See Danner (1994).

27/ *Partido de Conciliación Nacional*.

28/ *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*.

29/ *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional.*

30/ From 1946 to 1979, official figures put United States military aid to El Salvador at US$14 million; from 1980 to 1991, that amount increased to US$1.1 billion. The economic aid for the same periods was US$172 million and US$3.2 billion, respectively (Barry (1990), p. 178).

31/ This brief resumé of Salvadoran 20th-century history is based mainly on Woodward (1985), pp. 218-19; 249-54 and Karlsson (2002), pp. 8-12. See also Sprenkels (2005), who especially focuses on the post-war period and the human rights movement.

32/ In recent years, such developments have become more common around the world, with women participating in peace negotiations. For example, a Ministry for Gender Equality and Women's Affairs was established in Afghanistan as a result of peace negotiations. In Liberia, separate units were established within the ministries to address gender issues. In Cambodia, women gained equal rights to vote and were granted participation in political processes. In Northern Ireland, the peace process led to a profound change of attitudes towards women's leadership and decision-making capacities (Bouta et al. (2005), pp. 52-53).

33/ IFAD (2003:2).

34/ During the demobilization process, ONUSAL registered 5,000 women out of a total of 15,000 combatant FMLN troops (UNIFEM (2005)).

35/ IFAD (2003:2).

36/ Bouta et al. (2005), p. 14. Women's active participation in armed conflicts is widely acknowledged. It has been estimated that women made up about one third of the active fighters among the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and the fighting force of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua (Ibid., p. 11).

37/ Inadequate documentation remains a problem when property rights are going to be granted to women, or if they want to join cooperatives and other farmers' organizations, which are dominated by men.

38/ Conaway and Martínez (2004) in Bouta et al. (2005), p. 94.

39/ It is estimated that 95 per cent of all casualties in intrastate conflicts are non-combatants (USAID (2000), p. 1).

40/ Women's participation in social upheavals is often ignored in historical perspectives, despite the fact that social stress and anomie tend to trigger desperation and violent reactions among women. In the social upheavals in 1932 and 1944, years of crucial importance in Salvadoran history, women played a decisive role. In the desperate rebellion of 1932, women were among the fighters. A famous example from the uprising in 1932 is *Camarada* Julia, one of the 'Communist' leaders of the village of Sonzacate, a stronghold of 5,000 insurgents (Anderson (2001), p. 237). In 1944, for example, a big demonstration by women and children for the release of political prisoners and the very active roles of women in boycotts and strikes, were important events in the processes that led to the fall of the dictator Martínez (Parkman (2003), pp. 144, 147 and 154).

41/ USAID (2000), p. 3.

42/ Ibid., p. 3. However, not all women ex-combatants return to claim their rights. In El Salvador, as in many other countries where women have formed part of guerrilla units, reintegration has proved to be more complex for female soldiers than for male soldiers. More female than male ex-combatants opt not to return to their original community. As Bouta and other authors argue, they remain in exile or relocate to avoid returning to traditional ways of living and restrictive norms (Bouta et al. (2005), p. 17).

43/ Kumar (2001) in Bouta et al. (2005), p. 56. A similar, even stronger trend of women's political participation has been observed in, for example, Mozambique.

44/ Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, in a statement to the United Nations Security Council in October 2000, quoted in Machel (2001), p. 158.

45/ Manuel Escobar, technical assistant, PRODAP.

46/ *Proyecto de Rehabilitación y Desarrollo para Poblaciones Afectadas por el Conflicto: Departamento de Chalatenango.*

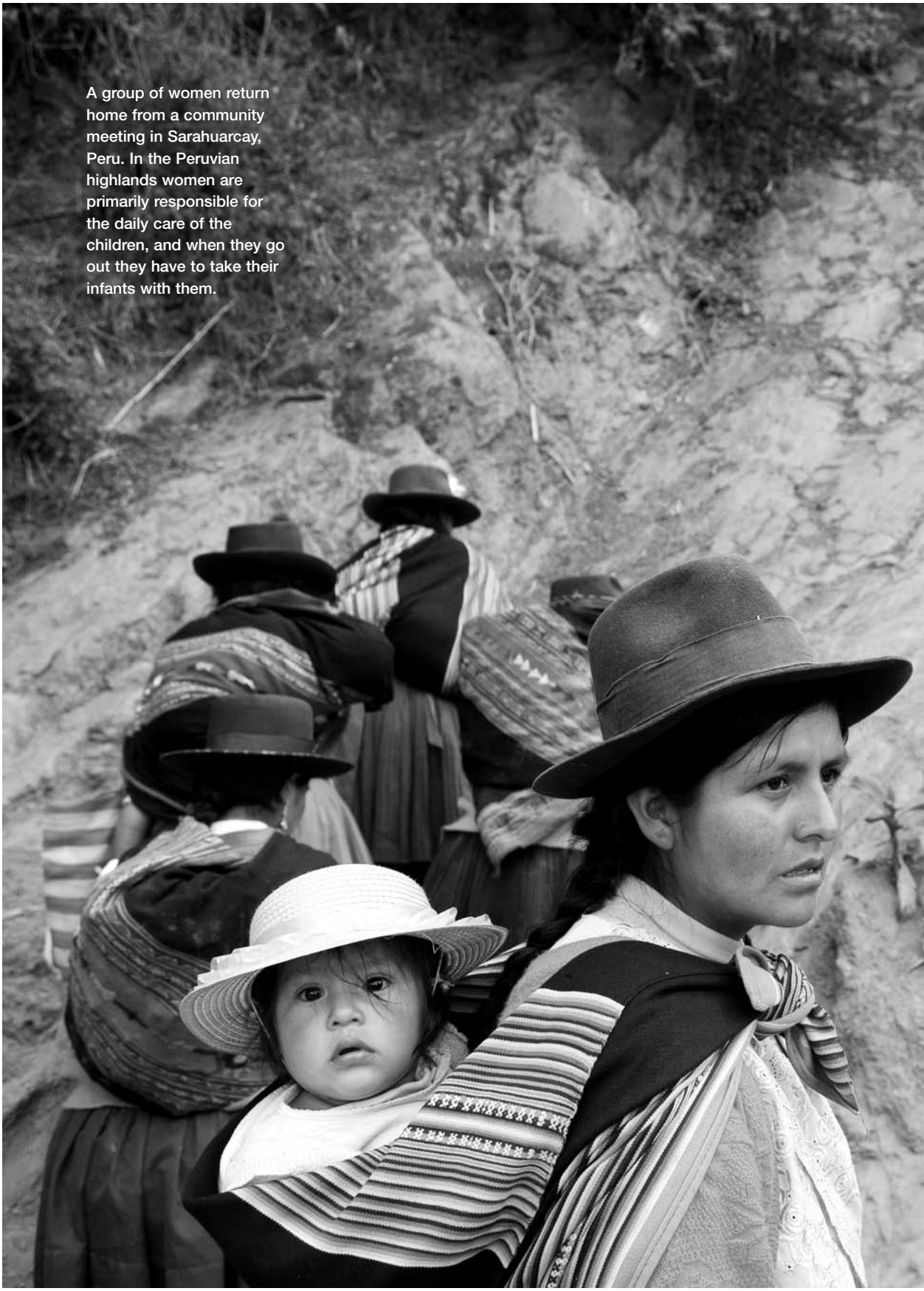
47/ IFAD (2003:2), p. xii.

48/ Ibid., p. xvii.

49/ A second phase of the project (PRODAP-II) started in 2001.

50/ *Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural para las Poblaciones del Nor-Oriente*.

51/ The experience of Ms. Benítez is related in PRODERNOR (2006), pp. 65-67.



A group of women return home from a community meeting in Sarahuarcay, Peru. In the Peruvian highlands women are primarily responsible for the daily care of the children, and when they go out they have to take their infants with them.

Chapter 3

# 'It's a harsh life for a woman': Voices from rural Peru

When comparing rural life in the Peruvian Andes with that in El Salvador, several features stand out. For example, the lowlands and hills of the Salvadoran countryside accommodate small-scale agriculture that is generally carried out near the homes of the farmers. In the Peruvian highlands, Andean farmers often have their chores more dispersed and varied, in the sense that they often work in different places, at different altitudes and at various distances from their houses. Other differences between El Salvador and Peru are also noteworthy. More than one third of Peru's total population should be considered indigenous.[1] Unlike in El Salvador, many indigenous peoples in Peru present themselves as such through their typical costumes, hairstyles, language and rural lifestyle. This is not to suggest that in Peru the repression of the indigenous peoples has been less than in El Salvador, but because of the isolation of many Andean communities and the huge size of the country, they may have escaped total assimilation and *mestizaje* (mixed descent or culture). Even so, if an indigenous person goes from the countryside to a city, he or she often dresses in a more urban style.

Another difference between the two countries concerns the civil war that each has gone through. Although both countries have had more than their share of violence, the character of each of these two civil wars was very distinct. In El Salvador, a significant portion of the impoverished population joined the FMLN, which confronted the military and right-wing paramilitary groups to defend their rights as citizens. In Peru, the rural

population was caught between the Maoist guerrilla organization Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) – which used systematic and massive methods of extreme terror – and the military, which reacted extremely violently against not only the Senderistas but also the indigenous population as a whole.[2]

In the first section of this chapter, we present narratives and testimonies about the hacienda system that dominated the Peruvian Andes for centuries. These testimonies were collected for the purpose of this book among the participants and beneficiaries of the IFAD-sponsored project Management of Natural Resources in the Southern Highlands (MARENASS).[3] The project ran from 1995 until 2006 and reached 360 rural communities in the regions of Apurímac, Cuzco and Ayacucho.[4] In the subsequent section, we describe rural Andean life in general, of which one of the most salient characteristics is the tradition of collective work. Subsequently, we focus on the complex character of gender relations and then move on to the atrocities of the Peruvian civil war. In the last section, we present more details on the MARENASS project and the ways this project has helped its participants and beneficiaries get their lives back on track after having undergone dire rural poverty and 20 years of violence.

## Testimonies of oppression and exploitation

Seledonia Loa Córdova lives in the adobe[5] house of her son-in-law, in Mayobamba Baja in the region of Andahuaylas. She is 77 years old and widowed. During the interview, she sat on the dirt floor inside the dark house, together with her female friends. They were all knitting, or spinning wool with hand-held distaffs. Like most Andean women of her age, she was dressed in typical indigenous style with a big, brightly coloured skirt and an old fedora hat. At the first encounter, Ms. Córdova appeared to be very timid, which is not uncommon among Andean women, since indigenous women frequently do not speak Spanish fluently. They listen intently, but often answer in short sentences. However, when asked to answer in Quechua,[6] Ms. Córdova immediately started to speak in long, animated sentences; her fluency, compared with the apparently summarized translations, made the interviewers doubt whether the translator had been able to transmit the entire content of her story. She spoke about the fact that, until the 1970s, many of the rural Andean communities were dominated by large landed estates, *haciendas*. Ms. Córdova vividly remembers 'the bad times' when her village 'was in the shadow of *la Casa Grande* [the Big House, i.e. the estate]'.

Seledonia Loa Córdova. Her parents arranged her marriage when she was 16. She says that her husband was a good man who never hit her, very seldom drank and always worked hard. He died 15 years ago.

There were two groups of people working for the *Casa Grande*. There were the *colonos*, farm labourers, who did not own or rent any land but had to work all the time for the *patrón*, the owner, and then us – the *arrendatarios*, tenants. We lived in darkness, in ignorance. We had no school, no church, and no mayor. The *patrón* was above us all. He was God and law. If people did not obey, if they did not abide by the rules, did not pay enough or did not work hard enough, he had them punished by his *mayordomos*, overseers. They beat people with wickers, sometimes with the thorns left. The tenants paid with cash for their *chacras*, plots, with the best of their cattle for the grazing rights and with labour for certain services, like access to drinking water. It was young girls like me who had to do the work at the *Casa Grande* as payment for access to water. For years, I worked without pay, selecting potatoes and doing other forms of hard labour, so my family could get water from the well of the *Casa Grande*. They were long working days with little food. An uncle of mine drove the car of the *patrón* and told him about me, so I got a little better food than the others did. It was always like that. Favours were handed out like presents, even if everything originally had been taken from us. Everyone lived in debt and fear. We were all downtrodden. Of course, it was worse for the women, because we were not considered equal to men. Men and women worked together and we worked equally hard, but when someone is mistreated he often mistreats those who have it worse. It was a harsh life for a woman. However, the ladies of the *Casa Grande*, the wife, relatives and daughters of the *patrón*, were all pampered. I remember how they were carried up to the *chacras* in palanquins, so they could enjoy looking upon us poor wretches when we worked. The more money you had, the more rights you received, even if you were a woman. The *patrones* have now lost their social standing and most of their wealth. They are paying for their sins. Now everything is better. I cannot remember one thing that was better in those times.

For hundreds of years the highlands were dominated by large landed estates, the haciendas. The relationships between the landlord and peasants can be defined as semi-feudal and oppressive. One of the themes that often comes forward from the testimonies is the lack of freedom and individual responsibility that characterized life within the oppressive hacienda systems. These conditions were often blamed for the bad relations between male heads of households and their families. Marina Leguia Rodrigo, an indigenous woman who lives in Moyabamba Baja, Andahuaylas, recounted the following:

> My father used to beat us without mercy. He even used stones and sticks. I now realize that it was not entirely his fault. You live in a certain manner and do not know of any other way to behave… He did not have any money. He was a poor man with nothing else than his drinks to soothe his pain. He was mistreated as well and compensated for this by being a macho at home. When the situation changed for the better, he stopped beating us and became a good man. Independence, better income and self-respect change the manner you treat others.[7]

The treatment of workers and tenants differed from hacienda to hacienda. Nevertheless, the generally bleak picture that we encounter in the testimonies on the hacienda system is also confirmed by other studies in the region. A farmer interviewed in a study by a Swedish scholar explained:

> When Fernández bought the hacienda there were no machines, all work was done manually. As compensation for our work we received a small plot of a half to one *topo*.[8] We paid for the plot by doing 40 days of work, and if fruit trees grew on it we had to pay with 60 days of work. When the hacienda was mechanized, he [the hacienda owner] gave away marginalized land that could not be cultivated mechanically. We received these poor lands on one condition: each plot could not exceed 1 *topo*. Furthermore, we [the farm labourers] were forced to work for free the entire week, with the exception of Sundays. Our only payment was two glasses of *chicha*.[9] He never paid in cash.[10]

During the 1950s, the *Sierra's* (the highlands') terms of trade in agricultural foodstuffs steadily deteriorated because of the state's urban bias in food pricing policy, which kept farm prices artificially low. Many farmers opted to migrate to the coast, where most of the economic growth

was occurring, thus breaking away from the oppressive land tenure system.[11] Several big landlords tried to meet the threatening trend of a decreasing labour supply by tying their workers to the haciendas, isolating them both physically and mentally:

> We were not allowed to have any contact with people outside the hacienda. If he [the *patrón*] met an unknown person strolling across his grounds, he submitted him to a regular interrogation. If the visitor became nervous and uncertain, he was accused of theft and thrown into the prison of the hacienda, where he had to remain until it pleased the *patrón* to send him to the police in Calca. He prohibited us from sending our children to school. We were to remain illiterate for our entire lives, and those who defied this decree were sent away.[12]

Contrary to what is often assumed, the indigenous communities in the Andean highlands have been traditionally very interested in improving the education of their children. From the 19th century onwards, they clamoured for schools, and during certain periods they were allowed to create their own schools, which were recognized by the government. Unfortunately, this 'strategy of inclusion' has often been opposed and was hindered by the political conflicts in the region.[13] During the interviews, several older people lamented the fact that they were never given any opportunity to learn to read and write, blaming it on the deplorable situation that characterized rural areas during most of the 20th century. In a book about the province of Calca, a Peruvian anthropologist quotes a discussion between a hacienda owner and a young man who is applying for work. Among other things the owner asked the applicant:

- Have you gone to school?
- No. I have never had the joy to attend school.
- That's good. It's to your advantage. Tell me, can your woman read?
- No, neither of us has been to school.
- Congratulations, it's only then you can live a happy life. You should know that the only thing a man has to read is the holy calendar. That is enough, and you become familiar with that in the military barracks. The woman is created to serve the man. When you work here on the hacienda we don't allow you to attend school, because then it may easily happen that you write to your friends and gossip about what takes place here at the property.[14]

Illiteracy, and particularly female illiteracy, is still common in the highlands. Although these days approximately 93 per cent of all 6- to 11-year-olds attend school in rural areas,[15] the results of earlier years of neglect linger on: in 2000, it was estimated that approximately 42.8 per cent of poor women in rural areas could not read or write, compared with 16.5 per cent of the men.[16]

## The Peruvian highlands and their social fabric

In the highlands, *kichwas* (green valleys) lie between snow-capped mountain peaks and the vast *punas* (high grassy plateaus). Several of these *kichwas*, which range in altitude from 2,000 to 3,500 metres, are watered by glacial run-off and thus enjoy a sufficient supply of water for irrigation. An abundance of native tubers thrive at these altitudes, including over 4,000 varieties of potatoes, such as *oca* and *olluco*, as well as such grains as *quinoa* and wheat. While llamas and alpacas thrive at the higher altitudes of the *punas*, sheep and cattle do well in the *kichwas*. Despite their beauty, these areas, with their irregular fertility, constitute a harsh environment for the people, and the great majority of the nation's poorest citizens are among the rural populations of the highlands.

Thirty-six per cent of Peru's population of 28.5 million lives in the thousands of small villages and hamlets that dot the rural hinterland around regional capitals and trading centres in the Peruvian Andes. Only 4.5 per cent of the highlands are arable and cultivable. Nevertheless, the area constitutes more than half of the nation's productive land, indicating that fairly dense populations exist in several of the green valleys. The particular topography, where land may fall away from 4,880 metres to 550 metres and then rise again up to 6,600 metres within a space of 50 kilometres, poses formidable challenges to communications. The Incas, who once reigned in these areas, often managed these problems in an admirable way.[17] However, vehicles did not penetrate the region until railroads were built in the latter half of the 19th century. Many areas are still very isolated and the existing dirt road system is still far from perfect, despite attempts by the Fujimori government (1990-2000) to improve the accessibility of the hinterland by building roads and highways. Jeeps or trucks are the only motor vehicles able to negotiate the narrow dirt roads that cling to the steep mountainsides. Travelling in the Andes can be quite a frightening experience, particularly during the winter when torrential rains frequently cause *huaycos* (severe landslides and avalanches), damaging irrigation canals and roads and sometimes destroying entire villages and towns.

*Ayllu* is a central concept in the social organization of rural life in the Andean highlands. It should be understood as a kinship or social unit[18] and may include social entities such as community, sections of the community, extended family or kin group.[19] *Ayllu* may consist of people with shared origins (actual or imagined ancestors) who work the land in common and in a spirit of solidarity. Within an *ayllu* the family is the central unit. Land ownership – or, more correctly, land use – and labour participation are based on family units. The *ayllu* concept is always related to the land and cannot be imagined without agricultural activities.

When the Spaniards conquered the Incas, they soon realized the overwhelming importance the land had for the highlanders. Francisco de Toledo stated in 1572: 'What the Indians love most, above everything else, is the land.'[20] According to traditional beliefs, the land does not belong to humankind, but to *Pacha Mama*, Mother Earth. Individuals may use the land, provided that it is used communally. An important reason for the holiness of the earth is that it nourishes and cares for the living and their ancestors. It is entrusted to an extended family that includes not only the living, but also the dead and the unborn.[21]

Despite the overwhelming importance of *ayllus* in people's minds and lives, their actual origin and development is not entirely clear. Their composition seems to have varied over time. During pre-conquest times some *ayllus* were politically independent, while others were controlled by authoritarian rulers. Some *ayllus* may also have been established by the Spaniards as a means of control. Present-day *ayllus* and the concepts surrounding them are an amalgam of Andean and Hispanic institutions, and researchers have stated that it is 'a fruitless endeavour to insist too strongly on either the autochthonous or European character of Andean communities.'[22]

It appears that some indigenous peoples, particularly during the 17th century, left the *ayllus* of their own free will to offer their labour to large Spanish landowners. Reasons for this may have been that life became tougher in the *ayllus*, due to destructive interferences from mestizos and outsiders, as well as increasing tax burdens. Working free of charge for big landowners in exchange for a plot and grazing rights was a way to evade taxes and communal control. However, during the 20th century, the remaining *ayllus* often came to be considered as havens of freedom:

> The free *comuneros* [*ayllu* members] constitute a kind of 'upper class' among the Indians and are the protectors of the traditional Indian values. Conservative in their dress and in their way of life, they have as little contact with the outside world as possible unless they need cash. If so,

they prefer seasonal migration to the towns to working in the local haciendas, where they fear being manipulated into a debt relationship. In the towns they also receive better wages, and lose less status.[23]

The social and economic organization of the Andes changed dramatically after the hacienda system disintegrated as a result of agrarian reforms. The reforms began in the mid-1960s and were radically modified and enforced in 1969 by the Velasco military government. Most of the land expropriation and adjudication was finished by 1979, affecting 38 per cent of the agricultural land and benefiting 21 per cent of rural families. Initially the land was turned over to groups of farmers and kept in large holdings, for example, production cooperatives. In the early 1980s, these cooperative enterprises began to divide the large holdings into individual parcels and distribute them to enterprising members.[24] Nonetheless, in the highlands, *comunidades campesinas* (indigenous peasant communities) still exist and are partly based on collective property and work.

Social organization in the Andes exists on three different levels, namely that of the basic household, that of a group of closely cooperating households organized along kinship lines, and that of a series of formalized groups and voluntary associations, which are part of the formal organization of the community as a whole.[25] Work patterns relate to these levels; that is, work at household level, collective work among relatives and friends, and the formal work at the service of the community. The household is the major social unit for mobilizing agricultural labour, managing productive resources and organizing consumption.[26] Households produce for their subsistence and often also sell their produce and labour in the markets.

It is noteworthy that the capacity to act collectively is one of the most outstanding characteristics of Andean households.[27] To understand collective work it is important to shed light on the importance of reciprocal relationships. Reciprocal exchange is often considered to be the social glue that holds social relationships and communities together.[28] Andean reciprocity is special because it takes specific, formal forms. The reciprocal exchange of work between closely cooperating households, such as households of close relatives, neighbours and friends, is called *ayni*. This means that the exchange relationship is between social equals, and that work is exchanged for work. The *ayni* relationships may be helpful in constructing buildings, or participating in agricultural activities such as clearing land or harvesting. A sumptuous feast offered by the family that has received help acknowledges the importance of the work. The *minka* is a

reciprocal exchange between people with a socially unequal status. Work in this form of reciprocal relationship is exchanged for a gift and money. It can be a relationship between a labourer and a boss, as well as between a son-in-law and his father-in-law. The recipient of the work cancels his debt by payments in kind, goods or money. The person who has offered the service, however, is not allowed to bargain about the amount.[29] This unequal form of reciprocal work exchange is interesting, because it sheds light on social stratification within Andean communities and thus tempers unrealistic and somewhat romantic perceptions of their communal economy.

*Faena*[30] is compulsory work for the benefit of the whole community or a specific *ayllu*. It should be understood as a contribution in the form of labour, skills or services. *Faenas* may be used for road construction, the cleaning up of canals or town squares, the construction of public buildings and the like. Often the village mayor or other authorities call together a group to perform the work; in other communities, it may be customary to ring the bells and shout from the church tower to announce communal work. In any case, the whole village has to attend.[31] Unless one has a very good reason, one cannot refuse to participate in a *faena*. Refusal is punished by the imposition of a heavy fine or by having valuables removed from a household as compensation.[32]

## Gender relations in the Peruvian Andes

The importance of gender roles in highland agriculture is easily discerned by observing traditions connected with the preparation and the sowing of the *chacras*. The following division of labour was recorded during a visit to the MARENASS project:

> When a peasant ploughs his *chacra* it is always a woman, in most cases the wife, who leads the oxen by their bridle so the furrows are straight. When the seeds are sown, the man leads the sowing team, he works with the plough, while his wife walks behind him sowing the seeds. In the *Sierra* it is always women who sow. After the woman come the children, chasing away the birds, making sure that the seeds have ended up in the furrow and adding the fertilizer.[33]

At the time of the Inca conquest, gender relations may have been rather complementary.[34] All *ayllu* members were born with rights and obligations. These were related to claims to land and other resources that were crucial for Andean subsistence. Descent was organized through parallel lines.

Women perceived themselves as the descendant of their mother, and men as the descendant of their father. Through their mothers, women obtained access to land, water, herds and other resources, and the same applied to men and their fathers. The interdependence and complementarity between men and women was expressed through all kinds of rituals. Andean gender ideologies associated men and women with gender-specific tasks. Though both men and women were engaged in all kinds of work, the weaving and making of cloth was associated with women, while men were associated with bearing arms and ploughing. People were buried together with gender-specific tools, such as spindles for women and weapons for men.[35] The Incas extracted tribute from the peasants and married men were subject to labour duties for the state, but at first this did not change the women's control over their part of the *ayllu*'s resources and the means of subsistence. Nevertheless, in the Inca administration men, not women, were perceived as the representatives of the households. And when the Incas tightened their control, men's status increased. Because of the association of men with arms, it was men who gained access to the new positions of power that emerged in government with the expansion of the Inca Empire.[36]

Despite these developments, much has been written about what has sometimes been described as the *ideal incaico* (the Inca ideal), namely a perceived complementarity between men and women within Tahuantinsuyo, the Inca Empire. The Inca Empire was at its height in 1525 and stretched for more than 3,200 kilometres along the Pacific coast, ruling over much of present-day Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru. This powerful and influential empire came to an end with the Spanish defeat of the Inca Atahualpa in 1532. The perceived complementarity of gender relations during Inca rule tempts outsiders to compare contemporary gender roles with historical ones. *Hatun runa*[37] – people who consider themselves to be upholders of the Inca culture – also view most of their traditions as a direct heritage from 'pre-conquest' times. However, since Inca traditions have been diluted by 500 years of Hispanic cultural and political dominance, the 'ideals' of Tahuantinsuyo are to a great extent a social and cultural construct, a patchwork based on surviving traditions and interpretations of often imprecise and ambiguous descriptions handed down by Spanish and indigenous chroniclers.

The core of Inca conceptions of gender seems to have been a concept called *yanatin*, a kind of dynamic symmetry between 'perfect opposites', perceived as masculine (*hanan*) and feminine (*hurin*). These two concepts constituted – and for many *hatun runa* still constitute – the foundation of not only human society but also the entire creation. However, even if they

complemented each other, the concepts were never considered to be equal. A certain hierarchy existed between *hanan* and *hurin*, in a similar manner as the right hand generally dominates and is more efficient than the left. Generally speaking, masculinity was assumed to be a dominant force in nature and human society. Nevertheless, as in the case of hands, there was always the possibility that femininity could be dominating.[38] A certain tension between the sexes is easily discerned in Andean myths and legends. For example, it is very common for inhabitants of the highlands to personalize the surrounding mountain peaks and to speak about them as males and females. Stories abound about marriages and concubinages between the mountains, about matrimonial quarrels, jealousy and fighting. In a similar way, gender concepts permeated the theological thinking of the Incas. As in many other religions, the Inca creator god seems to have had a bisexual nature, which later split into complementary opposites.[39] Furthermore, there are myths about female dominance at the beginning of time:

> And they say that the Moon [which is always female in Andean mythology] was created with more clarity than the Sun. Because of that, the jealous Sun, at the time of their ascent, threw a handful of ashes in the face [of the Moon] and after that she remained obscured, with the same colour as she still has.[40]

Even if men dominated the Inca Empire, it was unthinkable that an active and productive man could do without a woman. The supreme leader of Tahuantinsuyo had several consorts mainly as a way to foment political alliances with subdued rulers and other allies. However, the Inca also had a powerful female counterpart, the *Coya*, who has been interpreted as the *hurin* complementing the Inca *hanan*. The entire Andean pantheon of gods appears to have been equally divided between males and females, where the male deities were connected with natural phenomena like thunder, storms, boiling lava, torrential rains and earthquakes, and the female deities were related to origin and nutrition, functions that are destined to sustain and support humankind.[41]

The divine world had its equivalent in Inca society. The roles of Tahuantinsuyo's citizens were regulated not only by their social standing but also by their age and sex. Each age group had a particular denomination and specific productive tasks divided between the males and the females. Matrimony marked the initiation of the productive and mature age of a couple. The family was considered as an essential production unit, in which men, women and children had well-defined roles. Women's main task was

to prepare food and bring it to the men. This is still very marked in Andean communities, where women usually bring the food to the men working in the fields. During Inca times, women even brought food to the men who were fighting a war.

Understanding present-day gender relations in the Andes is a complex endeavour, and the academic literature reveals many disagreements. Three theoretical views can be distinguished on how husband and wife relate to each other. The first view is that Andean gender relations are fully complementary. Research about an indigenous community in the north of the region of Apurímac concludes that a certain division of labour based on gender exists (women sow the fields, tend the herd and sell livestock if necessary; men plough the fields and work as day labourers), but this division of labour does not mean a persistent inequality based on gender. In the economic domain, both women and men have cash at their disposal and have individual rights over land and cattle.[42]

The second view is that Andean women are subordinate to men. In a village located at 3,400 metres above sea level, in the region of Lima, women do not have independent access to the means of production and specifically to land. Each year, the communal land is divided among heads of households, who are almost always male. Also, in other crucial parts of the production process women depend on men. Women do not have access to cash while men may find work as day labourers. A last argument for the submissiveness of women is the fact that only men, as household heads, are allowed to vote and speak in community meetings.[43]

A third view comes from Olivia Harris, who studied an Aymara village in Bolivia. She concludes that men may well wield power over women, but that this is partly compensated for by the symbolic world in which femininity and masculinity are presented as complementary and equal. Nevertheless, the women in this village do not participate in the political affairs of the community. Harris concludes that gender hierarchies are complex and dependent upon the context.[44]

Carmen Salazar Quispe from Moyabamba Baja, Andahuaylas, described gender relations and the division of labour by gender as follows:

> Both men and women rise at five o'clock in the morning. We, the women, clean the house and make a soup of maize or wheat for our men and our children. The older girls, and sometimes the boys, go and fetch the water. To prepare everything for breakfast takes around one hour, and in the meantime the men gather their tools and visit their work companions to plan the day's work. They often work together.

Gladys Casafranca prepares food for her family in Occepata. Women in rural Peru spend a lot of time preparing food in cooking sheds behind their houses. Simple fuel-saving stoves are time-saving devices often introduced by rural development projects.

Lucia Castillo Lon carries animal fodder from a field in Moyabamba Baja. Traditionally Andean women are primarily responsible for caring for the animals, including cattle, while tending the fields is the men's main task.

Neiás Rivas Guamán (14 years old) prepares food in her home in Andarapa. She is using a hand mill, an important tool that spares women the time-consuming task of grinding corn with a mortar.

When someone builds a house in the Peruvian highlands, or a community project is being carried out, a *minka* may be organized. A *minka* is an event where people come together to work, eat and dance.  Here one member is placing a tile with a spire symbolizing his kinship group's participation in the construction of Flora Guzmán's adobe house in Andarapa.

Cleufé Osjo Vargas and her husband Rómulo Vásquez (not pictured) run a small bakery out of their home in Manchaybamba. Here the family is preparing bread rolls for the Day of the Dead.

Celebration of the Day of the Dead in Turpo, Andahuaylas. Many peasant communities believe that deceased relatives and neighbours remain an integral part of society.

Returning home after a women's community meeting in Sarahuarcay. Walking is extremely difficult because of the steep terrain and recurrent landslides. Because women traditionally graze animals and take food to men working in the fields, they spend several hours a day negotiating mud trails.

Faustina Navarro sows the seeds while Victor Vásquez Pérez drives the plough. When a peasant ploughs the *chacra* (field), the woman sows and leads the oxen to make sure the furrows are straight. The children follow, chasing away the birds, making sure the seeds end up in the furrow and adding the fertilizer.

Miguel Loa Pardo and his son-in-law, Edwin González Alarcón, are building a pen for guinea pigs in Moyabamba Baja. The small rodents are considered a delicacy. The family plans to breed at least a thousand of them for export.

Dina Oscco Tito sells potatoes in the Andahuaylas food market. Potatoes are indigenous to the region. Peasants grow many varieties, with a remarkable diversity of colours and shapes.

> Before the men leave for the *chacras*, the family eats breakfast together and the women get the children ready for school and then bring the cattle, pigs, horses and sheep, all together, up to the pastures. We have to bring them to different plots all the time. The pastures are communal and the village uses a particular schedule for where to graze the animals. Around eleven o'clock, or earlier, depending on where we are, we women go back home and prepare lunch for the men in the *chacras*. When we bring lunch to the men we also help them in the fields. Then we go back to the animals. At around five o'clock we come back and prepare the meal for the entire family. We often return with firewood, and the men do the same. On Saturdays and Sundays, we do the washing. Men may help in the house, but it is always the women's task to prepare the food and bring it to the men in the *chacras*, as well as to care for the animals.

When discussing gender roles in the Andes, it is important to keep in mind the singularities of highland agriculture. Because of altitude differences, constructing different types of terraces and barriers and irrigating the crops take a lot of time. This may be one of the reasons why the men stay in the fields all day and the women have to take food to them. In general, women are apparently considered as sustainers, while men are considered to be more 'active' – the 'movers and shakers', who stand for change and even asocial activities, like war.[45]

## Peru's armed conflict

To understand and appreciate recent achievements among the poor women and men in the Peruvian highlands, they must be seen in relation to overcoming formidable obstacles created by Peru's internal war. Mistrust, repression and open, lethal violence characterized the two decades between 1980 and 2000. The creation of the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation in 2001 will hopefully contribute to bring that period and its aftermath to an end.[46]

Several village communities within the MARENASS-supported area were affected by violent political terror that peaked with the activities of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)[47] and the Peruvian Army's reaction to them. The rise and expansion of the Sendero Luminoso should be placed in the context of four decades of dramatic demographic change and partially truncated land reforms that were initiated by the left-leaning regime of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975). The agrarian reform

programmes gave hope to the already existing peasant movements that were struggling to throw off the yoke of the feudal agrarian system. Nevertheless, during the reforms the peasants became aware that their demands for land, self-management and empowerment were being frustrated.[48] This resulted in the further radicalization of the peasant movements, which were increasingly considered as a threat to the state. In 1975, General Francisco Morales Bermúdez took over from Velasco Alvarado after a power struggle within the military. The land reform experiments and the negotiations with the peasant movements were stopped. As a consequence, a growing number of peasants lost whatever confidence they still had in the state. The Sendero Luminoso gained support from these radicalized sections of the population, especially from young people of peasant origin. As these young people saw it, the progress that was promoted in schools, in the mass media and by their parents was a lie. Social mobility was not obtainable through the socially accepted routes such as education or migration. Joining the Sendero Luminoso was seen, in part, as an alternative path for social mobility.[49]

At first, the Sendero Luminoso seemed to offer law and order in communities where local authorities had the reputation of being very unjust and arbitrary. The Senderistas seemed to provide solutions to everyday problems by punishing adultery, alcoholism, vagrancy, robbery and cattle theft,[50] and often their actions were characterized by an urge to commit bloody revenge on individuals who were perceived as upholders of the 'old order of things'. When the organization became increasingly violent, however, and used violence more and more as a goal in itself – as a 'purifying force' – it started to lose the sympathy of the rural population.[51] The Sendero Luminoso reacted to this loss of support with abductions and coercive recruitment.

> When Sendero takes a village, it first blows up the municipal buildings and, if there are any, a couple of banks. Next, it holds instant 'people's trials' and executes members of the local power structure […]. After the executions Sendero finds the civil registry and lines up everyone in town. The 'troops' tell villagers they are now members of Sendero. They form people's committees and designate a youth chief, a food chief, a health chief. The prudent *campesino* will cooperate. He will bring food to the 'troops'. He will perform a 'revolutionary action', such as robbing a large landowner's sheep, if forced to. And he will keep silent if the Senderistas take his 12-year-old son with them when they leave.
>
> But no guerrilla movement can survive on fear alone. Many peasants who have the opportunity to inform the police about Sendero's whereabouts without endangering themselves choose to keep silent.

> The reason for their silence is twofold. On one side, Sendero's moralistic totalitarianism appeals to many. It keeps the men home with their families at night. It offers a crude system of justice to which the peasant can appeal, punishing those who pay the *campesino* too little or take his land.
>
> That is more than the government ever does. The second reason a *campesino* might support Sendero is that to him the idea of tearing down the Peruvian state is eminently reasonable. What has the government ever brought but promises and trouble?[52]

Although at first the peasants may have supported Sendero Luminoso, in the end the taking over of power in their communities by the Senderistas only meant being dominated and ruled by an even more unjust, brutal and arbitrary force that had no respect for human life whatsoever. Contrary to, for example, the guerrillas in El Salvador – who invited international observers to monitor human rights[53] – the Sendero Luminoso showed open disdain to the mere concept of human rights. Sendero's leader, Abimael Guzmán (also known as 'Presidente Gonzalo'), declared:

> For us, human rights contradict the rights of the people because we consider man to be a social product. He is not an abstract man with innate rights. Human rights are nothing else but the rights of the bourgeois man […] instruments to impose a reactionary ideology.[54]

Most observers have stressed the sheer ruthlessness of the Senderista uprising:

> While there were certain moments in the conflicts in Colombia, El Salvador or Guatemala when the debate could have humanized the war from a human rights perspective, in our case it was only a question of ending the war […] there were no possibilities for conciliation, no way to think that Senderistas were FMLN, or Sandinistas [who were prepared to negotiate to lessen human suffering], that outline simply did not exist.[55]

The open disdain for human lives and suffering manifested by Sendero Luminoso was countered by similar convictions on the part of the army:

> If the security forces are going to be successful, they have to begin to kill both Senderistas and non-Senderistas […]. They will kill 60 people and maybe three of them are Senderistas, still they [the army] may say that all 60 were Senderistas.[56]

As the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation has concluded, the military adopted a general and systematic practice of violating human rights, including extrajudicial executions, disappearances, torture and sexual violation.[57] Sendero Luminoso's brutal attacks and the subsequent violent reactions of the police and the army created a bloody chaos throughout the central highlands. The Commission has estimated that between 1980 and 2000, a total of 69,260 people died as a consequence of the actions of Sendero Luminoso and the military.[58] The most tragic aspect of this war is that it was a war principally against indigenous peasants. Both parties to the conflict terrorized them. Although some violent actions occurred in towns, the overwhelming majority of the victims were poor, rural inhabitants – members of the most excluded sector of Peruvian society. Of every four victims, three were peasants whose mother tongue was Quechua.[59]

When Abimael Guzmán was captured by the military in September 1992, the violent acts of Sendero Luminoso subsided rapidly and the army's repression eased. However, many wounds from the conflict remain and people still fear that the violence may erupt once more. During an interview, a male peasant who wanted to remain anonymous expressed the following wish: 'Our only hope is that development, justice and a better life for all will take away the threat of violence. No one is helped by the killings of people.'

Contrary to the Salvadoran countryside, it is very difficult to find people in the rural highlands in Peru who are willing to talk about the violent conflicts of the 1980s, probably because perpetrators from both sides are still around and the wounds are far from healed. The peasant continued:

> I suppose that in a way the Sendero fought for the rights of the poor. I admit they did it in a wrong way, but still it was a reaction to injustice and a revenge for old sufferings. There were no *Senderos* [Senderistas] in this village, but I know of several other places where they were present, and I am also familiar with people who were with them. However, it is best to forget all of that and to work hard for a better future for all of us.

## Gender and Sendero Luminoso

Many Peruvian women joined the ranks of the Senderistas.[60] In 1990, eight of the nineteen members of the organization's Central Committee and two of the five members of its Political Bureau were women.[61] Women played an important role in the face the movement presented to the world, and it has been stated that women's issues were 'one of the most important ideological pillars of the movement'.[62] Among the Senderistas, International

Women's Day was an important cause for celebration, when songs and poems with such titles as 'Woman, Mother, Guerrilla' were sung and read, while the difference between female liberation and the true emancipation of women made possible by the fall of capitalism was explained.[63] However, the Senderistas also waged a ruthless war against female leaders who dared to oppose them. When the Senderistas started to attack and murder male and female grass-roots leaders in the capital and the countryside, many of them had to flee the country.

Several authors have tried to analyse why so many women were attracted to the movement. Fear, indoctrination, threat of violence, coercive recruitment and abduction are probably a part of the picture. Also, for young women, joining the Sendero Luminoso could mean an escape from daily male domination within their families and communities.[64] The 'female' branch of the organization – the Popular Feminist Movement (MFP)[65] – especially targeted rural women. Several Quechua-speaking, female agitators were active in the 'education' of women. Among Senderistas, the basic document concerning the 'feminist issue' was Abimael Guzmán's *El marxismo, Mariátegui y el movimiento femenino*.[66] This book is a conglomerate of ideas Guzmán had picked up during the years he attended a Chinese cadre school,[67] writings from the 1920s by the Peruvian socialist José Carlos Mariátegui and his own opinions about 'feminist issues'. This book is an illuminating example of a genre that for centuries has been typical of ideological literature dealing with gender issues; namely, books written by men emphasizing men's perceptions regarding the ideal role of women within ideological constructs based on patriarchal views.[68]

Guzmán determines which values and morals will be important for women if they are going to 'benefit from a popular struggle'. Women are addressed as if they were a mass of ignoramuses who have to be 'educated', 'organized' and 'prepared' in order to join the 'revolutionary process'.[69] According to Guzmán, women's liberation is a bourgeois attempt to use feminism as a pretence for dividing the popular struggle.[70] Class division is a much more burning issue than anything connected with gender equity. It is completely useless for women to fight alongside other women for emancipation. The only struggle worth its name is the armed struggle alongside men and women of the same class, who eventually will tear down the existing, oppressing society. It appears as though Guzmán considered not only gender but also 'women' as a social construct. He stated that 'woman is a social product whose transformation demands a transformation of society'.[71] Women are turned into abstract entities, devoid of individuality and apparently also of sexuality, at least a sexuality that they

are allowed to control themselves. Senderistas even controlled how militants could date and marry. Mao's principle that 'the line determines everything' permeated all *Pensamiento Gonzalo* (Gonzalo thinking).[72] In summary, the Senderos' written discourse and visual propaganda were in reality focused on maintaining a state of affairs characterized by women's inferiority and lack of individuality. They manipulated traditional concepts of gender and power in order to create a 'new image' of women intended to serve the movement's own patriarchal tendencies.

Senderistas initially proved to be skilled in using the cultural framework of the Andean highlands; many were Quechua speakers and well immersed in the world view of the highlanders. As pointed out above, Senderistas also found a fertile ground prepared by social exclusion, frustration, dire poverty and a general feeling of a lack of viable solutions to difficult situations, often combined with pent up feelings of rage and an urgent desire for revenge nurtured by centuries of oppression. Like several other fundamentalist ideologies, the movement was able to offer a framework of apparent order, well-defined morals and a plan of action for changing the status quo.

Apparently, Sendero Luminoso was able to benefit from the state of anomie that had taken hold of a great part of the Peruvian countryside. Anomie is a state of affairs that is liable to occur in small, close-knit societies where most people are engaged in agriculture and close interaction takes place between neighbours. In such communities, individuals often find themselves in a familiar microcosm where they share many convictions and beliefs with their neighbours. However, if far-reaching socio-economic changes occur in the midst of such groups, social relations may change drastically. Thousands of people may suddenly find themselves outside their well-known microcosms, or they may perceive how social boundaries are weakening, if not actually dissolving. Many of them may interpret these changes by assuming that former rules of conduct and traditions are in retreat and that a new, more universal state of affairs will eventually change their lives.

As people become directly involved in a new kind of social life beyond the confines of their earlier microcosms, they begin to evolve, or adapt to, different or modified moral codes and social roles.[73] Their old, familiar world is turned upside down. A state of insecurity, which for some is filled with hopes for a radical change, grips many individuals, and when the traditional social boundaries are broken down, new, often formerly marginalized actors – including women – may come to the forefront. This phenomenon has occurred several times throughout history. Particularly in times of war or revolution, women may suddenly shoulder traditionally male gender roles and even take command over men.[74] However, when

tension subsides and 'order' is re-established, there is no guarantee that women will be able to safeguard or claim positions they have obtained during times of social turmoil. It all depends on how profound the social changes have been. Rural women were especially affected by the war because many of them had to sustain their households in the absence of men who had been killed or were on the run from killers on both sides.[75]

Semonia Vasquez Uargu – a member of the Organized Group of Women 'Heart of Jesus', in Mancheybamba, Andahuaylas – told us the following during an interview carried out in a warehouse that had been erected with money earned by the women's group:

> There were more deaths further to the south. It was worst around Ayacucho. The violence was not present here, at least not in the same way. Of course, we have widows here, too; for various reasons they are often more motivated to get organized than other women. They come to the meetings and organizations out of necessity.
>
> Before, the men were more absent. They went all the way to Lima to serve as porters at the big markets there. It takes almost two days to reach Lima and when they work there, they stay away for several weeks, even months. However, it is not so common any more, probably because life has become better here. For us women, everything has become much better with MARENASS.
>
> Through our women's group, we learned to become strong. Our girls study now. They will not become like us. Our husbands and fathers told us we were stupid and were only good for household work. It was the men who left the house; we women were stuck inside and that made it difficult for us to learn and organize.
>
> For many years, things just happened to us women. We could not do anything about the violence or other problems that occurred around us. Before, I did not know what time was. I just lived. Now I value time. I work hard. My life is changing. We women went to training sessions when they were offered by the project and we started to participate in a more organized way in the production of wheat and maize. We learned to do business and bookkeeping. Now we have the storage house, we sit in here. We have a vehicle and a small mill, and we have started to bake bread and sell it in the markets. We are saving to get an electric oven. Our husbands are supporting us. Everything has changed.

## The IFAD-sponsored MARENASS project

When the MARENASS project started in the southern Andes of Peru in 1997, the region was slowly recovering. In addition to the deaths and the violence, the region's social structure had been heavily damaged. Peasant organizations and even complete communities were broken down and many peasants were displaced. The region was the poorest of the country. The poverty index was 2.6, compared with an average of 2.0 for the rest of Peru. Over 80 per cent of the population was malnourished and only 25 per cent had access to drinking water.[76] There were still some outbreaks of violence. Nevertheless, the displaced started to return to their communities and peasants resumed their agricultural activities in the zones they had abandoned.[77] The aim of the project was to deal with the deterioration of natural resources as the main cause of poverty and to 'expand cultivated areas and increase the commercial value of the productive natural resources of the peasants in the Southern Highlands of Peru'.[78] The Andean traditions of collective work were taken as one of the foundations of the ideology behind MARENASS. Groups constituted by *aynis* or communal *faenas* partook in thematic competitions where winners were provided with economic resources for further investment. These competitions, like all forms of communal work, ended with a feast. This system – which is based on capacity building, promotion, competition and voluntary participation – is called *Pacha Mama Raymi*.[79] Another activity was family and gender training, which was aimed at improving social equity. Men and women were trained in such issues as participation, gender equity and other gender-related themes (for example, machismo and alcoholism). Affirmative actions were taken, such as the creation of funds especially meant for women's groups.[80]

While interviewing women in the highlands it is common to hear them say: 'Before we knew nothing. We were nothing. We could not do anything.' MARENASS has helped women to overcome this, as illustrated by the words of Gladys Casafranca spoken at a meeting in Occepata, Andahuaylas:

> I would like to speak. Before, we women were almost all the same. We did not know how to do things. We could not speak. Look at me now. Here I stand and speak in front of you all. In this group we have, thanks to MARENASS, learned a lot of things in less than two years. We are able to do profiles of our needs and the needs of our village. We are able to organize activities and events on our own, not only here, but in other villages as well. We manage our own bookkeeping and our own cheques. We earn money on our own and deposit it in the bank. We

Gladys Casafranca is the chairwoman of *las Ovejitas* (the Lambs), a women's group that has won several awards for its entrepreneurial skills. Together with her husband, Víctor Cuadros, Gladys breeds and sells cattle, and cultivates sweet peas and other commercial crops.

> also take and handle credit. We make mistakes. We do not know everything, but we are learning. We have our own organized group and choose a president among us. Now we have a future. We did not have that before. Yes, we work more and harder than before, but we know ourselves and our capacities. We control our lives. Before, the men threw us out from their meetings. 'What do you know?' they asked us. 'What can you help us with? What are your contributions?' Now they invite us and listen to us. Before, they were all *machistas*. Now they want to learn from us. I remember the first time I spoke in public, less than two years ago. My heart was beating so hard that I thought I was going to die. I was so afraid. But look at me now. I have no problems to speak up. What do I have to be afraid of? Now, when I know how to speak and have learned things that are good for everyone to know.

During meetings with groups of women in the highlands, it is common for one woman after another to offer a testimony. These testimonies tend to be quite similar. Almost invariably the women start off by stating what they can now do that they could not do before. Something that tends to be mentioned with particular pride is that 'we control our own money, we have a chequebook in common and are able to deposit and withdraw money. Before it was impossible for a woman to do that.'

That the women have the use of a chequebook is the result of MARENASS' methodology of directly transferring funds to communities and organizations, which helps empower the beneficiaries. Apart from that, it is also very common for rural men and women to stress their abilities in the field of public planning, bookkeeping and valuing the worth of property, such as land and cattle: 'We know what an animal is worth. What you look for when you are going to sell or buy it. Before, only men were able to do that.'

The transfer of knowledge, the training sessions and the technical assistance offered by MARENASS were all highly valued and contributed to changing gender relations. As Alejandria Huaman Isquierdo, who lives in Andarapa, Andahuaylas, told us:

> I think we were maltreated as women because women and men were seen as belonging to separate groups of people. We were apart from one another. Now we are able to work together and that gives us strength. Both women and men have learned how to do business and now we can learn from one another and cooperate. If the project leaves us, it does not matter so much, now when we have our knowledge. That is the heritage we will give to our children when we die.

Another important methodology of MARENASS consisted of the so-called 'ordering of space'. The local geography, the plot, the village and other such factors determine to a large extent how peasants interpret 'the cycles of nature, day and night, the lunar cycle, the solar cycle, the life cycles of animals and plants – all [of which] hold particular importance for cultivators'.[81] Peasants face a world governed by forces over which they do not have full control. Droughts, insects or plagues can easily mean ruin and death for themselves and their families, and political turmoil and social injustice strike from quarters beyond the reach of their village communities. Thus, the peasants have to seek order in their lives; they try to make events predictable. In this endeavour they are supported by others who find themselves in almost exactly the same situation. The collective tradition of the community helps peasants to interpret and use their environment in a meaningful way. Peasants live within a production landscape. They are dependent on their surroundings for their survival. Contrary to the opinion often held by outsiders, most peasants tend to be practical-minded and to think in terms of real situations and realizable possibilities.[82] Economic considerations influence daily decisions. The peasants want and need something in return for their effort. All this implies that ordering the immediate environment (i.e. making the production landscape more effective) as well as mobilizing the production unit (i.e. the family) in an optimal way, becomes an essential part of rural development work. Just as in any individual's personal life, chaos may hinder progress.

Through the competition for funding, peasants themselves initiated projects directed at the ordering of their houses, gardens, stables, grasslands and the other spaces of their daily realities. Within the house, walls were erected and then painted. The area around the house was reorganized and fences were built to secure the cattle. Ordering space and introducing stables not only had the desired effect on the environment (less overgrazing), but also reduced the time that women and children spent taking the cattle to the pastures. This had a positive impact on the availability of women's time and the percentage of children attending schools. Some communities moved on to

the ordering of the village, where they improved the streets, the sewage system and the collection of garbage.[83] Marino Bega from Occepata explained:

> An important change introduced through the project has been the ordering of spaces – our homes, the village, the fields. Before, particularly the women suffered a lot from what we now consider as a general disorder. We were not really aware of it before. All cooking was done directly on the floor, in a hole between four stones. Now we have stoves. The women can do the cooking standing up and the smoke is led outside the house. We are also making pens for the hen, the pigs and the *cuyes* [guinea pigs],[84] as well as garden plots and more hygienic latrines. Through MARENASS we have been inspired to order our homes, separating rooms for children and grown ups, ordering kitchens and tool sheds. When you find this order around you, you begin to feel more secure, happier and it helps the women a lot, since they are the ones who spend the most time around the house. You gain new confidence, a new way of thinking, when you have order around you. It is reflected in our work, in how we tend our fields, even in how we treat our families. We have given names to the streets, constructed a public garden in the town square and now we are even collecting the waste and burn or bury it outside the village. We did not do that before MARENASS.

These improvements of the living space led to improvements in the quality of life, as reflected in easily discernible changes in private and social settings. Interviewees often mentioned that after 'ordering the homes' it was easier to organize the fields, production, time and even life itself in a more efficient way than before.[85] Such improvements are gender-related in the sense that they affect both sexes and all generations within a community. When all the members of a community elaborate and apply visual plans for the betterment of the entire living space, both personal and public, specific gender roles also become visible; that is, issues related to how and where various functions of men and women are performed. Aumaru Urbano Manzilla, who also lives in Occepata, explained how the ordering of space has improved his relationship with his wife:

> I believe it has to do with organization. What we all need is a kind of systematization of life. Before we did not value women. We took them for granted. We could not really see what they did, what they were able to do. Now we have learned to see things in a new, more ordered way.

With the help of MARENASS we are planning our work, our way of being, and thus we have become able to consider our community as a unity, with different parts that can be reorganized in an efficient way. When you understand how your environment, your home and your family can be organized, you also see the possibilities that each and every one has within their reach. I am proud of what my wife has achieved and I am now prepared to help her with things I did not see or understand before. We work as a team.

We conclude this chapter with the narrative of Maria Taipe Ceoyeca. She is 28, a mother of four and lives in Occepata, Andahuaylas. Her story clearly reveals how her life has changed through the project and how she has acquired self-esteem.

I would like to tell you something about how my life has been since I came to this place. Most of the people sitting around me here now know me well. However, it was not always like that. I came to this village from Chauchamayo, which is in the wilderness higher up in the mountains. I was only 12 years of age and came as a daughter-in-law, because I was supposed to marry a man who lived here. I felt very lonely. I was lost. The houses were not as beautiful as they are now. I was a stranger, I did not really know how to behave or how to speak to the people living here. However, some ladies felt sorry for me and helped me. Now we are good friends and finally I feel I belong in this place.

When I was 17 years of age, people came to me and told me I had to live in a decent way with my man. They told us that we had to marry. It was the Evangelicals who instructed me, and for five years my husband and I were with the Pentecostals. However, we could not stay with the church. My husband misbehaved. He drank too much and was abusive. We quarrelled a lot, and in the end none of us could stand it anymore. Our children grew and finally they were able to tell us that we had to stop our violent discussions.

I have four children. They are eleven, eight, six and three years old. I myself am 28 years old and I consider myself as a woman who has changed a lot through the project. After we realized that we were going in the wrong direction, my husband changed his ways. We were helped by the new situation that occurred with the project. I was chosen to be a *fiscal* [group representative] of the women's organization and so my fears disappeared. I felt the support of the others. 'We accept you for what you are and we will help you,' the other women told me. When I

felt their appreciation I was able to benefit from the new knowledge that came with the project. I learned to read and write better and I gained more respect. I began to organize my home and my husband helped me with that.

Together with the women, I learned to sew and improve the fields and farming systems. We learn and change with the help of others, and as a *fiscal* I benefit even more, because I am responsible not only for myself but also for others. The children have become part of the changes as well. In school they learn the names of plants and have helped us to organize the public garden in the town square. The teachers take the children into the fields and show them the progress made there. My own children learn not only the new farming techniques, but also what they are good for. It is demonstrated to them, and to us, why it is good to have an ordered life. The children even tell my husband and me what to do. I am so happy for that, because when I look at my children I know that what we have started and achieved will not die with us. I have now gained sufficient strength to act and a confidence that helps me to organize others and show them how to do things in a better way than before.

## Endnotes

1/ According to a World Bank Report (Hall and Patrinos (2006)), 25 to 48 per cent of Peruvian households can be considered indigenous. The lower limit corresponds to households in which the household head and/or spouse uses an indigenous language more frequently than Spanish. The upper limit includes all the Peruvian households in which the household head and/or the head's spouse have parents or grandparents who had an indigenous mother tongue. (See also Country Highlights, Peru, in www.worldbank.org.)

2/ Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (2004).

3/ *Proyecto de Manejo de Recursos Naturales en la Sierra Sur*.

4/ Barrio de Mendoza (2002), p. 17.

5/ Adobe (pressed earth blocks mixed with fibrous materials such as grass, straw and rushes) is still the most common building material in rural areas of the Peruvian Andes.

6/ Quechua is today spoken by approximately 13 million people in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Northern Chile, Peru and Southern Colombia. In Peru the language is spoken by 4.5 million people. It was the official language of Tahuantinsuyu, the Inca Empire. Tradition has it that it was established as such by the Inca Pachacutec in 1483 (about Pachacutec, see Rostworowski de Diez Canseco (2001)).

7/ It is important to note that Ms. Leguia Rodrigo not only accredits the agrarian reform and the MARENASS project with the change of mind of her father, but also acknowledges the influence of a fundamentalist, evangelical mission that has been very active in her village and converted most of her neighbours, the *Ministerio Apocalipsis Cristo Viene* (Christ is Coming Apocalypse Ministry).

8/ *Topo* is a measurement that changes from area to area. Initially, during pre-conquest times, it was used to define the amount of land needed to provide subsistence to a household and could thus vary according to the quality of the land, the subsistence crops planted, the altitude and the labour available in the household. The Spanish rulers tried to unify and standardize the *topo* concept by adapting it to Spanish measurements. Generally, 9 square *topos* were equal to 1 *fanega*, which is approximately 0.4 hectares. Nevertheless, the size of a *topo* still tends to vary locally (Ramírez (1996), p. 54).

9/ *Chicha* is a fermented, alcoholic beverage brewed from germinated or malted corn called *jora*.

10/ From an interview with a former *colono* at the Huarán hacienda in Calca, quoted in Genberg (2000), p. 273. Citation translated from Swedish by the authors.

11/ The population of metropolitan Lima, in particular, soared. While standing at 662,000 in 1940, it increased almost threefold to over 1.9 million in 1961 and grew to 4.8 million in 1981 (Webb and Baca (2002), Table 4.4). The capital became increasingly ringed with squalid shanty towns of rural migrants, putting pressure on the liberal state that was long accustomed to ignoring the funding of government services to poor people. Estimates indicate that in 2002 almost 8 million people lived in so-called Greater Lima (including Callao) (ibid.).

12/ From an interview with a former *colono* at the Huarán hacienda in Calca, quoted in Genberg (2000), p. 276. Citation translated from Swedish by the authors.

13/ Rénique (2004), pp. 55-82.

14/ Quoted in Chancón (1994), p. 134.

15/ Bravo (2003), p. 31, Table 7.

16/ Ibid., p. 36, Table 12. In the entire country, 27 per cent of poor women over 15 years of age were illiterate, compared with 71 per cent of the women over 50. Equivalent figures for men were 9.5 per cent and 28.8 per cent.

17/ The Incas, and other Andean rulers before them, developed a sophisticated network of often paved roads, suspension bridges and frequent *tambos* (rest houses for travellers). Vestiges of this road system can still be seen in the highlands of all Andean nations.

18/ Mayer (2002), p. 333.

19/ See also Silverblatt (1987), p. 217.

20/ Toledo was a very forceful viceroy who ruled between 1569 and 1581. Among other things he decreed that indigenous peoples had to live in *reducciones* (settlements) apart from the Spanish colonizers (Zimmerman (1968)).

21/ Genberg (2000), p. 62.

22/ Karl Yambert quoted in Genberg (2000), p. 61.

23/ Skar (1982), pp. 80-81.

24/ For more on Peruvian agrarian reform, see Alberts (1983).

25/ De la Cadena (1989), p. 83, see also Mayer (2002).

26/ Netting (1993), cited in Mayer (2002), p. 14.

27/ Mayer (2002), p. 35.

28/ Mauss (1990 [1930]) called reciprocal exchange a 'total social phenomenon' because it simultaneously has moral, social, legal, religious and economic meanings.

29/ Mayer (2002), pp. 108-112.

30/ Communal work systems may have different names in different areas of the Andean highlands. *Faena*, which is a Spanish word, may in other areas be equivalent to a *mita*, the Quechua terminology for a similar phenomenon.

31/ Mayer (2002), p. 124.

32/ Genberg (2000).

33/ Based on an interview with Percy Barrio de Mendoza, regional coordinator of the MARENASS project in Andahuaylas.

34/ Silverblatt (1987), pp. 3-19.

35/ Ibid., p. 14.

36/ Ibid., p. 15.

37/ *Hatun runa* is a Quechua word that indigenous peoples often use to designate themselves. In reality it is a masculine word meaning 'great man', indicating a married male who has shouldered the responsibilities that apply to his age (Rostworowski de Diez Canseco (1999), pp. 236 and 321).

38/ Hernández Astete (2002), p. 37.

39/ As an example, it has been suggested that Judaism, and therefore also Christianity, shows traces of similar thinking. See for example, Genesis 1:27: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.'

40/ Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, a Spanish chronicler (1572), quoted in Hernández Astete (2002), p. 51. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

41/ Hernández Astete (2002), pp. 48-49.

42/ Skar (1979); Rens (2003), pp. 14-15.

43/ Bourque and Warren (1981); Rens (2003), pp. 16-17.

44/ Harris (1978); Rens (2003), pp. 20-23; Mayer (2002), p. 12.

45/ Hernández Astete (2002), p. 87.

46/ Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (2004).

47/ The complete name of the organization is *Partido Comunista del Perú – Sendero Luminoso*, PCP-SL (The Communist Party of Peru – Shining Path).

48/ Mallon (1998); Strong (1992).

49/ Degregori (1998).

50/ Del Pino (1998), p. 161.

51/ Degregori (1998), p. 136.

52/ Rosenberg (1991), pp. 199-200.

53/ Youngers (2003), p. 225.

54/ Abimael Guzmán quoted in Youngers (2003), p. 164. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

55/ Carlos Basombrío quoted in Youngers (2003), p. 226. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

56/ General Luis Cisneros Vizquerra quoted in Youngers (2003), p. 77. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

57/ Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (2004), p. 32-33.

58/ Ibid., p. 13.

59/ Ibid., p. 30.

60/ Peruvian penal authorities estimated female participation to be 20 per cent, while the Senderistas themselves estimated that 40 per cent of their followers were women (Glendinning (2004), p. 39, n. 3).

61/ Kirk in Glendinning (2004), p. 4.

62/ Glendinning (2004), p. 7.

63/ Rosenberg (1991), p. 198.

64/ Balbi and Callirgos (1992).

65/ *Movimiento Femenino Popular*.

66/ Guzmán (1975). There has been a lot of speculation about the authorship of this book. Several researchers believe it to be a joint effort of several party militants, who put Guzmán's name on the finished product. Others consider it to be Guzmán's own writing (Glendinning (2004), p. 19).

67/ During the mid- to late 1960s, Guzmán lived in China, studying such subjects as politics, military strategy and tactics, Marxist philosophy and international affairs. He returned to the country on later occasions (Poole and Rénique (1992), p. 33).

68/ Glendinning (2004), p. 18.

69/ Ibid., p. 20.

70/ Ibid., p. 17.

71/ Guzmán (1975), cited in Glendinning (2004), p. 17.

72/ Cordero (1996), p. 350; Glendinning (2004), p. 15.

73/ Ray (1976), p. 214.

74/ Julieta Kirkwood has analysed the changing roles of women during times of social upheavals, particularly in a Chilean context, as well as in Peru, Mexico and Brazil (Kirkwood (1986)).

75/ Youngers (2003), p. 111.

76/ IFAD (2006:1), p. 2.

77/ Ibid., p. 6.

78/ Ibid., p.2.

79/ Barrio de Mendoza (2003); IFAD (2006:1), p. 8.

80/ IFAD (2006:1), p. ix.

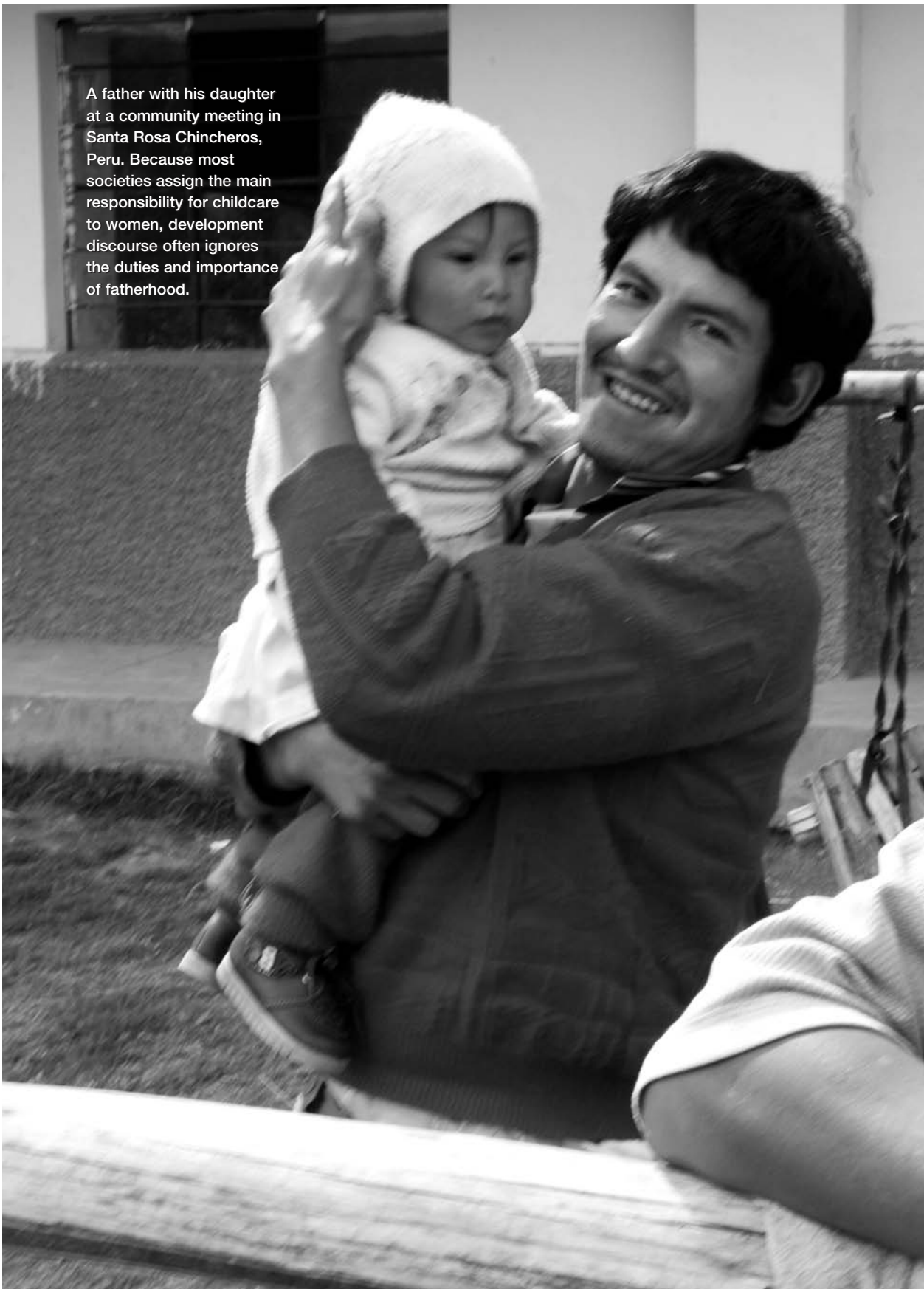
81/ Christian (1987), p. 371.

82/ Ibid.

83/ IFAD (2006:1), p. 27.

84/ Guinea pigs are an important meat source in the Andes.

85/ de Zutter (2003).



A father with his daughter at a community meeting in Santa Rosa Chincheros, Peru. Because most societies assign the main responsibility for childcare to women, development discourse often ignores the duties and importance of fatherhood.

Chapter 4

# Gender mainstreaming and its significance for development

The concept of gender mainstreaming refers to the aim of development agencies to ensure that gender equality becomes an integral part of their general strategy. Nowadays, there is a global consensus that gender mainstreaming is one of the most important tools for development and the fight against poverty. Nevertheless, this general acceptance is only recent. Gender mainstreaming is the outcome of a transformation in the thinking about development and women's actual and possible contributions to it. Until the 1970s, development workers often did not consider women's role in development. From the 1970s onwards, women were increasingly perceived as being important and development projects started to focus on them. Many of these projects approached women as a separate category of beneficiaries. Ultimately, the focus of development workers moved from women as isolated beings to women in relation to men. The concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming were crucial in making this shift. These changes in development theory and their subsequent implementation in daily practice were not applauded by all people involved. Some development workers, especially men, did not see the point and, at times, the focus on women and gender evoked resistance from both men and women.

In this chapter, we discuss the concept of gender mainstreaming. In the first section, we sketch the theoretical shift in the thinking on women, gender and development. This shift went from a focus on women in isolation to a focus on gender and inequalities in the relationships between men and women. In the second section, we deal with the concept of gender

mainstreaming and its general acceptance by national governments and international development agencies. We then shed light on aspects of the process of gender mainstreaming in IFAD-supported development projects in El Salvador and Peru. Finally, we demonstrate some of the constraints and prejudices that arise when efforts are made to mainstream gender.

## Women, gender and development

Until the early 1970s, development agencies in general were oblivious to women and the contributions they could make to the development process. Attention was primarily focused on men and their roles and activities. Men – not women – were considered as agents of change and development. If development workers paid attention to women, they generally perceived them as rather passive aid beneficiaries. Based on ethnocentric perceptions of gender roles, their work with women mostly meant efforts to attend to women's needs within a framework of their roles as mothers and wives, and their reproductive, caring and home-based chores. Supporting women meant instructing them about the best way to handle issues related to family planning, nutrition, health and hygiene.[1] In 1970, Esther Boserup published her book *Women's Role in Economic Development*, in which she draws attention to women's unrecognized contributions to development. She presents a historical vision of Africa and argues that originally women dominated African agriculture. It was eventually dragged into a male sphere by European colonizers, something that gradually led to the degradation of female independence and economic status.[2]

Boserup's book had an almost revolutionary impact on development theories. It became increasingly recognized that women's capacities had to a great extent been an untapped resource in the development process. Several development workers challenged ethnocentric assumptions about the value of women's contribution to economic production. Project designers began to include Women in Development (WID) components in rural development projects. Innovative strategies were applied and aimed exclusively at women's groups, such as revolving loan funds and micro-lending. Legislation was also sought to guarantee women's rights and equal access to the means of production. A sign of this development was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.[3] CEDAW consists of a preamble and 30 articles, defining what constitutes discrimination against women and setting up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

CEDAW has often been described as an international bill of rights for women. In its Article 14, which is about rural women, CEDAW stresses that men and women must have equal access to productive agricultural resources. The Convention underlines the '…significant roles, which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy…'.[4] According to CEDAW, women's participation should be fostered in development planning at all levels. Women should obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, as well as the benefit of all community and extension services. They should be stimulated to organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment, and participation in all community activities. Furthermore, they must be guaranteed access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform, as well as in land resettlement schemes.[5]

Most Latin American countries signed the Convention in 1980 and ratified it in subsequent years. Peru adopted CEDAW in 1982 and El Salvador in 1981.[6] The aspirations of both countries are to include all sectors of rural populations in the struggle against poverty as a necessary prerequisite for sustainable development. IFAD has tried to implement the Convention in all the projects it supports.

These developments coincided with women's demands for social justice, political equality, improved education and better employment opportunities. Also, women's organizations and networks were founded throughout developing countries, and they pressed governments and institutions to be more sensitive to women's needs and capacities. All this contributed to the greater visibility of women's formerly often hidden capacities for change and their contribution to development. This visibility improved further as a result of the greater use of gender-disaggregated data and statistics.[7] Many development workers have testified about the positive effects that resulted when women were offered more space and participation in the projects. As Mattia Prayer Galletti, one of IFAD's Country Programme Managers, stated:

> To experience how better opportunities and access – in short, empowerment – transform life for marginal groups, and especially women, is one of the most rewarding experiences of this job. To experience the liberation of the inherent enthusiasm and force of people, whose lives and possibilities have been restricted, is a jubilant experience. It is like witnessing the opening of a bottle of champagne: the cork is removed and the energy springs forth. It's like a party.

However, even if most development agencies seemed to approve of the WID approach, various shortcomings emerged. Some pointed out that the very act of WID's predominantly addressing areas that, in the eyes of the development workers, were considered typically female (for example, needlework, nutrition, health and childcare), separated the women from the main programmes that were still directed towards men. In several instances, the WID approach proved to be counterproductive and tended to keep women marginalized. For example, women were not provided with equal opportunities to improve their income generating activities. The main shortcoming of the WID approach is that it focuses mainly on the category of 'women' in isolation; that is, as a special category and interest group. This ignores the real problem, namely women's relationships with men and within the family, community or rural organization. The relationships between men and women are a social construct of which power inequalities and women's subordinate position are the main characteristics.[8]

Even so, women's involvement in agriculture and other productive activities was increasingly recognized, and women were incorporated more and more in other components of development programmes, such as the creation and maintenance of infrastructure, credit, technical assistance for agriculture and microenterprise development. In the 1980s, when policies of structural adjustment were in full swing, another danger became apparent. The structural adjustment policies often resulted in a shift of responsibility from the state to the household. This increased women's workload, paid and unpaid, as they were forced to meet their household's needs in a situation of increasing poverty.[9] A side-effect of the WID attention to women's engagement was a misconception that women's time and capacity had a seemingly endless elasticity.[10] When various activities amassed, some rural participants in WID activities often complained that they did not have enough time to attend to the needs of their families. For example, at the time, most of IFAD's rural development programmes did not take into account women's workloads and other factors that limited their possibilities for participation in project activities.

The great schemes for women's empowerment and women's rights sometimes blinded development workers when it came to cultural aspects and the balance between the economic and the social aspects of development. Programmes were often implemented in great haste, without a sound foundation or thorough local knowledge. Insufficient consideration was given to power imbalances inherent in households and communities. Difficulties arose when it came to achieving a balance

between productive and reproductive work, which so often characterizes rural women's lives. It became apparent that more efficient links had to be established between the intentions to empower women and including them more efficiently in mainstream development activities. This development inevitably led to the most sensitive issue involved in the controversial question of women's participation: power and control.

In the early 1990s, the concept of WID gradually changed into a different approach, called GAD.[11] Those debating GAD were soon divided into two main factions. One faction emphasized gender roles and highlighted women's individual access to and control over resources within the family, and their productive contribution to the household.[12] The other view stressed the importance of analysing social relations.[13] According to this opinion, the central problem is not the lack of women's integration in development programmes but:

> … the social structures, processes and relations that give rise to women's disadvantaged position in a given society. As such, ending women's subordination is viewed as more than a matter of reallocating economic resources. It involves redistributing power…[and] …men will have to relinquish some of the economic, political and social power.[14]

When discussing power in relation to gender equity, other forms of social differentiation come into focus as well, such as discrimination and exclusion based on class, ethnicity, race, age, caste and the like. A gender approach that indicates that power structures are the base of distortions threatens the status quo in a fundamental way.[15]

The GAD approach assumes that political and economic power are closely enmeshed.[16] The approach is thus holistic in nature. Its focus is on the distribution of social wealth and capital, including the unbalanced distribution of political power, in relation to the structures of inequity between men and women. GAD takes into consideration the links between households and the organization of political and economic spheres. In an analysis of the structure of a working day, for both men and women, the existence of a domestic sphere must be considered as well.[17]

A focus on gender and development is not concentrated on the situation of women per se, but on the relations between men and women in a variety of settings. GAD views women and men as active agents, not as passive recipients of development efforts. However, it is not assumed that women and men have perfect knowledge or understanding of their social situation. For example, while women as individuals may be well aware of

their subordinate position, this does not mean that they are familiar with the structural roots of discrimination. Accordingly, men cannot be assumed to be fully aware of the social basis for male dominance.[18]

In their shared struggle for survival and betterment of their life situation, both sexes are weakened by gender inequities. However, because of the more privileged position of men it may be difficult to involve them in the GAD agenda.

> The GAD approach does not assume that women are in some way unquestionably or unassailably right in all forms of behaviours, in all their aims or objectives. It does not assume that men are invariably wrong-headed or wicked. It does assume that male privilege makes most men unlikely to ally themselves to the cause of women's advancement without powerful persuasion.[19]

While applying a GAD approach it is opportune to ask such questions as: who benefits from changing gender roles and increased equity? Who loses? What trade-offs are made? What is the balance of rights and obligations, power and privileges between men and women and between given social groups?[20]

The GAD approach is not as optimistic as the WID approach when it comes to the role of the market as distributor of benefits and the power that stems from having 'cash in the hand'. WID traditionally helped women to organize into collective groupings for productive purposes to increase their bargaining power in the economic system. A common approach has been to help women to organize themselves into groups, because lenders are more willing to provide groups with credit as they are regarded as having lower credit risks. The GAD approach is not at all opposed to such strategies, but it also stresses the need for both men's and women's self-organization in order to increase their power within the economic and political systems. GAD focuses on the importance of organizing, of creating alliances and coalitions, of exerting influence, of communication and of public education.[21]

## Gender mainstreaming

The GAD approach increased the general awareness of the importance of gender equality, not only economically but also with respect to power and decision-making. Gender mainstreaming has been identified as a major global strategy to achieve the goal of gender equality. The worldwide acknowledgement of the importance of gender mainstreaming should be

placed in the light of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) and the four United Nations World Conferences on Women that were called for by the United Nations General Assembly. Principles of gender equality and non-discrimination were enshrined in the United Nations' original charter of 24 October 1945, where the organization's central goals were established, such as the reaffirmation of a '…faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women…'.[22]

However, in the decades following the United Nations' foundation, its approach to the protection and promotion of women's human rights was fragmentary and failed to deal with discrimination against women in a comprehensive way. The Conferences on Women in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) – as well as the 'Decade for Women' – were attempts to amend the United Nations' previously deficient attention to issues concerning gender equity. The Mexico Conference focused on securing access by women to such resources as education, employment opportunities, political participation, health services, housing, nutrition and family planning. The conference marked an important conceptual change. Whereas women had previously been perceived as passive recipients of support, they were now defined as fully equal to men, with equal rights to access to resources. Within development thinking, a shift was noticeable from women as passive recipients of aid towards women as full social actors whose participation is of crucial importance for the success of development.[23] The Copenhagen Conference called for (among other things) stronger national measures to ensure women's rights. The Nairobi Conference acknowledged that all issues were women's issues and that their participation in decision-making was not only their legitimate right but also a social and political inevitability that should be integrated in all societal institutions and organizations.[24] In 1995, the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The tendencies towards broadening the issues of WID and 'equality' to encompass wider concepts such as 'gender' and 'equity' (which marked the subsequent World Conferences on Women) became even more apparent. The 1995 Beijing Conference summed up many aspects and topics of the intensive debate concerning women's rights and questions regarding gender equality. The conference adopted the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which can be perceived as an agenda for women's empowerment.[25] In the declaration, the importance of gender mainstreaming in all development work was fully acknowledged.

In the years following the Beijing Declaration, the United Nations provided further principles and directives for gender mainstreaming. In 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined mainstreaming a gender perspective as:

> … the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 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 is to achieve gender equality.[26]

In 2001, ECOSOC adopted a resolution to ensure that gender perspectives are taken into account in all of the United Nations' work.[27]

The implementation of gender mainstreaming was further promoted by the declaration of the MDGs in 2000. The third Goal promotes 'gender equality and the empowerment of women'. The target was to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. To achieve this, four indicators were formulated that focus on education, literacy and women's participation in wage employment and national parliaments.[28]

Mainstreaming gender implies the identification of gaps where measures and services have not reached both men and women in an equitable way. Such gaps become visible by using gender-disaggregated data. Gender mainstreaming is a holistic approach, meaning that the entire spectrum of all human activities is taken into account. This indicates that it is not enough to approach 'soft' areas that traditionally lie within female spheres of activity, such as health and education. All aspects of rural development need to be included in a specific gender approach; areas like agriculture and livestock management, infrastructure development and economic policy have to come under scrutiny in such a way that women are enabled to participate on an equal footing with men in all social and economic activities.

Mainstreaming is a difficult exercise, not the least because development organizations tend to be structured in such a way that their expertise and services are compartmentalized. Accordingly, staff (including IFAD's staff) often find it difficult to cooperate because of the limitations set by their own specialties and particular experiences. Such shortcomings permeate some organizations and influence the way

professionals work, as well as how beneficiaries are treated and instructed. Mainstreaming implies an awareness of the importance and implications of the concept, not just ticking off checklists to account for male and female participation in different programmes. As in all development efforts, it is important that gender-mainstreaming results become tangible and visible. It is not enough that family members go to meetings and become sensitized: economic and social gains must be apparent for individuals and families.

It is a common misconception that 'mainstreaming' necessarily means that men and women have to work together in rural development organizations. This is of course an important goal. However, mainstreaming means breaking down barriers to cooperation, and if women are marginalized for some reason (for example, traditional misconceptions, lack of education, low self-esteem), it may prove to be more effective if women learn self-management through controlling their own organizations. As Carmen Salazar Quispe (Moyabamba Baja, Peru) recounted during an interview:

> For a while we were told to mainstream our activities. The men were invited to participate in the management of our organization, but it did not work out. Somehow the men began to dominate the activities once again. It was probably not their fault; it just ended up like that. So we women decided to take control again. Now the men support us in our work, but they do not take part in the decisions and do not control our money.

As a staff member of a project in Honduras explained:

> If the group consists of only women, communication and confidence are promoted and self-esteem increases. This stimulates the personal growth of women. However, male participation has to be considered as a possibility, so they eventually may be integrated in the activities, at the same time as the contributions of the women are made visible.[29]

Inequities between men and women are often exacerbated by an education gap. Rural families tend to be keener on investing efforts and money on the education of boys than of girls. It is still common that girls have to choose between education and marriage, and once married and responsible for a household it is less likely that a young woman will continue with the strenuous, time-consuming and often expensive effort involved in

education. The poorer women are, the less likely it is that they have an adequate education that makes it possible for them to participate in formal decision-making, do bookkeeping, or even read and write.[30]

A lack of education tends to trap women in their traditional roles. It is mostly men who know how to express themselves in writing and are able to communicate in a language shared with politicians and decision-makers. Often, not only is this language characterized by different social usage, but in many cases it is completely different from the one that is spoken in rural areas. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are more than 550 different indigenous languages, and most of their speakers live in rural areas. However, the only official language of most countries is the tongue of former colonizers (Spanish, Portuguese, English or French).[31]

Connected with the limited education of rural women is the lack of access to new technologies, not only the use of machinery, but also access to information and communication technologies. Since rural women traditionally have been excluded from political, economic and other societal spheres, they also lack access to information that may help them to improve their situation.

Due to women's traditional roles as upholders of what are commonly called reproductive tasks (activities related to maternity, the care of children, and looking after the house and the family's daily needs), they tend to be more vulnerable than men. If a man leaves his family behind – something that nowadays is very common, particularly due to labour migration – he often leaves his spouse to perform tasks that used to be shared between them. During recent decades, legislation has rapidly changed in most Latin American countries, guaranteeing women the same rights as men. However, practice often lags behind and much remains to be done, particularly when it comes to women's rights in connection with pregnancy, birth and divorce.

In sum, mainstreaming gender means that gender differences in accessing assets have to be overcome. Both men and women must be guaranteed equal access to land and material belongings, health care, education and labour markets, as well as political participation, social networks and associations.

## Promoting gender equity in El Salvador and Peru

The shift in approach from WID to GAD and gender mainstreaming is noticeable in IFAD-sponsored development projects. At first, IFAD supported the establishment of WID components in many of its projects, trying to integrate women in most activities, often labelling them as 'privileged beneficiaries'.[32] However, the WID components had a tendency to turn into

'the social component' of the projects, responding to the traditional female caring function. Women dedicated themselves to assisting functions, such as nutrition, health and social welfare. Project components dealing with credit, production assistance, marketing, road construction, forestry and the like continued to be male-dominated. In some projects, male technicians jokingly referred to the WID component as 'a club for women' that was engaged in everything related to 'the female sphere'.[33]

The IFAD approach to gender has progressively turned into a GAD approach. For example, in El Salvador IFAD has supported the development of an Action Plan for a National Policy Regarding Women. In connection with the introduction of the IFAD-financed Reconstruction and Rural Modernization Programme (PREMODER)[34] in 2003, IFAD supported the establishment of a Unit for the Strengthening of and Support to Gender Policies (UFAG)[35] at the Salvadoran Ministry for Agriculture and Livestock. UFAG works closely with IFAD-financed projects, at the same time as it addresses gender issues in other rural projects. It is also assisting the Ministry in developing a gender focus in its policies.

In a workshop on gender mainstreaming organized by IFAD's Technical Advisory Division in June 2002, IFAD's vice-president, Klemens van de Sand, declared:

> … closing gender gaps and empowering women are important tasks for IFAD. Apart from being an effective way of reducing poverty and malnutrition, gender equality is part of IFAD's system of values and principles: equality under the law, in civil and political rights, in access to opportunities, services and production assets. IFAD upholds gender equality as fundamental to human rights.[36]

Throughout the years, IFAD has gained practical experience in implementing a gender approach. Because of diverging socio-economic and cultural contexts and the specific dynamics of the individual projects, there is no 'right' way to implement gender mainstreaming. Reina Noemi Moreira, who was in charge of the gender unit of the PRODAP project in El Salvador,[37] stated:

> IFAD's strategy for gender mainstreaming is something that developed over time, through a process of trial and error. Beginning in 1997, a gender mainstreaming approach was systematically included in the Salvadoran projects and its implementation gained force, step by step, until it became an integrated part of all project activities. I would like

to stress that each and every rural development programme has its particular beginning and end. They all have a dynamic of their own and that is something that has to be respected.

Comparing projects in El Salvador with those in Peru, it is noticeable that in the early 1990s the main objective of IFAD-supported development projects in El Salvador was to assist poor rural families in overcoming the devastating effects of the civil war. The MARENASS project in Peru was also aimed at helping rural people to mitigate the consequences of the armed conflict, but had a particularly pronounced focus on natural resource management. Even so, in both projects the development of a gender approach was crucial.

El Salvador provided an early testing ground for IFAD's endeavour to validate and scale up the methodology of gender mainstreaming within rural development projects. For several years, the technical staff of the PRODAP and the PROCHALATE projects developed and tested a number of gender training materials and methods.[38] The resulting manuals were intended for both men and women.

Three training courses were designed. One was custom-made for beneficiaries of IFAD projects. It was designed to facilitate: i) the identification of barriers to participation and development; ii) the recognition of traditional gender roles and the generation of practical actions geared towards the promotion of gender equity; and iii) the promotion of the welfare of family and community members. The second course was designed to: i) improve inter-family relations; ii) increase self-esteem; and iii) stimulate participation in organizations and decision-making. The third training package was exclusively for technicians. The aim was to develop a theoretical and action-oriented capacity-building process that would facilitate a gender perspective in the planning and carrying out of all activities and services.

The didactic material was richly illustrated with pictures and examples from everyday life. It was oriented towards group activities, socio-dramas and direct observations in such a way that people with little or no schooling would be able to participate in the sessions.[39] Since the editors of the material wanted to guarantee that the final product would be the result of a thoroughly participatory process, it took quite a long time to establish the final format of the courses and manuals.

The participatory and practical gender approach developed and promoted by the Salvadoran projects was the outcome of a conscious effort by the project's gender expert to widen the impact of gender-consciousness training. As in so many other rural development projects, the activities of the Salvadoran gender component were initially exclusively oriented towards

women. Project designers began to include WID units in rural development projects, forming women's groups around activities such as microcredit and small home-based enterprises.

However, some people involved in these women-centred activities soon realized that the strict application of the WID concept brought with it limitations. By initiating the development of the training packages mentioned above, Ms. Moreira tried to turn the WID trend around. Gender mainstreaming became a concern for all project participants – staff as well as beneficiaries, men as well as women. The approach was based on an affirmation of the fact that since gender is a social construct affecting all members of a given society, a gender component cannot limit its activities to one specific sector of that particular society. Capacity building in gender consciousness ought to be designed in such a way that it serves all members of a community. Gender equity training became a prerequisite for participation in all Salvadoran projects.

The PRODAP project in El Salvador intentionally made an effort to mainstream gender by integrating men and women in all project activities, and eventually developed a sophisticated set of instruments for promoting gender consciousness among technicians and project participants. The MARENASS project in Peru followed another process. Claudia Ranaboldo, a consultant who worked with MARENASS, stated:

> When it came to addressing gender issues, the original design of MARENASS was quite weak. However, the flexible, open-ended and participatory structure of the project made it possible for women to take the project by storm and change its unsuccessful original design to their own benefit. The approach of MARENASS is unmistakably 'women in development'. The project is based on five funds and one of these was originally destined for women's groups – The Fund for Production and Commercialization of Seeds. Maybe it looked like a good idea at the design stage, but like so many ideas concerning gender it was probably a desktop product, the brainchild of some theoretician with limited knowledge of the realities of the area.

The commercialization of seeds was hampered by the huge amount of competition in the region, and the project needed another strategy to integrate groups of women in its activities. In his study of various projects in Peru, Pierre de Zutter writes about MARENASS:

> It was all planned! The families and communities were going to compete in reforestation and management of pastures. Thus they needed seeds of good quality and pine seedlings. This presumably good market would be an opportunity for organized groups of women where they could learn, be empowered and create capital supported by a 'Fund for Production and Commercialization of Seeds'.
>
> The first year brought the first setback: the massive presence of public and private institutions that provided improved seeds disillusioned any idea of making business. Several groups became more or less paralysed, or traumatized, by the experience. Others began to pressure the project to give the right to use the fund for their own initiatives.
>
> The project had to change the nature of the fund. It became a 'Fund for Production and Commercialization', granting the organized groups the responsibility to define and decide their own initiatives.
>
> Some launched activities related to the commercialization of foodstuff in local markets. Others engaged in production and transformation. Several still thought of 'solutions' (marmalades, fabrics, vegetables) devised by all types of institutions … Later they confronted the problems of finding a market for these 'businesses'.
>
> The story of the MARENASS Fund for Seeds is an excellent example of the need to 'unlearn solutions'. Today, many of these [women's] groups function with success. These are the ones in which the women themselves decide upon what is 'business', or lend money to their members and other communities, because they know what business is for them. They decide what interest they are going to charge and what kind of collateral (generally cattle) they are going to demand.[40]

The MARENASS project was to a high degree built around the self-determination of the participating organizations and communities. One of the most salient features of the project was the transfer of funds directly to the communities, which then allocated the funds among their members through a system of contests and competition.[41] In this way, 558 Organized Groups of Women (GOMs)[42] – in which a total of almost 8,000 women and 600 men participated – were able to benefit from the Fund for Production and Commercialization. They contracted their technical assistance and controlled their own investments. Over 70 per cent had a communal bank account managed by three elected members (president, treasurer and *fiscal*). A large number of groups were able to increase their funds and divided the surplus between their members.[43] Claudia Ranaboldo, the consultant cited above, explained:

The GOMs of MARENASS are a good example of how, with minimal technical support, the empowerment of women may grow spontaneously. The ladies of the GOMs learned bookkeeping from Quechua-speaking youngsters who were hired from local universities and centres for higher education.

The women's groups are examples of positive discrimination, but this approach has still led to very positive results. It is a joy to see how these often illiterate women manage their accounts and books. They proudly tell their male counterparts: 'We have this little fund and we want to participate in others as well.' The funds have been their leverage for participating in the management of other communal funds and an active participation in formerly male-dominated decision-making.

The GOMs grew out of the women's desire to control the Fund for Seeds and eventually turned into an instrument for empowerment. The GOM is an open structure. It is not, as so often has been the case before, a governmental construct open only to 'women between 20 and 45 years of age', 'mothers' or 'artisans'. Everyone is welcome and the GOMs interact with one another, sharing initiatives. For example, in several villages the GOMs have organized 'vigilance groups' that denounce to the police men who assault their wives.

Nevertheless, GOM members tend to stress that what they appreciate the most is the feeling of strength and self-assurance that comes from the control and management of financial funds. They are always happy to show you their neat account books and tell you about the pride they feel when they – poor Quechua speaking women – enter the banks and are served by a clerk who has never before served a Quechua lady.

## Constraints and prejudices

The broad and general consensus about the importance of gender and gender mainstreaming may give the impression that its implementation is a smooth process. But are all people involved with it really always convinced about its importance? What is actually happening in the field? Are people effortlessly changing their attitudes and traditional approaches to gender issues? Isn't there any resistance?

Percy Barrio de Mendoza, staff member of the Andahuaylas section of the MARENASS project, spoke about the problem originating from the fact that a gender approach is often imposed upon the beneficiaries and participants of a development project, who are already dependent on the funding and support offered by the project:

> It is no easy process to make the concept of gender equity visible and accepted in the communities. You have to learn to be modest, patient and unassuming. In the first place, you have to realize that the urge to include a gender approach in all project activities mostly emanates as a proposal, or even a demand, from us – the project staff. This means that you cannot force your views onto others, demanding that they will accept, or fully understand, your intentions. You have to learn to develop a sensitive ear and try to understand the social reality of the people you cooperate with. Unfortunately, one sometimes gets the impression that gender mainstreaming can function like some kind of dogma directing how things have to be done.
>
> To receive the benefits provided by a project, people may feel forced to accept conditions and terms they are not always in accordance with. Such a strategy is not sustainable. To be effective, a gender equity approach ought to be developed from the inside; be internalized in its own due time. Your good intentions may succeed or fail; that is a risk you have to take. Strategies for how to implement gender equity have to be tested in an efficient way, always taking into consideration the specific cultural environment. Realization of the importance of gender tends to come step by step. Social control changes over time and adapts to new situations. You have to be prudent and cautious. Listen to divergent opinions with respect.

Thus, the danger is that gender mainstreaming is implemented by the project staff, not because of the demand from the community, but because it is an internationally accepted development strategy. The director of MARENASS, Antonieta Noli, phrased this in the following way:

> The poor are not a bunch of wretches. They are all individuals endowed with a unique reservoir of force and knowledge. The question why gender mainstreaming has to be implemented is easy to answer: international and national agreements demand it. However, how to ensure participation and engagement is much more difficult and subtle. The answer lies in promoting active participation. To make people realize the necessity of having all family members participating in the various efforts; men, women and children. A man who has been active in groups of gender sensitization recently told me: 'I earn money from every harvest, but now since my wife started a business of her own, she has money all the time. I realized the benefits of this when I fell ill a while ago and they had to bring me to the hospital. My wife could pay

> for it all because she had cash at hand. I could not have paid since it was between harvests. Men and women complement each other'.

Despite all efforts to improve gender equity, its importance is not always sufficiently internalized by all participants in development projects. Assurances of the profound commitment to apply principles of gender equity may often be nothing more than paying lip service to officially established rules and regulations. Timoteo López, a consultant with CODERSA in Guatemala, explained this as follows:

> I assume that most project directors, local authorities and project staff believe in the importance of supporting gender equity. However, since [gender issues] have been exempted from the academic formation of most of them, I believe that the real problem is an apparent lack of a profound understanding of what gender really signifies. Professionals and technicians often try to present an enlightened image in front of their colleagues, giving an impression that they know everything, something that makes them vulnerable when it comes to the adoption of a serious and responsible analysis of the activities they are supposed to support.
>
> Other problems are connected to political machinations. Since IFAD funds become public in countries where there often is a lack of financial resources, management of the money destined to projects is often characterized by significant shortcomings and delays. It is not strange that under such conditions, where internal political forces for various reasons try to control the resources and often delay access to them, it may happen that gender equity is deemed to be of lesser importance and is thus not attended to in a proper way.
>
> Productive projects have to be geared to women, but it often happens that both technical and social personnel have little experience of applying the proper approach in the field. [Gender mainstreaming] is often dependent on initiatives based on ideas that have not always been properly adapted to the reality circumscribing the men and women [who participate in the projects] and its implementation may thus result in frustrations and lack of real possibilities to incorporate gender equity.

Traditional and often chauvinistic views of gender roles may have permeated the views of certain project staff and technicians. Their own notions about how families ought to function may stimulate these views. The idea of the

nuclear family household consisting of a male head of household who is the breadwinner, a dependent wife and a number of dependent children, may lead to an underestimation of rural women's role in production. Related to this notion is the assumption that the man is the head of the household and that he is the only one in need of credit and technical assistance. The man is considered to be the one who makes decisions, who needs to be trained and to be invited to participate in courses. Women's demanding work in the household may lead to the assumption that they do not have time for other activities.[44] A project director participating in one of IFAD's seminars on gender mainstreaming said:

> I don't understand this gender issue. Why do you want me to force more work on women, particularly since women already have enough to do with ironing, washing, cooking and taking care of their children? It's a crime if I give them even more work to do.[45]

Women's limited time may also provide husbands with a 'good' excuse for their lack of participation in development projects. A male coffee producer participating in an IFAD-supported project in Sesemilito in Guatemala said:

> No, women do not have time to participate in all these meetings. They have to take care of the house and the children. They have enough to do with that. It is good if they learn how to cook better and to sew. I believe it is best that they learn things that have to do with their domestic chores.[46]

Undeniably, women's work, their household chores and their caring tasks are very time-consuming and demanding. Nevertheless, women's workload and limited time cannot count as a good reason for not participating in development projects. After all, they are the result of the gendered division of labour and women's unequal position. Development projects should do away with unnecessary restrictions that hinder women's participation, and create conditions for making work more efficient and lightening workloads.

Men, whether or not they are participants and beneficiaries of a development project, may show an attitude of resistance towards the participation of their spouses in project activities. Cristina Suaña, a small-scale rural businesswoman and participant in an IFAD-sponsored project in Peru, spoke about the resistance of husbands:

> We felt humiliated and were not appreciated for the work we were doing. When we came home late, we received shouts and screams from our husbands, 'Why do you do it? I believe you do this for your own entertainment. It does not pay off, it will never pay off. It is just for fun that you have meetings'.[47]

Nelsa Pedrol, a small-scale rural businesswoman in Panama, explained how her work in a development project put pressure on her relationships with her family and husband:

> At the beginning, my work was very difficult. The people, the family and my husband considered my work a waste of time and a sign that I did not want to do anything productive. My participation in this kind of work almost caused a divorce. Even my children did not accept that I was working.[48]

This negative attitude of men towards women's participation in projects should be viewed in the light of the marginal economic position of these men and the daily difficulties they encounter in performing their roles as breadwinners and protectors of their family. As a consequence, men may experience feelings of losing status, power, importance, respect and self-respect, and may even end up perceiving themselves as victims. While women may benefit from positive discrimination and receiving attention from external agents who provide technical assistance, capacity building and credit, poor men may experience this as a further threat to their authority and their central position in the family. An episode from the Ecuadorean highlands recounted by a consultant may serve as an illustration of such a tragedy:

> Accompanied by a female technician, I visited a woman who was using credit and technical assistance provided by an IFAD-supported project to prepare and plant a garden plot in order to grow medicinal plants. She had grown a vast number of different species and was now manufacturing several remedies that she sold in the market for a small profit. She was also chairwoman of a communal women's group. While I was interviewing her [during a group meeting], her husband entered. He was very drunk and quite aggressive. First he started to shout at the women, telling them that they took the livelihood and pride from the men, disobeying them and turning them into idiots. Then he turned to me and said his life had been good before foreigners like me entered his community. We fooled men like him by granting

> them credit they could not pay back, while at the same time we twisted the minds of women and children, destroying the families. In the end he started to cry. The women around me were extremely embarrassed. First they tried to ignore the drunkard, and then they smiled and said he was just drunk and crazy, and then they explained that he had lost a horse in a bad deal and was sorry for that. I was told not to pay any attention whatsoever to what he was saying.[49]

This incident illustrates the fact that outside assistance may improve women's roles in society, at the same time as men may feel they are losing prestige and influence. When working with poor communities, it is important to remember that men, just like women, may suffer from powerlessness and disdain due to, among other things, abject poverty, ethnic prejudices and illiteracy. Gender consciousness implies that members of the entire society are taken into consideration, that the problems of both men and women should be considered and addressed. To do so, it is important to study the local cultural, religious and socio-economic context and to establish an open-ended dialogue with community members, not only with groups composed of both women and men, but with separate groups of women, men, youth, children, elderly people and formal and informal authorities. Any poverty analysis ought to reflect issues related to power relations that originate from gender roles. Accordingly, such analyses must also take into consideration the situation of men who are living in difficult circumstances.[50]

When an organization such as IFAD insists on female participation in decision-making processes, it is important that such initiatives be prepared and introduced with the utmost care and with deep sensitivity to the cultural singularities of the region. Dora Vasquez, who is in charge of gender training for the Peasant Women's Association of the East (AMCO) in Quetzaltepeque, Guatemala, stated:

> It is not at all easy to make people conscious of the importance of gender. The culture of this area has fostered perceptions that make men believe they have the right to think and talk for the women, as well as for themselves. I was born here. I come from a poor peasant family. My parents cannot read or write. I think I know my people pretty well. Women are taught not to think or talk for themselves. Still, they often have more responsibilities for their families than the men, in the sense that they have to care for the children and administer the money their husbands give to them. Most men leave the care of the home entirely to

the women and are thus unable to visualize what it means in all its details. I generalize, but sometimes you have to do that. There are always exceptions.

Anyhow, how do I go about trying to convince people that they should care more about gender issues? First of all, I tell them it is the law and that they have to obey it. Everyone understands that. There are three Guatemalan laws that oblige every citizen to give equal opportunities to women: the law of decentralization, the municipal code and the law for rural and urban development councils. Furthermore, the peace accords stipulate that women have the same rights as men to access and participation. People know how to abide by the laws, and I teach them how to do it.

Often women do not come to the meetings, but then I ask a particular man why his wife is not here (I often know both husband and wife personally). He probably answers that she does not want to come. That is typical; men tend to speak on behalf of their wives. Then I say: 'How come? I spoke to her recently and know that she wants to come.' That often helps. Men have to learn not only to listen to their wives, but also to be able to admit that they do so in public, because … after all … most men and women are already sharing the responsibilities of their homes.

## Endnotes

1/ UNDP (2003), p. 4.

2/ Boserup (1970).

3/ UNDP (2003), p. 4.

4/ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women', http://www.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw (visited June 2006).

5/ Ibid.

6/ Chant and Craske (2003), p. 28, Table 2.1.

7/ UNDP (2003), p. 4.

8/ Moser (1993), p. 3; Moser et al. (1999), p. 3.

9/ Benería and Feldman (1992); Moser (1993), pp. 70-71.

10/ Moser (1993), pp. 70-71.

11/ In the beginning, GAD was called GID (Gender in Development).

12/ UNDP (2003), p. 6. These views have in particular been connected with the Harvard Institute for International Development (Razavi and Miller (1995), pp. 13 and 14) and the 'Harvard framework', which was originally outlined in Overholt et al. (1984). The key issues of this framework are to map the work of men and women in a given community, highlight the key differences and demonstrate that there is an economic rationale for investing in women as well as men.

13/ This approach has been promoted through the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex (Razavi and Miller (1995), p. 27).

14/ Razavi and Miller (1995), pp. 27-28, see also UNDP (2003), p. 6.

15/ UNDP (2003), p. 6.

16/ Young (1997).

17/ Ibid., p. 52.

18/ Ibid., p. 51.

19/ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

20/ Ibid., p. 52.

21/ Ibid., p. 53.

22/ http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/ (visited June 2006) under 'Preamble'.

23/ See 'The Four Global Women's Conferences 1975-1995: Historical Perspective'. Published on the Internet by the United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI/2035/M, May 2000, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/hist.htm (visited June 2006).

24/ Ibid.

25/ Ibid.

26/ ECOSOC agreed conclusion 1997/2 in United Nations (2002), p. v.

27/ ECOSOC Resolution 2001/41, July 2001 in United Nations (2002), p. v.

28/ http://www.mdgender.net (visited June 2006). The MDGs have been criticized for being too vague when it comes to issues of gender equality. It has been stressed that this is particularly lamentable, since the MDGs were established partly as an answer to concerns raised at various summits and conferences that dealt specifically with the importance of gender equality for promoting development. However, it has also been highlighted that gender equality is not only a goal in its own right, but is also an essential ingredient for achieving all the MDGs. See leaflet 'Gender Equality and The Millennium Development Goals' by UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, the World Bank and OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, http://www.mdgender.net/upload/tools/MDGender_leaflet.pdf (visited June 2006).

29/ Claudia Lizeth del Cid, Coordinator of Capacity Building and Small Businesses, PROSOC, Honduras, quoted in FIDA/ProGénero/Promer (2003), p. 31. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

30/ See, for example, Narayan (2000), pp. 206-211, 331.

31/ Sources from the mid-1990s report between 550 and 700 languages for the whole region. There are some 56 language families and 73 isolates (i.e. languages without a demonstrable relationship to other living languages) (Campbell (1997) and Kaufman (1994a&b) cited at AILLA, The Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America), http://www.ailla.utexas.org (visited June 2006).

32/ IFAD (1998:4), p. 46.

33/ Ibid., p. 47.

34/ *Programa de Reconstrucción y Modernización Rural*.

35/ *Unidad de Fortalecimiento y Apoyo en Género*.

36/ Quoted in IFAD/ ProGénero/CODERSA (2003), p. 17. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

37/ After the conclusion of PRODAP, Ms. Moreira subsequently started working in a comparable position in the PREMODER project.

38/ Moreira (n.d.).

39/ The training package for technicians was somewhat more theoretical.

40/ de Zutter (2004), p. 107. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

41/ IFAD (2006:1), p. vi.

42/ *Grupos Organizados de Mujeres*.

43/ de Zutter (2004), p. 258; IFAD (2006:1), p. 14.

44/ Based on an interview with Reina Noemi Moreira in 2006.

45/ Quoted in FIDA/ProGénero/PROMER (2003), p. 42. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

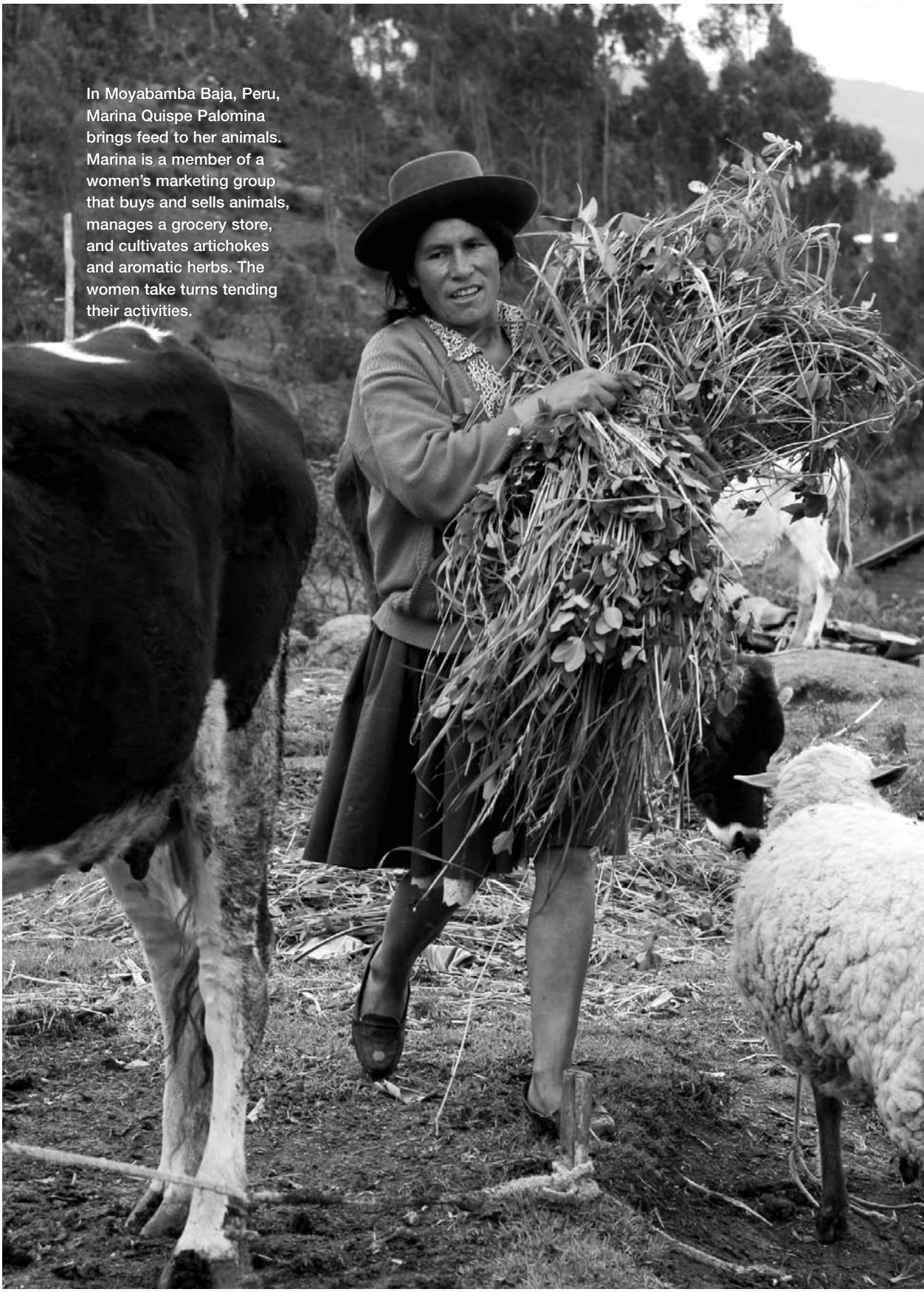
46/ Quoted in IFAD (1998:4), p. 18.

47/ Quoted in FIDA/ProGénero/Promer (2003), pp. 30-31. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

48/ Ibid., p. 30. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

49/ Recounted by a consultant who worked with the Upper Basin of the Cañar River Rural Development Project (CARC) in Ecuador.

50/ Among the vulnerable male groups are young men without an education who encounter grave difficulties when they try to enter the labour force and thus may end up as criminals. Demobilized soldiers and former militia members are often not only dangerous but also vulnerable as well. A particularly painful example of vulnerability is the fate of many former child soldiers, who tend to harbour deep-seated feelings of shame and worthlessness, or who suffer from various psychological problems caused by systematic indoctrination, various forms of abuse and long-time exposure to extreme violence. Furthermore, it is common in various parts of the world for such children to be rejected by their communities. Cultural beliefs and attitudes can make reunification particularly difficult for returning girls who have been raped or sexually abused (Machel (2001), pp. 12-19). At any given time, more than 300,000 children are being used in hostilities as soldiers (Brett in Machel (2001), p. 2). Another forgotten group is constituted by men with hazardous occupations or with jobs in which they become victims of various forms of exploitation; in such groups we also find men who are forced to live far away from their families as migrant or ambulatory workers (de Wylder (2004), p. 101).



In Moyabamba Baja, Peru, Marina Quispe Palomina brings feed to her animals. Marina is a member of a women's marketing group that buys and sells animals, manages a grocery store, and cultivates artichokes and aromatic herbs. The women take turns tending their activities.

Chapter 5

# Developing an IFAD gender strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean

IFAD was established in 1977. Two years before, the United Nations had organized the first World Conference on Women, in Mexico City. Right from the beginning, the Fund's policies and operations have reflected and implemented the insights, theories and actions that were developed and refined through the global equity debate. Since the beginning of the 1980s, women have been explicitly incorporated in IFAD-cofinanced projects. However, it became obvious that in spite of training efforts, aimed at both project technical staff and beneficiaries, it was still very difficult to implement a comprehensive gender equity focus in most projects. The main reason for this was a lack of clear strategies and insufficient tools for technicians to operationalize gender concepts in project execution. As mentioned in the previous chapter, IFAD projects that had been prepared in the 1980s generally had a specific women's component and promoted actions specifically aimed at women. In more recent projects, gender equity was supposed to be included in all components and sub-components. Women were to form an integral part of the entire group of beneficiaries and were accordingly supposed to receive the same benefits and services as male participants. In practice, however, there were huge gaps in male and female participation, as well as access to project resources and development opportunities. Nevertheless, if shortcomings in the implementation of gender equity measures at the stages of project formulation and project execution were going to be improved, it was important for not only project management, staff and

beneficiaries, but also representatives of co-executing agencies and governmental institutions to be gender sensitive and to participate in identifying problems and proposing solutions.

In this chapter we describe the developments concerning the integration of a gender approach in IFAD's activities and operations as developed by IFAD's regional division for Latin America and the Caribbean. We especially focus on a gender mainstreaming programme carried out in the region. We pay attention to the meetings and activities that were organized within the framework of this programme. The main PROSGIP activity consisted of a series of four international seminars held in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and Chile between 1997 and 1999. The following three sections of this chapter are dedicated to relevant themes that came up and were discussed during the international seminars. They concern: i) the conceptualization of gender and the gender division of labour; ii) the preferred methodology for addressing gender inequalities; and iii) the incorporation of a gender equity approach into specific stages of the development project, namely planning, training and monitoring. In the final section, we pay attention to the ways the PROSGIP programme was followed up.

## In need of a gender approach

In early 1997, IFAD's LAC Division evaluated its performance on gender equity. Several weaknesses in the formulation and appraisal of projects were found. At the project formulation stage, for example, little attention was given to working in a differentiated manner with male and female beneficiaries or incorporating gender issues in each project component. In general, the appraisal documents[1] included little gender-disaggregated information with regard to the target group, or analysis regarding existing gender inequity. Due to the lack of such an analysis, 'gender equity' was not incorporated in the projects' general or specific objectives. Often no gender training was foreseen and most projects did not have a specific budget for addressing gender equity issues. Furthermore, most projects did not have a gender expert as a team member and the Terms of References of team members made no mention of the staff's responsibility with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in their respective component.

Although several weaknesses were identified, it was also found that many projects had had valuable experiences with gender mainstreaming and that these could prove to be very helpful for other projects. Thus the idea arose of using experiences gathered from various projects as the basis

for a comprehensive discussion involving project representatives from the entire region. The theme of gender equity and rural development could be discussed and scrutinized from various angles. Such an exchange of experiences, queries and proposals could form the basis for the formulation of action plans for gender mainstreaming in IFAD projects in Latin America and the Caribbean.

By inviting project directors, staff, government representatives and people from co-executing agencies to discuss gender issues and propose initiatives to mainstream them in project activities, the process to establish action plans turned into a participatory and open-ended exercise. Participatory approaches and methods for gender training were already being developed in various projects, such as the Salvadoran initiatives described in the previous chapter, and they could now be used for the preparation of a framework for various workshops and seminars.

Accordingly, IFAD's LAC Division developed the Programme to Support Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (PROSGIP).[2] PROSGIP was aimed at supporting the staff of IFAD's rural and agricultural development projects in incorporating gender aspects and allowing a more equitable participation of men and women in project activities and results. A way to achieve this objective was to adopt a practical approach to gender mainstreaming by incorporating gender aspects throughout the entire project cycle. The endeavour required a painstaking and comprehensive process, during which much effort was expended to ensure that the needs, interests and experiences of staff and beneficiaries were included in the design of the programme.

The PROSGIP initiative was financed with a grant from the Government of Japan[3] and a smaller grant from the Dutch Consultant Trust Fund. The programme was implemented for three years with a total budget of US$506,000.[4]

In June 1997, the programme was initiated with a seminar in Antigua, Guatemala. Here is what Pilar Campaña – IFAD consultant – had to say about PROSGIP:

> The point of departure for the entire process was an urge to answer questions like: 'How can we engage and commit project directors and staff to address gender equity issues? How can we stimulate an effective implementation of gender-related actions? How can capacity building be generated within the projects themselves?' PROSGIP was constructed around such questions. It was decided that the programme's content and actions had to be defined by the same

people who had the ultimate responsibility for implementing them – directors and staff. It was also felt that it was important to attract the attention of government agencies, in particular ministries of agriculture in the countries where the seminars/workshops were taking place. The intention was to make government officials aware of the profound interest in and the importance of addressing gender issues in rural areas. NGOs were also invited to participate in the events, as observers, and to present documents analysing various project experiences in implementing gender issues.

## PROSGIP

The aim of PROSGIP was to address and clarify doubts related to such concepts as 'gender equity' and 'gender mainstreaming', as well as to demonstrate how the gender equity theme could be applied to and analysed within the context of all project components. Considering the extent and diversity of IFAD's operations (around 50 projects are supported in different countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region), it was decided to implement the gender programme gradually in four subregions. The division into subregions was not made in a geographically strict way, but was mainly based on cultural affinity and potential collaboration with regional institutions. First, a preparatory meeting was held in every subregion for the management, staff and technicians of the participating projects. Then, consultants visited the participating projects to make a first overview of the various approaches and methodologies for mainstreaming gender. They then recorded their observations in diagnostic reports (one for each subregion). Finally, international seminars were organized according to the scheme presented in Table I. (For more details see Annex I.)

**Table 1: Overview of the series of PROSGIP international seminars**

| Seminar | Participating countries |
|---|---|
| Antigua, Guatemala<br>7-11 June 1997 | Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama (preparatory meeting in Guatemala) |
| Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic<br>8-13 June 1998 | Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (preparatory meeting in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) |
| Castries, Saint Lucia<br>9-13 November 1998 | Belize, Guyana, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (preparatory meeting in Barbados) |
| La Serena, Chile<br>20-26 June 1999 | Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay (preparatory meeting in Colonia, Uruguay) |

IFAD co-organized the four international seminars with governmental and non-governmental organizations active in the region. Each seminar had an average of 35 male and 35 female participants, representing around a dozen development projects and another dozen governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The general goal of PROSGIP was to develop action plans for an efficient implementation of gender equity strategies in each IFAD-supported project in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, IFAD did not want to introduce and conduct such a process 'from the outside', by relying exclusively on hired experts. Instead, the idea was to approach project directors, staff and technicians and ask them how they tackled problems related to gender equity within the context of each specific project. The approach would be cross-cutting and practical, meaning that the entire process of mainstreaming gender had to be based on practice, lessons learned and best cases. Three consultants – Pilar Campaña, Ingrid Schreuel and Ana Lucía Moreno – participated in the entire process of planning, carrying out and organizing the PROSGIP events. Ingrid Schreuel recounted the following:

> All activities were intended to centre on a participatory approach. The reason for this was that several people who had worked with gender sensitivity training had experienced how confusion, or even resistance, had been expressed by several project directors and thus wanted to engage them in, and commit them to, the process of implementing gender. The PROSGIP seminars came to serve as some kind of boxes where you entered information, doubts, needs and discussions. The analysis came afterwards, when you 'opened' the boxes and sorted the contents. At the events, people were free to say: 'Not everything within our projects works smoothly. We do not always know what to do. We need help and support.'

Since a main focus of the seminars would be lessons learned from practice, consultants first visited all participating projects. After these visits they prepared reports on how the projects had developed various approaches and methodologies for mainstreaming gender, at the same time as they offered and presented descriptions and analyses of salient gender issues.[5] Ms. Schreuel explained:

> Before each event [international seminar], Pilar Campaña and I visited the participating projects and prepared diagnostics and analyses that served as some kind of baseline studies. The studies presented general information about the state of affairs of gender equity implementation in each project. This procedure was excellent in the sense that when we came to the international seminars and met the assembled project staff, we already knew them and they were aware of the studies. Often we had helped the project staff with the case studies they would present at the seminars, so there was a good relationship. During the seminar, the studies served as eye openers, themes for discussions and food for thought.

The diagnostic studies written by the consultants presented the unique problems and characteristics of each project, thus stressing the fact that any gender analysis and strategy have to be applied to the particular sociocultural, economic and natural conditions prevailing in the areas where the projects are carried out. However, the reports also indicated that the projects shared similar problems. In many projects, there was confusion regarding the concepts of gender. Gender was often considered to be synonymous with women and mainstreaming gender meant implementing some extra activities especially for women.[6] The reports underlined the fact that when dealing with gender issues it is important to keep in mind that each project has at least three levels of execution and decision-making: i) project management and technical staff; ii) beneficiaries; and iii) government institutions. At the staff level, internal problems are related to the existence (or non-existence) of qualified staff to identify and execute gender-related affirmative actions. Of course, political and personal will and convictions differ among managers and technicians. However, the establishment of systematic and permanent training processes may solve problems arising from different or opposing opinions. Training opportunities in gender awareness also have to be directed to men and women beneficiaries, addressing issues such as low self-esteem in women, male and female chauvinism, gender-related illiteracy, female subordination and other barriers to gender equity and, consequently, sustainable development. Finally, there are structural problems related to legal and juridical aspects that limit the equal access of women and men to the services offered by the projects, and these are beyond the control or influence of both project management and the beneficiaries.

## Preparatory meetings and international seminars

The preparatory meetings were organized five months ahead of each international seminar. They were focused exclusively on the project directors and staff in charge of gender issues and were intended to stimulate their interest and commitment. Ms. Schreuel explained:

> On a daily basis the directors are confronted with the challenge of how to implement gender equity within their projects' different activities. By engaging project directors from the beginning and leaving the planning of the events to them, we were able to guarantee a focus on practical issues. Furthermore, the directors are well aware of which members of their staff would benefit the most from being present at the international seminars, and since they were instrumental in inviting participants to the seminars the personal knowledge of the directors served as a guarantee for the arrival of the right people.

During the preparatory meetings, the proceedings for the upcoming international seminar were established and discussions were held between the invited project staff, IFAD personnel, consultants and representatives of the co-organizers. Participants in the preparatory meetings presented topics and themes that they thought should be considered during the international seminar, and agreements were made with the consultants for the forthcoming diagnostic studies. The participants in the preparatory meetings also recommended and agreed upon the presentation of case studies to be prepared by those projects that were considered to be able to offer particular insights into and methodologies regarding salient gender themes. Guidelines for case study preparation were developed and US$600 was set aside for each of the projects chosen to prepare such case studies. Ms. Schreuel explained:

> All preparatory meetings were characterized by a very positive environment. People came with great expectations and open minds. The participatory format of the meetings, the informal group work and the open sharing of problems and ideas, as well as the process of the selection of themes, proceedings and case studies, raised the interest of the directors and made them proactive. Their engagement influenced the creation of a positive mood during the main events.

The host country for the international seminar was selected by the participants in the preparatory meeting. The selection was based on the project that could offer the best location and budget proposal for the seminar. During the diagnostic studies that the consultants did after the preparatory meetings, it was found that several of the project directors questioned why they and their staff had to work from a gender perspective. A reason for this resistance was that most projects were designed with a WID focus rather than with a gender equity approach. Accordingly, it was difficult for some directors to understand 'why matters had to be complicated even further'. In most cases, projects did not have a gender specialist and it was generally the person in charge of monitoring and evaluation or capacity building who had some knowledge about gender issues.

The international seminars were designed to attract as many stakeholders as possible and efforts were made to reach and engage high-level decision-makers. National and regional co-organizers cooperated in making the seminars not only interesting and stimulating, but also entertaining. Project participants prepared their contribution several months ahead. The project participants who presented case studies did so with the support of video presentations and testimonies offered by invited beneficiaries. Efforts were made to attract attention to the events in the host countries. Invitations were sent to the representatives of different donor organizations and United Nations agencies, the press and various government officials.[7] In Santo Domingo, a parallel event was organized to satisfy the national demand for distributing and receiving information about gender equity and rural development. At a round-table session during the Dominican seminar, Dominican development organizations presented studies and accounts of their activities, and described the gender situation in rural areas in the Dominican Republic.[8]

An important feature of all seminars was the organization of a 'fair' at which the projects presented their various activities, products and didactic material. To make these presentations as attractive as possible, the stands were erected and decorated in competition with each other. The winners were chosen by the seminar participants and given a prize for 'best presentation'. Ms. Schreuel recalled:

> The enthusiasm and special care demonstrated by various projects' exhibitions and presentations can be considered as one measure of how important the participants considered the event to be. It cannot be underestimated how the participatory format of the events stimulated an exchange between the participants and eventually stimulated further collaboration.

Training material related to gender issues was presented, distributed and sold at the seminars. The material came from IFAD projects as well as from other international governmental and non-governmental organizations. An initiative related to this activity was the establishment of a PROSGIP library that served as an information source for the participating projects. In addition, a diskette containing all references to the displayed material was distributed among the participants.

Controversies related to gender issues guaranteed that the discussions were dynamic and animated – and sometimes heated. After all, every participant had personal experiences about what it means to be a woman or a man within particular sociocultural contexts. Gender forms an important dimension of our identity and it is difficult to overcome this personal identification and to think about gender in a more analytical way. Also, theorizing and abstract lecturing occurred during the seminars and may have provoked feelings of confusion. Claudia Ranaboldo, who participated in the seminar in La Serena, stated:

> The seminar offered many valuable insights from several project representatives who had experienced various forms of gender implementation in their respective projects. Still, as is usually the case at any such event, there was a lot of theorizing as well. You are told what gender is, and what it is not. Such a discourse is often interesting to listen to, but there are of course confusions as well. You listen and learn, sit there taking notes, looking at charts and PowerPoint presentations, but then you go for a coffee and chat with other participants. On such occasions, a little germ of doubt appears and starts to chew on your mind: 'Perhaps we're doing everything wrong. I really don't understand everything that is said. Is our project a "Women in Development" or a "Gender and Development" project? It's probably too much of a WID project and accordingly it's all wrong. All our efforts have been in vain and will probably be condemned in the evaluation. There are so many rules and regulations to follow.'

The evaluations that followed the events expressed different opinions about what had, and had not been valuable. The overall impressions appeared to have been positive, however, indicating that the seminars had been not only illuminating and productive but also quite fun, promoting both personal contacts and future collaboration between projects. Ms. Schreuel described the seminar in Santo Domingo as follows:

> The seminar was amazing. Participants would work late, only to be back at the conference table early the next morning. There was no way of stopping them in their discussions in small groups. I have never seen so many project staff participate with so much enthusiasm in any workshop. Gender equity was clearly a theme that had captured their interest and it was very much alive. This enthusiasm will definitely have its impact in the field.

During the first seminar in Guatemala, beneficiaries were invited to offer their experiences of how gender issues had been tackled within the setting of the projects they were engaged in. However, without previous knowledge of the sociocultural environment of the specific projects, it proved difficult for the seminar participants to digest the information provided by beneficiaries. Therefore, another approach was tested in the Dominican Republic. A one-day excursion was organized to various sites of an IFAD-supported project,[9] which provided demonstrations of how gender approaches had been implemented. Afterwards, the experience was discussed and commented upon by the participants. The field visit was generally appreciated and interpreted as an illustrative example of both the will and the strength of people engaged in gender-related activities. This positive experience led to field trips becoming a feature of the subsequent seminars.

At all seminars, working groups were organized to discuss the particular themes that had been identified during the preparatory meetings. Each group discussion produced a summary and conclusion that was presented to the other participants during round-table discussions. The activities, discussions and suggestions were translated into action plans for each participating project. Project representatives and the representatives of IFAD and the cooperating institutions drafted these plans jointly. The action plans established how gender equity considerations were going to be mainstreamed within all project components. They identified responsibilities, financial resources for implementation, strategies and concrete activities that project staff and participating institutions needed for incorporating gender equity in the project. Furthermore, each project planned workshops, training programmes and diagnostics to be realized in collaboration with other projects. Participants agreed that the process of gender mainstreaming had to be supported by adequate systems of monitoring and evaluation. The effective identification of indicators, especially for measuring qualitative gains, as well as a better use of participatory methodologies, were discussed in the action plans and possible solutions were suggested.

## Conceptualizing gender and the division of labour

Important themes related to gender relations and equity were presented and discussed during the series of international seminars. One concerned the conceptualization of gender and the gendered division of labour. The descriptions of rural life in areas of El Salvador and Peru presented in Chapters 2 and 3 show that men and women are accustomed to carrying out different, specific chores within the farming systems that characterize their means of livelihood. This division of labour has influenced technical assistance directed towards rural communities, which has often been geared to particular gender groups. Accordingly, socio-economic systems based on exclusion and specialization were being reconfirmed, thus limiting access and possibilities for members of the community, mainly women.

A case study presented at the international seminar in Guatemala demonstrated how a comprehensive, detailed and gender-sensitive study of production systems in the Guatemalan Cuchumatanes highlands proved to be helpful for the establishment of innovative strategies for technical assistance directed to men and women. The study described how much time men and women dedicated to their work, what kind of activities they were engaged in and their particular needs. All data were gender-disaggregated and served as the basis for future technical assistance.

The general picture that emerged made all project participants well aware of the importance of applying a thorough gender analysis to any diagnosis of production systems. For the first time in that area, figures and statistics clearly demonstrated the level of participation by men and women in certain activities. For example, it was found that the rearing and marketing of pigs, poultry and sheep were done almost exclusively by women, who also controlled the generated income. Women provided 28 per cent of the labour invested in potato growing and carried out 18 per cent of all agricultural labour.[10] Such data convinced technicians and extension workers about the importance of directing their activities to both men and women. Ricarda Velazquez Funes participated in the capacity-building programme offered by the Cuchumatanes project, which among other things enabled her to work with the veterinary care of sheep. Her husband commented on her participation in the following way:

> When she has to participate in a meeting, she always leaves things prepared in the house before she goes away. I stay with the children. I have to give them their breakfast, lunch and dinner, get them off to sleep and make their beds. When the food she has prepared is finished, I have to find a woman who can make tortillas, because my wife may

> be away on training for more than a week. Nevertheless, I like it, because they are providing her with skills to sow, to irrigate properly and to take care of the potatoes in a more efficient way. Thus we all learn to work better. And I also like it since we are experiencing a change for the better, because she goes to those groups that ask her to look after an animal and cure it if it is very sick. She has gained the knowledge; she knows how to apply the right medicines. Sometimes she has to go away and even travel to other communities.[11]

To convince men to take on responsibilities for domestic chores is not easy. There is a huge difference between 'helping out' and really sharing responsibilities by appreciating the importance, planning and extent of specific tasks. In addition, to increase women's participation in development projects, it is essential to stress the importance of introducing time-saving devices and actions that facilitate women's presence at training sessions, their access to technical assistance opportunities and their participation in decision-making. Devices such as water tubes, pumps, wells, improved stoves, hand-driven mills and improved housing facilities, combined with improved social services, such as access to effective schools, day care centres and rural health clinics, are all crucial for facilitating women's participation, as well as for the welfare of families and communities. Pilar Campaña explained:

> Since most women combine domestic chores, in particular the care of children, with productive work, they tend to have another vision of time, another way of organizing their lives, than men. To try to help women organize their time in another way does not cost much money, but it does imply a lot of effort and the ability to perceive obstacles and shortcomings that are not always so apparent.

The seminar where the theme of gender definitions and the gendered division of labour was a particular focus was the one held in Castries, Saint Lucia. There were several reasons for this; perhaps the most important was the fact that the participating projects had been initiated at a rather late date,[12] on average two years before the event. Appraisal reports and initial strategies had not considered gender issues to the same degree as those projects participating in the other international seminars. For example, in the identification of target groups, no distinction had been made between men- and women-headed households. None of the projects had a strategy for incorporating gender issues in each project component. There was no gender-disaggregated

information (except to a certain extent in Belize and Guyana). Gender equity was not incorporated in the projects' general and specific objectives and no training in gender was foreseen. All projects lacked a specific budget for gender equity and none had a full-time gender expert. In addition, its cultural diversity – at least when it comes to dominant languages, legislation, and highly diversified sociocultural influences – to a certain extent sets the Caribbean region apart from the sociocultural setting of the Latin American mainland, where the gender debate is based on a discourse that is dominated by a different academic and cultural tradition. Compared with the Latin American mainland, which for 400 years was dominated by the colonial regime of Spain (and in the case of Brazil, that of Portugal), several coastal areas and island states of the Caribbean have been influenced by various cultures. Indigenous Carib and Taino cultures, and a strong influx of African traditions from a wide range of cultures such as Yoruba, Fon and Congo, have left their mark on the distinctive character of Caribbean culture, as have English, French, Dutch, United States and Danish administrations.

A presentation by Eudine Barriteau focused on the gender concept within a Caribbean context.[13] Her study emphasized that gender is about men and women, but is not synonymous with men and women. Both gender and development are connected with changing patterns and values that regulate the cultural meanings of being a man and being a woman. Gender involves two dimensions: a material and an ideological dimension. In the context of rural development, an instrumental approach refers to the material dimension of gender: it is an approach that is intended to correct manifestations of gender inequalities. On the other hand, a transformative approach tackles the roots that cause gender inequities. If this essential difference is correctly understood, gender awareness signifies not only addressing the symptoms of gender inequalities – such as the number of men and women who have access to land or credit – but also a profound awareness of the fact that people think and act within a vast sociocultural system of sophisticated networks based on power relations that constantly reconstruct femininity and masculinity. Such a realization implies that development projects need to search for strategic allies that are able to help them to address social and psychological aspects related to gender equity, self-esteem, masculinity, femininity and violence. Recent developments of the gender concept have been influenced by the fact that studies carried out in the Caribbean show that women cannot automatically be cast as victims – neither can men.[14] While facing the current division of labour within households and high unemployment, some Caribbean men are currently suffering from the absence of useful social and economic roles.

Two studies that were presented in Saint Lucia support the thesis that gendered divisions of labour have to be considered in their specific socio-economic context.[15] Historical developments in the Caribbean have been characterized by plantation systems based on slave labour, and more recently by an unusually high degree of social mobility, mainly due to mass migration of men. Such factors have led to a high degree of women's participation in the labour force. Nevertheless, family life and the rearing of children continue to be culturally defined as 'women's business'. It is not uncommon for men to be labelled as 'marginal' to the family, and as 'irresponsible', 'hit and run' fathers and conjugal partners. In several Caribbean countries the female workforce exceeds 40 per cent of the employed population.[16] Recently, some voices have been raised in the gender debate stating that men are being marginalized, in particular pointing to the educational system where, during the 1970s, several countries adopted the co-education of boys and girls as the solution to gender inequalities. In many countries the results have moved far beyond expectations and it is now common for girls to outpace boys in enrolment and performance at all levels.[17] In most Caribbean countries, a little less than 50 per cent of farm operators are women. However, male tenure dominates the sector and traditional views of farming are still persistent, indicating that the man usually controls all decision-making on the farm. The situation calls for more sophisticated disaggregated data and statistics, as well as gender-sensitive training in order to make the complex reality of gender and development in the Caribbean clearer and more visible.

## Methodologies: From WID to GAD

A second theme that was extensively dealt with at the international seminars was the methodology of promoting gender equity. Several participants stressed that many projects with a WID approach had the tendency to group women around traditional female tasks, such as childcare, health care, nutrition, handicrafts and sewing. Such strategies may exclude women from more profitable development alternatives and thus hinder their potential integration as full-fledged beneficiaries and participants of all project components and activities. In this context, the benefits and shortcomings of exclusively male and female groups were discussed. Another point of discussion was the level of project responsibility with regard to changing traditional divisions of labour in relation to equal access to income-generating opportunities.

The field trip organized during the seminar in Santo Domingo highlighted this issue. The visited project covered an area that has 204 farmer

organizations and 184 *Clubes de Madres* (Mothers' Clubs). The latter had generally been in existence for 10 to 20 years and carried out a wide range of activities, including several that were typically characterized as being within the 'female sphere': various types of handicraft, preparation of natural medicine, poultry production. However, some of the Mothers' Clubs were also engaged in reforestation and commercial nurseries. The women gave several reasons for being organized:

> 'To strengthen the organization and fight for our community in order to solve our essential needs, encouraging participation without political or religious banners'; '… As women we unite because with joint forces we will be able to solve our problems'; 'We think of organizing ourselves to obtain courses in dressmaking, as well as music and painting lessons for the youngsters'; 'We are organized as women, but we do not receive support to resolve the problems we have as women.'[18]

Although the women appreciated various aspects of their organizations, it became clear from the discussions that their main need was to gain access to paid work.[19] The need to promote the more efficient use of the potential inherent in women's organizations was discussed. It was emphasized that it was very important to identify and implement participatory methodologies allowing men and women to realize their different demands, priorities and interests in a united manner, within a project framework that makes it possible for them to maximize their respective potentials.[20]

Nevertheless, there are also many viable arguments for distinguishing between men and women, and to allocate part of a project's funding exclusively to women. Focusing exclusively on women may contribute to the development of self-esteem and to the promotion of self-expression among them. The following three testimonies of members of the *Asociación Nueva Vida* (New Life Association) from the Bolivian highlands were presented in the international seminar in Chile:

> 'The ladies who participate are mainly widows. They are already mature people and yet none of them knows how to read or write. There's a sense of solidarity in the association, though not every one shares the feeling. It's harder for older ladies to learn; they need more time. The training has to be in Aymara and, above all, practical methods have to be used…'; 'In the association, we're all equal. If the organization advances as one person, we'll all be well off; if we're

> divided, we cannot progress in an efficient way. Every one of us must gain knowledge. If we move forward, all of us can breathe more easily…'; 'Not every one agrees with this statement of solidarity! We have trained older ladies, but they do not learn anything. It's sad, but that way we'll not get anywhere. If we're not going to be let down, we have to choose those we are going to train…'[21]

At the international seminar in Santo Domingo, the staff of the Upper Basin of the Cañar River Rural Development Project (CARC),[22] a project in the Ecuadorean highlands, presented their experiences with turning the WID approach into a GAD approach. They explained the various difficulties and benefits related to the application of a gender approach.[23] As in many other projects, the staff of CARC experienced difficulties trying to harmonize a WID approach with the entire project strategy. The incorporation of a gender equity approach in all components of the project implied a gradual and complicated process. A particularly difficult constraint was that the project, like many other projects formulated in the same period, initially suffered from a dichotomy between 'social' and 'technical' components:

> The women personnel of the project were mainly promoters engaged in the social part of the activities, while the men were mainly extension workers engaged in the technical part. The former were in charge of organizational work involved in all activities and components of the project, and were engaged with all work related to women's groups. In the project chart, the women promoters found themselves within a component called 'Social Organization', while the technical coordinators and extension workers came under a component called 'Technical Assistance'. By the end of 1994, the introduction of a gender approach enabled us to question this division and to address gender issues within a new, more comprehensive framework. Both extension workers and promoters were integrated into a 'territorial unit' – the UCA (Coordination and Support Unit) – which from then on realized all of the project's actions.[24]

This new strategy facilitated the integration of women's groups into the social network of formal management and decision-making, thus creating a new situation in which men and women could interact and make decisions on an equal footing. A thorough diagnosis of gender roles was carried out, searching for viable answers to such questions as: Who does

what? What are the barriers to equitable participation? Are there any gender-related needs within the area? Is the project able to fulfil the specific needs of women and men? What results can be expected from improved gender equity? How are the project's actions and services affecting women and men?[25]

One solution to the question of how to integrate both women and men into management and decision-making within the CARC project was the introduction of the Annual Operational Participatory Planning process, which guaranteed the participation of both women and men. In the case of the CARC project, this planning process meant that women and men participated in the planning and evaluation of project activities at meetings held at three different levels: the community, the parish and the province. Furthermore, when communities applied to join the project they had to present an elaborate, participatory diagnosis. Such diagnoses were also carried out and improved by women and men project beneficiaries during recurrent evaluation workshops. First, these groups worked separately and then came together in plenary sessions. Diagnoses and evaluations were based on participatory methods and gender analyses, such as the creation of community maps of the present and the future, calendars that showed men's and women's agricultural activities, analyses of domestic activities, and matrices that laid out access to assets, control of natural resources and benefits, and prioritization of problems. The strict application of such a participatory framework gradually led to an increased awareness of gender roles and the inclusion of women in all communal and regional organizations.

> Even if it is important that a technician lets his work be directed by a hypothesis, this does not necessarily mean that such a hypothesis has to be turned into a certainty. The reality always provides new elements to the vision we form about the things and phenomena that surround us. An important requirement is to learn how to listen to peasants, to be familiar with and value their particular logic, and to ask yourself if your questions really are applicable in such a context. It is much easier for a male technician to direct himself to other men, since they have more experience of and contact with the surrounding world, with technicians and with institutions. However, a male technician still has to ask for the opinion of women, because that is the only way to achieve a complete vision of peasants' perceptions of the world, and we can only consider ourselves as participants if we incorporate the criteria [of both men and women] in our strategies. However,

> 'participation' does not mean doing everything the peasants ask for, because such behaviour easily turns into paternalism and demagogy. A process based on the deconstruction and revision of strategies is important because it allows an enrichment of the vision of both peasants and technicians.[26]

The CARC initiative is just one of many examples of how the personal commitment of project staff concerning gender issues gradually leads to changes of attitudes. This process is far from easy, as illustrated by the testimony of María Solís, one of the promoters involved:

> I came to CARC during a decisive period of my life. I have four children and have been working for ten years as a college teacher, dealing with learning systems. I have also worked for 12 years as a sociologist specializing in rural development. Before I came to CARC, I had done a historical study of indigenous cosmovisions and the people of Azuay. I came to the project during its worst period. No one liked the organization and I came as an unwanted person. I came from the outside, from Cuenca. I was a sociologist and a woman supposed to promote gender issues within a male-dominated, technically biased project. The social component was marginalized and the least popular of them all. It was difficult to address the gender issue, but I got valuable help from a Dutch gender expert. We were able to widen the gender aspect, moving away from an area that related women exclusively to handicrafts and tailoring. We addressed problems such as illiteracy, monolingualism, migration, etc. We tried to introduce women to all activities. Eighty-five per cent of the people who came to the training sessions were women; yet women worked with women and men with men. We studied all the components from a gender aspect and finally succeeded in convincing people that all activities had to be united under a common vision.[27]

The peasant leader José Guamán, a participant in the project's efforts to mainstream gender, recounted the following:

> The women necessarily have to participate in the project because women have always participated in all kinds of work, including agriculture. During the time of the big haciendas, men and women were treated equally badly. Even if it was not their obligation to perform like equals, women were treated as such when it came to hard work. And when the processes of

struggle for the land began, women played a very important role. The women rose immediately, with pickaxes, poles, hoes, and they were engaged in many confrontations with the police. With a choir of different voices they opposed the big landowners. In those days participation was strong, in both demonstrations and marches.

We have to share participation in the governing bodies with women because they often have more sane qualities [than men]; they are even more loyal to others. The fact that they are mothers makes women more responsible. For example, when a male leader comes to a community, it is traditional to give him some drinks. They party. It is different with a woman. The women bring much responsibility to their work and this has produced results. Accordingly, I believe this [women's participation] gives much to the organization. There is always a difference between the man and the woman. The men have a little bit more of licentiousness in them; it does not matter if they are leaders. This fact implies that proceedings are done with more seriousness and responsibility when women are involved in the organizations.

Some communities experienced this earlier – that men have been the only community leaders – but recently when women have shouldered the task of being directors or treasurers, things have changed and men suddenly become more responsible for their acts. When they serve as treasurers it is common that men create some extra expenses besides the normal activities. For example, they buy things – tobacco, extra things – but women are careful and don't permit themselves the same license as incautious men.

The gender focus does not appeal to all communities; some want to separate women from men. In such cases, [gender equity] has to be presented as an alternative, a complement, without emphasizing the gender focus too much. The men here, the women there, it may also work. A gender approach should not be introduced as a gender focus; it may scare people off. You don't talk gender, you do gender [*el género no se habla, se hace*].[28]

## Planning, training and monitoring

The urgent need for rules and guidelines for the incorporation of a gender equity focus at all levels of a development project was already expressed at the first international seminar in Guatemala. There were especially doubts about incorporating gender equity in project planning, training, and monitoring and evaluation.

The action plans presented by each project and the regional work plans that were going to be executed by the IFAD-supported technical assistance programmes stressed the need for specific guidelines for implementing a thorough gender approach. To that end, IFAD put together a document that determined objectives, strategies, basic elements and conditions for the implementation of a gender approach in all projects.[29] As established in the document, the main objective of gender mainstreaming was to ensure the equal participation by poor rural men and women in the activities and benefits of the programmes and projects by creating the necessary conditions and applying adequate tools and mechanisms for such participation. Specific objectives were listed, including:

i) equal benefits for men and women through technical assistance and technology transfer in agriculture and livestock, as well as small businesses;
ii) gender training for all men and women participating in the projects, including managers, technicians and personnel from co-executing institutions;
iii) equal access by men and women to credit and natural resources;
iv) the creation of the necessary conditions for men and women to participate in and profit from services and activities offered by the projects; and
v) the introduction of information systems that would guarantee equal access by men and women to market information concerning production and commercialization.

The recommended strategy involved the creation of mechanisms ensuring the effective participation of women in all project components. It was stressed that projects must put a particular emphasis on striving to increase the living standard of woman-headed households. In order to operationalize an effective gender approach, projects ought to pay particular attention to the diversity of the rural population and varying family structures and strategies, as well as how labour is organized within the household. While trying to address the activities and policies listed above, the projects might try to apply a recommended set of requirements. This set was presented in further detail in a publication that summarized some of the essential needs, findings and results expressed through the PROSGIP initiative.[30] We will pay more attention to this in the following chapter.

Training of management, staff and beneficiaries also received attention during the international seminars. In the previous chapter we discussed the gender training programmes developed by the technical staff of PRODAP in

El Salvador. These training programmes served as a source of inspiration at all four international seminars. As mentioned earlier, when PRODAP was initiated in 1993 its project design had an unmistakable WID approach. However, after half a year of implementation, the project changed its gender policies and restructured its strategies in such a way that a gender focus was promoted, aiming at 'benefiting both men and women so that rural development could be achieved with equity and equality of opportunities'.[31]

To guarantee the application of a gender equity approach, PRODAP developed a gender-focused training programme for all staff, technical personnel, beneficiaries and participants. The education effort was cross-cutting and all project actions were accompanied by a gender training component. During its second phase, PRODAP emphasized even further the importance of comprehensive gender training for all personnel. A paper presented on the Chilean seminar states the following:

> Capacity building in order to obtain a gender focus is the basis for changing the attitudes project staff may hold concerning the equal rights of men and women to participation and to have access to assets and benefits. Accordingly, all project personnel will be given training in gender approaches. During the first year, the training will be offered with more intensity to facilitate the development of strategies and mechanisms for each project component. Every year, specific workshops will offer a follow-up to the ever-deepening process of achieving knowledge of gender approaches. The person responsible for gender issues will define themes in accordance with the demands and concerns expressed by the technicians.[32]

A comprehensive gender sensitization programme was also developed for all project participants. This programme was combined with a thorough literacy campaign and the implementation of a curriculum for gender training in primary schools. An important thrust of the programme has been to address gender roles within the family, trying to encourage family members to share responsibilities and various household chores. During an interview, 13-year-old Marlon Alfredo Diaz Pereira of Caserio las Marías, Cantón Pueblo Viejo, El Salvador, whose parents were beneficiaries of PRODAP, explained:

> In many families it is common that the father always has the last word about everything. He gives the orders and is in charge of everything. However, in my family my parents know that two opinions are better

than one. A *machista* father thinks and acts for all. That is not a good way to organize things. For me, both my parents are setting a good example. In school, I have learned that the father and the mother are two different people with the same value.

For several years, the technical staff of PRODAP worked on developing and testing several packages for gender training; later, their experiences served as inspiration and a resource for other IFAD-supported projects.[33] The presentation of the Salvadoran gender training efforts became an integrated part of all four international seminars. This recurring feature was particularly appreciated since all the material was prepared by project staff and was thus based on their hands-on experience, which meant that it was considered to be more credible than the input of consultants coming from the 'outside'. Apart from describing the learning process involved in acquiring a profound gender awareness, the presentations underlined the presence of persistent barriers to women's participation in gender programmes and other services offered by the projects: i) lack of access to land; ii) lack of support from spouses; iii) lack of self-assurance; iv) machismo and traditional taboos; v) the heavy workload of women; vi) lack of information; and vii) fear of debts.[34]

The last subject of the project cycle that received ample attention at the international seminars relates to monitoring and evaluating the impact of a gender approach. The lack of techniques to determine impact became apparent at the preparatory meetings. The diagnostic studies that the consultants had written about the participating projects and that were presented at the preparatory meetings revealed that neglect and confusion reigned when it came to assessing and monitoring efforts related to gender equity. Very few of the projects had gender-disaggregated data or a comprehensive system for measuring the impact and extent of activities addressing gender issues. Problems had already occurred at the design stage. A common belief was that there was no discrimination of potential beneficiaries and participants at the level of project design. Nevertheless, this belief was proven to be false. Neglecting to distinguish between potential beneficiaries and participants by sex or analysing gender roles cannot be equated with non-discrimination. This made it especially difficult to reach specific categories of beneficiaries such as women heads of households. Monitoring and evaluation were made difficult since gender-disaggregated data and impact-measuring indicators for gender training had very seldom been included in project design documents. Apart from this, many projects lacked effective systems for monitoring and

evaluation; they also lacked qualified staff who could monitor the impact of gender equity initiatives.[35] However, one case study presented at the event in Santo Domingo by the Support Project for Small Producers in the Semi-arid Zones of Falcón and Lara States (PROSALAFA)[36] in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, described in detail how gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation could be carried out within a rural development project.[37]

The Venezuelan project described efforts connected with the introduction of a system for following up on gender efforts. This System for Computerized Information on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (SISPE)[38] established specific indicators for measuring gender-related efforts in the project area. The evaluation methods were managed mainly by the project's beneficiaries and participants themselves, and similar methods were applied at the project management level. Regular, methodical check-ups were made of a representative group of approximately 300 families.

The results of the exercise highlighted the fact that gender mainstreaming is a dynamic process that is constantly changing. It turned out to be very important to measure changes in gender-biased attitudes and to relate them to an ever-changing environment that is influenced by migration, and to new levels of participation, self-respect and self-perception. To reach a higher degree of efficiency in monitoring and evaluation, it was crucial to abandon traditional conceptions of 'families' as fixed entities and instead learn to study them as composites, in which positions, conditions, needs and attitudes differ from individual to individual. Likewise, it was important to relate gender to every single activity carried out by a family member. The same was true for such factors as types of cultivation, farm size, topography and access to means of communication. Degrees of participation also had to be addressed and related not only to physical presence but also to such questions as: Do the beneficiaries and participants have equal access to information? Do they have the means to digest what is treated and discussed during training sessions? Are they able and permitted to express ideas and opinions? Are all present allowed and able to partake in decision-making?

Even if it originally had not been an explicit objective of the PROSGIP exercise, monitoring and evaluation turned into a central theme of the discussions at the international seminars. As a result, most projects eventually made a conscious effort to improve their monitoring and evaluation systems.

## Building on PROSGIP

Each international seminar finished with the preparation of work plans for the individual projects, while the participating IFAD regional programmes[39] made similar regional work plans. The projects planned workshops, training programmes and diagnostics, as a follow-up to the PROSGIP seminars, which were to be realized in collaboration with other projects and the technical assistance programmes. The IFAD regional programmes and cooperating institutions agreed to support the projects and to help them to realize the objectives of the work plans. Each international seminar also produced comprehensive final reports in Spanish and English.[40]

The Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (RUTA)[41] in Central America, which co-organized the first international seminar in Guatemala, made a great effort to honour its commitment to follow up what had been decided upon during the international seminars. The PROSGIP initiative had made it very clear that many projects continued to grapple with problems such as a limited awareness and education of their staff and technical personnel when it came to implementing gender equity issues. Accordingly, several projects asked for regional support in implementing gender equity, as well as easy access to sources of information. In 2001, RUTA carried out a comprehensive inventory in Central America to identify changes in gender equity approaches, problems, initiatives and plans for the future. Questionnaires based on the regional action plans that had been developed as a result of PROSGIP were sent to all IFAD-supported projects in Central America and Mexico.[42] RUTA's investigation found, among other results, that 60 per cent of the projects had incorporated gender in their annual operational work plans, an increase of 20 per cent since PROSGIP. Eighty per cent had a person in charge of gender issues and 60 per cent had a special budget assigned to gender equity measures. Of the committees directing the projects, 20 per cent had women occupying decision-making positions and 46 per cent of project personnel had been trained in gender-related issues.[43]

The analysis concluded that projects that had recently been initiated had to a high degree adopted the new guidelines for strengthening gender equity in the projects, and several of the ones that were in 'full' implementation were trying to adopt a more gender-conscious approach, particularly in certain components such as rural finance, small enterprises and farming.[44] Thirteen of the fifteen projects felt that they were in need of technical assistance to help them address gender issues. The highest priority was capacity building in gender training for the projects'

managers and technicians. Second was a need for assistance in the design of gender strategies, and third was monitoring and evaluation.[45] RUTA's research data were presented at the initial workshop to launch a follow-up programme to PROSGIP (the Programme for the Consolidation of Gender Strategies in IFAD Projects – called ProGender), held in San José, Costa Rica in March 2001.[46]

## Endnotes

1/ The IFAD project cycle is divided into six phases: i) inception (project proposal based on a country's Strategic Opportunity Paper); ii) formulation (project proposal including a detailed technical design); iii) appraisal (fine-tuning of the proposal and the finalization of the implementation arrangements); iv) negotiations and approval (loan negotiations between the government and IFAD); v) implementation; and vi) evaluations. For further details, see www.ifad.org.

2/ In Spanish, the programme was called PROFAGEP (*Programa de Fortalecimiento de los Aspectos de Género en los Proyectos FIDA*).

3/ The Revision of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter states that full consideration will be given to the active participation of women in development, and to their obtaining benefits from development as a means of ensuring effective aid implementation, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf, p. 3 (visited June 2006). Acting on this policy, in 1995 Japan created the Japan Women in Development Fund (JWIDF). In 1997, IFAD was granted US$367,000 from this fund to support the three-year PROSGIP initiative.

4/ The Dutch contributed US$95,000. The remainder was obtained from part of the cofinancing received from the CDB, RUTA, PROCASUR and CIARA (IFAD (2000:1), p. 27, n. 11).

5/ Campaña and Schreuel (1998), Schreuel (1998) and Campaña and Schreuel (1999).

6/ IFAD (2000:1), p. 12.

7/ The interest from authorities and governments was considerable. For example, the Dominican Republic meeting was attended by the country's vice-president, Jaime David Fernández Mirabal, and in Chile the meeting was attended by the country's First Lady, Marta Larraechea de Frei.

8/ Alvarez (1998), Gómez (1998), Rossi Quintana (1998) and SEA (1998).

9/ Agricultural Development Project in San Juan de la Maguana (*Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola en San Juan de la Maguana – PRODAS*).

10/ Proyecto Cuchumatanes (1997), p. 15.

11/ Quoted in Proyecto Cuchumatanes (1997), p. 22. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors. The name of Ricarda Velazquez Funes' husband is not given in the document.

12/ With the exception of the Rural Financial Services Project in Jamaica, which had finalized its activities. Nevertheless, this project was included in several of the analyses presented at the seminar. Grenada did not have an ongoing project, but was represented by some members from its ministries, since a project was going to be initiated in that country.

13/ Barriteau (1998).

14/ Barriteau mentioned Errol Miller's 'male marginalization thesis', which recasts Caribbean men as victims of a conspiracy among Caribbean feminists, elite male power brokers and international development institutions (Miller (1994)).

15/ Barrow (1998); Schreuel (1998).

16/ Barrow (1998).

17/ The World Bank study *Can Anyone Hear Us* shows that Jamaica is the only country among the 38 developing countries included in the study where women are more literate than men: in Jamaica, 8 per cent more women than men are literate, while in El Salvador, for example, 6 per cent more men than women are literate (Narayan (2000), p. 331).

18/ Quoted in IFAD (1998:2), p. 44. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

19/ Ibid., p. 45.

20/ The South Western Region Small Farmers Project (PROPESUR) – an IFAD-cofinanced project in the Dominican Republic that was initiated after PRODAS – incorporated many of the lessons learned from its Dominican predecessors and other IFAD projects in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In the words of one consultant who was assessing its impact, PROPESUR has been 'a project (the only one I know of) that really has been able to operationalize a gender approach. Not only when it comes to gender sensitization offered to male and female beneficiaries, generating noticeable changes within social and economic spheres, but also by its application of a gender focus in the area of land

registration [where the project] has been able to inspire a process whose results merit a thorough analysis'. (Pilar Campaña in a letter to Pablo Glikman, IFAD Country Portfolio Manager, 15 December, 2004).

21/ From an interview conducted by Ingrid Schreuel with members of the *Asociación Nueva Vida*, which is associated with the Small Farmers Technical Assistance Services Project (PROSAT) in Bolivia (quoted in Campaña and Schreuel (1999), p. 74). Citation translated from Spanish by the authors. Aymara is a language spoken by approximately 1.2 million people in Bolivia.

22/ *Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural de la Cuenca Alta del Río Cañar*.

23/ CARC (1998).

24/ Ibid., p. 18. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

25/ Ibid., p. 20.

26/ Ibid., p. 23. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

27/ From an interview quoted in IFAD (2001:3), pp. 78-79.

28/ Quoted in CARC (1998), pp. 26-28. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

29/ IFAD (1998:3); see also IFAD (1998:1).

30/ IFAD (2000:1).

31/ PRODAP (1999), p. 16.

32/ Ibid., p. 26. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

33/ For example, PROPESUR (an IFAD-supported project in the Dominican Republic) sent people to PRODAP to learn how to provide gender equity training, in particular to personnel from co-executing agencies. Based on the PRODAP experiences and new insights gained in the Dominican Republic, two manuals for gender sensitization were developed in connection with the PROPESUR initiative (Ramírez (2003) and Schreuel (2003:2)).

34/ PRODAP (1999), p. 23.

35/ Beginning with the second international seminar in Santo Domingo, a consultant was hired to participate in the seminars to clarify concepts and methods related to the use of a gender approach in monitoring and evaluation, and the various working groups of each event continuously elaborated the theme. Budinich (1998:1) and (1998:2).

36/ *Proyecto de Apoyo a Pequeños Productores de las Zonas Semiáridas de los Estados Falcón y Lara*.

37/ PROSALAFA (1998).

38/ *Sistema para Información Computarizada de Planificación, Monitoreo y Evaluación*.

39/ These are programmes financed by IFAD with grant resources. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, these programmes aim at providing support on thematic issues such as gender, rural finance, monitoring and evaluation to the ongoing projects. ProGender – a programme which we will deal with in the following chapter – was a regional programme financed with such a grant.

40/ IFAD (1997); IFAD (1998:2); IFAD (1999:2); IFAD (2000:2); the last report is only available in Spanish.

41/ RUTA is a technical unit created as a joint initiative between Central American governments (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama) and the international development agencies World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UK Department for International Development (DFID), Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Development (IICA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IFAD.

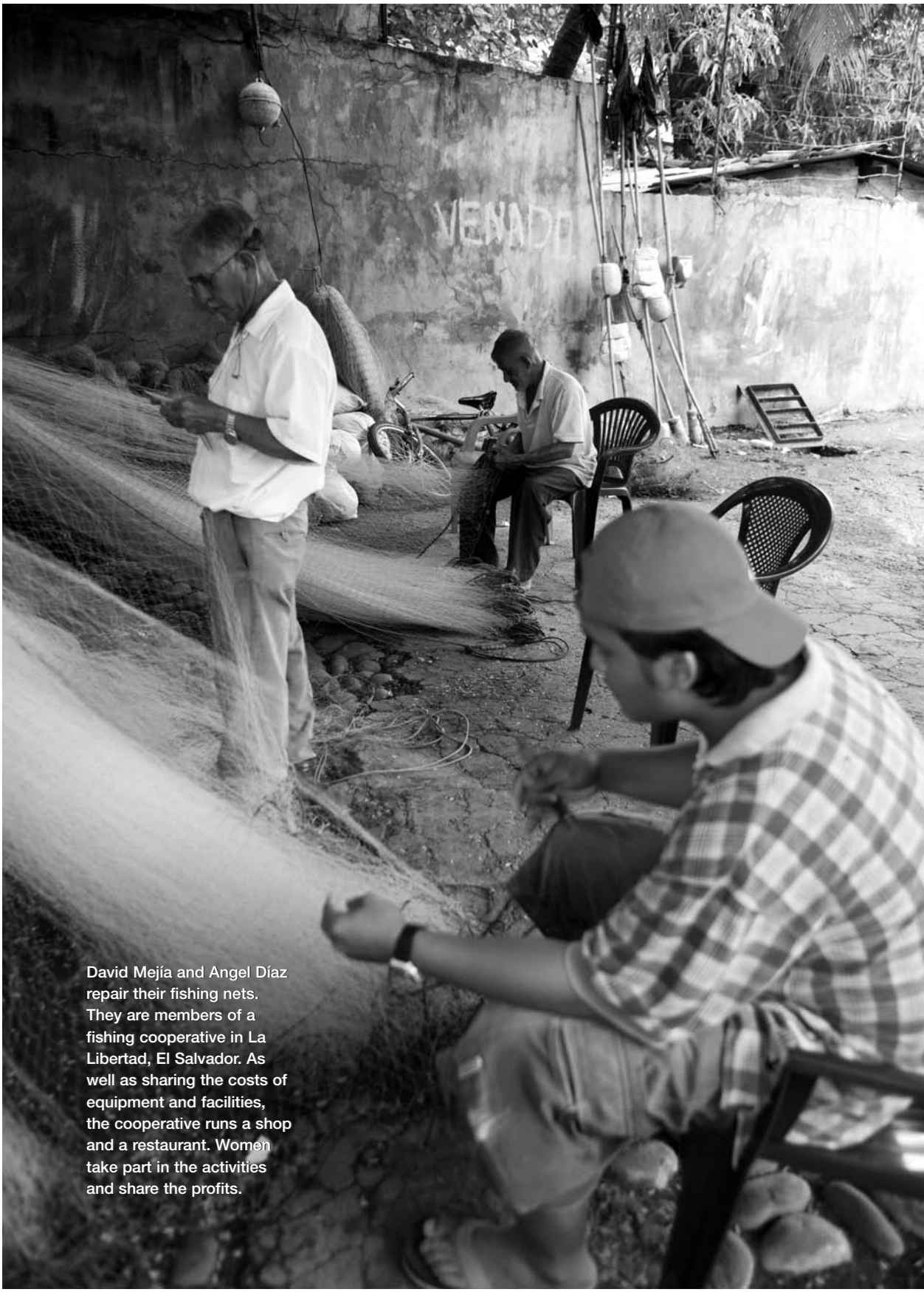
42/ IFAD (2000:1), p. 43.

43/ Moreno (2001), pp. 13-18.

44/ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

45/ Ibid., p. 29.

46/ Ibid., pp. 9-11.



David Mejía and Angel Díaz repair their fishing nets. They are members of a fishing cooperative in La Libertad, El Salvador. As well as sharing the costs of equipment and facilities, the cooperative runs a shop and a restaurant. Women take part in the activities and share the profits.

Chapter 6

# How gender became one of IFAD's core priorities

The PROSGIP experience has generated many positive results. Gender equity was accepted as an important development issue that had to be discussed and addressed by all the parties concerned. Project directors and technical personnel were sensitized on gender issues, and there arose a general political will to address gender equity. Most projects increasingly demonstrated concrete advances when it came to the implementation of a gender equity approach, particularly in the field of capacity building.[1] In 2001, the LAC Division started with the second phase of PROSGIP by launching the ProGender programme. This programme was meant to further support the developments mentioned in the previous chapter and to cater to the growing awareness that it was necessary to develop efficient instruments and guidelines.

Although IFAD's LAC Division has been important in developing methods to systematically implement a gender approach and was the first to integrate it in its project cycle, it was not alone in its endeavours. IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division and other regional divisions followed this example and started to develop their own strategies. Also, the cooperation that IFAD seeks with other development agencies resulted in a mutual influence and an exchange of experiences on gender. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), one of IFAD's cooperating institutions responsible for project supervision, has made great efforts to support gender mainstreaming in the projects of the LAC Division. The acknowledgement

of the importance of gender and the empowerment of both men and women spread rapidly within IFAD and beyond. This process should also be understood in the light of the international context of the Decade for Women, the four United Nations World Conferences on Women, ECOSOC's resolution on gender mainstreaming and the declaration of the MDGs. In 2003, IFAD's Executive Board responded to these international demands and development within its own agency by approving a Gender Plan of Action, through which gender mainstreaming became one of IFAD's core priorities.

In this chapter, we continue with the history of the incorporation of gender in IFAD activities and put the efforts of IFAD's LAC Division into a broader institutional context. In the first section, we focus on the LAC Division's ProGender programme. We then pay attention to UNOPS and subsequently discuss IFAD's Gender Plan of Action. In the last section, we broaden our view by leaving the Latin America and the Caribbean region and paying attention to the gender mainstreaming efforts of IFAD's other regional divisions.

## ProGender

ProGender was launched in 2001[2] and can be considered as the second phase of PROSGIP. It ran for three years. Nevertheless, its approach was different. While PROSGIP was almost entirely based on capacity building and training through initiatives and experiences provided by staff of IFAD-cofinanced projects, ProGender was a technical assistance programme developed as a response to technical assistance demands from project staff. Its objectives were to assist projects with the development of instruments for implementing a gender equity approach, to develop indicators to measure the effects of implemented gender approaches and to collect material related to capacity building. The programme also supported projects to comply with the work plans that had been established at the end of each PROSGIP international seminar. Nevertheless, the follow-up of the incorporation of a gender equity approach in projects and programmes proved to be rather difficult to carry out. As consultant Ingrid Schreuel observed:

> It proved to be difficult to follow up the work plans. People returned to the projects with much enthusiasm. However, when they once more became involved in the routines, the enthusiasm faded among many of them and in several projects the follow-up of the work plans ceased to be systematic. Anyhow, ProGender made constant efforts to follow

> through, at least in the beginning. CODERSA was hired to provide an overview, on behalf of ProGender, of the gender activities in the Caribbean subregion. The time was limited and the fluency of communication networks proved to be rather inefficient. The most successful part was probably the cooperation with CARD[3] in Belize, which developed and followed an effective work plan and was also given an opportunity to visit and exchange experiences with three projects in Guatemala.

A precise and detailed follow-up of the work plans gradually lost importance for ProGender and the programme concentrated its efforts on other areas of its field of action. From 2001, ProGender produced a long list of publications and manuals dealing with such issues as gender indicators, organizational support, training in gender-related issues and baseline studies.[4] The programme also supported events such as a workshop about IFAD's experiences with small enterprises and gender, and a seminar on gender equity and natural resources. ProGender offered technical assistance and information to projects. It answered their questions and arranged contacts between them. While ProGender succeeded in advancing the promotion of gender mainstreaming in several IFAD-supported projects, the programme also received some criticism. Some project staff considered its approach to be somewhat too theoretical and even felt that the programme had been more or less imposed on the field by outsiders. In some cases, it was believed that the programme was running the risk of losing its ability to undertake 'reversal of learning' and to listen to voices in the field. Claudia Ranaboldo, an IFAD consultant, recounted during an interview:

> ProGender is related to the professional interests of project directors and gender specialists at the management level, as well as consultants participating in the endeavour. It is not really a construct coming from the field; it is something that has been developed at, and concerns itself with, a higher level. An important issue runs the risk of being lost, namely the answer to the question: 'From where comes the experience of gender roles?' I assume the answer must have something to do with the experiences of people living in specific rural areas. Where are the open discussions between experts and project beneficiaries and participants? Where is the direct connection between the people in the field and the gender experts?

Of course, ProGender is working with this issue as well, but like most work done by academics and theoreticians, it may tend to emphasize theories more than listening to and collecting information from experiences that are somewhat 'out of the ordinary'. Initiatives that do not immediately fit into the lists of indicators and manuals fabricated by the gender experts do not receive sufficient attention.

I know it sometimes happens that a gender expert visits the field and checks upon an initiative originating from the beneficiaries themselves, only to condemn it as 'too traditional', an ancient approach that does not fit into the latest models of gender mainstreaming. It may be okay, but such views and behaviour bar communication and weaken our abilities to listen to one another. Some consultants present cases and models, instead of listening and supporting people in their construction of something sustainable based on their own needs and experiences. People in the field sometimes feel it is difficult to establish a dialogue around what they feel to be desktop products. They need to talk to and interact with other individuals and be assisted in constructing something based on their own ideas, needs and efforts. Gender experts have to learn to read the reality. Making reality their point of departure, realizing that reality is different in every single place. Development is based on a firm belief in the skills and capacities of the people who are going to benefit from it. That is the most important point of departure, not logical frameworks and over-dimensioned sets of indicators. We have to maintain and support the ability to listen to what the women and the men in the field really say and do.

Personally, I am not at all concerned whether a project starts from a position where women are provided with specific tools for their empowerment, or if it originates from a 'Gender and Development' approach. Most important is that rural development implies an open process, taking into account the gains and errors of the people taking part in it. I have gained this understanding from experiencing how people, with the right support, have been able to radically change the gender equity situation within their own families and communities. Furthermore, I think it is very important to stress that such processes take time and patience. I believe we constantly have to think in processes and base our interventions on the will and initiatives of the people who are affected by our actions.

Despite such criticism, ProGender has been appreciated for the help it has offered in solving concrete problems. The following was related by Elpidio Peña, director of the South Western Region Small Farmers Project (PROPESUR)[5] in the Dominican Republic:

> Due to the fact that we had to address the scepticism of our technicians, we contacted ProGender to help us to realize a trip to some country in Latin America where we could experience the concrete development results of a project that was similar to ours. That's how we, in collaboration with ProGender, were able to realize a working trip for our Dominican promoters to two IFAD-supported projects in the Republic of El Salvador. As a result of that visit, our technicians became convinced that development is best achieved with an equitable participation of men and women. They gained a positive attitude that is now helping them to construct and carry out such a strategy based on that important insight. This excellent experience, the positive attitude of the technicians and the continuous construction of the project process have resulted in new requests from PROPESUR for technical assistance from ProGender. In this way we have developed: i) the testing of the gender equity methodology for 'closing the gap', in other words, how to validate equal participation in rural organizations; ii) the development of a methodology to sensitize rural men and women to gender equity, with the assistance of our own technicians; and iii) the elaboration of a methodology to train female leaders. And on top of that, ProGender continues to support us in the monitoring of the process that PROPESUR is going through.

## UNOPS

UNOPS is one of IFAD's cooperating institutions that has understood the importance of gender mainstreaming and is allocating financial and human resources to monitor this process in the projects it supervises. Periodically, UNOPS undertakes supervision in IFAD's project areas, where project implementation and management are reviewed and various technical issues discussed. Procurement review services are provided for each IFAD loan, or grant, supervised by UNOPS, in order to ensure compliance with all the procedures established in the Loan Agreement.[6] Rodolfo Lauritto – Senior Programme Officer at UNOPS – recounted the following during an interview:

> UNOPS has to apply all regulations that govern our cooperation with IFAD. In the case of implementing gender mainstreaming in Latin America and the Caribbean, this has meant that UNOPS keeps itself fully informed about the development of gender equity issues raised within IFAD. As a cooperating partner we are instrumental in applying IFAD's recommendations and guidelines while supervising and working with IFAD-cofinanced projects. To ensure that a thorough gender equity approach is applied, we have contracted consulting firms like CODERSA to help us with the analysis and implementation of gender issues in IFAD projects. Of course, this means that UNOPS has been influenced and inspired by an initiative like PROSGIP. However, it has to be pointed out that UNOPS, just like IFAD, also has its own gender policy. For example, UNOPS is one of the few international development agencies that, within its own organizational structure, applies and encourages parental leave, as well as other gender equity policies.

Mr. Lauritto participated in most of the PROSGIP international seminars and has been actively promoting gender in project supervision. He continued:

> In my opinion the [LAC] Division has developed and applied quite an advanced approach. Before this mainstreaming process was initiated, a general resistance to gender issues was present in many projects. It is now easily discernible that the importance of gender mainstreaming in poverty alleviation has been accepted. However, the application of a thorough gender equity approach remains difficult. More practical training is needed and focus has to be concentrated on implementation. Theoretical models and matrixes may be good. Nevertheless, I have found that the most efficient gender equity approach is to constantly try to think in terms of barriers to accessing social and financial assets. One has to learn to ask the question: 'What hinders women and men from participating in development processes and making the best use of their skills and faculties?' It is quite easy to fall into the trap of complicating issues.

UNOPS often includes gender equity in the Terms of Reference for supervision missions and ensures that competent personnel assist in monitoring this and other cross-cutting themes. The organization has assisted IFAD with the inclusion of gender equity issues in the start-up workshops of two Salvadoran projects[7] and the development of gender

equity strategies for two projects in Guatemala.[8] In relation to follow-up and supervision missions, UNOPS generally subcontracts a local consultancy firm for a certain number of days during the year. The Terms of Reference for each supervision mission are tailored according to the needs of the project. For instance, in 2004 supervision of the gender equity aspects of five projects was carried out. In one project, this required special attention to sustainability aspects, while in another the emphasis was on affirmative actions and the integration of gender equity issues in all project components. In a third project, the supervision mission stressed the importance of including gender equity to strengthen local institutions and rural organizations.[9]

## IFAD's Gender Plan of Action

Within IFAD, the LAC Division is not the only division that has tried to operationalize a gender approach in all the projects it supports. However, the LAC Division was the first, followed by the Asia and the Pacific Division, to initiate systematic programmes for addressing gender issues on a large scale, making use of supplementary funds and technical assistance grants. These two divisions are now clearly ahead of other IFAD divisions when it comes to incorporating gender in project design, indicating that a systematic approach, combined with adequate, targeted funding, pays off. Annina Lubbock stated:

> When I attend inter-agency meetings, I realize that IFAD has come quite a long way with its gender mainstreaming efforts. More than 50 per cent of IFAD-supported projects meet the requirements for integrating gender in their design and that is really not too bad. However, we recently carried out a comprehensive baseline study concerning the performance of regional divisions when it comes to gender mainstreaming. Both the LAC and the Asia and the Pacific Divisions came out on top, but their grading was not as high as they had expected, and other divisions lagged behind. We could expect a better performance from all. The two mentioned divisions can present several examples of best practice and both may serve as inspiration for other divisions. However, we need strong support and dedication from senior management. As the technical adviser for gender issues, I can only provide tools, set targets and inform about the current situation within the field and the organization. The divisions have their own programmes for addressing gender issues, but

> these programmes will not continue forever. If we are going to be able to harmonize and mainstream gender efforts within the organization, we need a strong commitment from IFAD's management. Working as gender adviser is tough. It involves a lot of negotiations, persuasion and constant efforts to influence processes. To be able to do that, a supportive management is extremely important. Without an enabling environment not much can be achieved.

The LAC Division and the Asia and the Pacific Division are now more focused on gender mainstreaming and provide better implementation support. They have moved away from a model that was more specifically aimed at women and are now integrating gender at all levels of project activities.[10] The Africa, Near East and Eastern Europe divisions have also launched gender mainstreaming programmes within their projects.

The effort and results of PROSGIP and ProGender were substantial and did not pass unnoticed within IFAD. Many of the experiences gained from the programmes have influenced an ongoing debate within the organization. Furthermore, the LAC Division was able to enhance its own capacity by taking part in and contributing to the initiatives to mainstream gender in other IFAD divisions. The Gender Programme Manager of the Western and Central Africa Division, Christiana Sparacino, commented:

> The board [of IFAD] started to demand a gender approach and that is the reason for the IFAD-wide implementation of a gender approach. The Latin America and the Caribbean Division has always been a good example and a front runner. They have made their material available. A problem was that most of it was in Spanish.

The IFAD process of gender mainstreaming is characterized by cross-fertilization and attempts to visualize the importance of gender IFAD-wide. Nonetheless, there are several threats to the process. There are signs that gender issues are losing their impetus on the international scene. The following is an extract from an interview with Ms. Lubbock:

> I perceive a change in attitudes, some kind of international sea change. So many other issues and interests are currently demanding attention. I notice that gender now figures less strongly on the

> agenda of donors who traditionally were 'gender champions'. Gender is no longer the flavour of the month. This may be one of the reasons why gender issues and gender mainstreaming are losing momentum.

However, gender mainstreaming still remains on IFAD's agenda. Despite the fact that IFAD's country programme managers tend to express a general feeling that they are 'overstretched' and overburdened with work, so far nobody has used this as an excuse for not wanting to take gender equity issues more seriously, particularly in project design.[11] The role of IFAD's division directors is essential. If a director at an IFAD division does not take gender issues seriously, the country programme managers will not do so either. And if the programme manager does not take gender equity seriously, neither will the consultants nor the project directors. Ms. Lubbock continued:

> To some extent, gender has been internalized within IFAD. However, we have to make sure that all divisions catch up with the gender mainstreaming efforts. If the division director does not supervise and coordinate the activities, there may be huge differences within each division in terms of how gender issues are handled.

Therefore, it is important to continuously provide refresher courses in order to share guidelines and examples with directors, country programme managers, consultants and project management unit staff.[12]

In 2003, IFAD's Gender Plan of Action was approved. The plan aims to comply with the United Nations' effort to mainstream a gender perspective in all of its policies and programmes.[13] In IFAD's Strategic Framework, gender inequalities are viewed as a root cause of poverty and as an expression of social injustice.[14]

The Gender Plan of Action builds on experiences generated through field operations and special programmes that were implemented by regional divisions. The action plan establishes a common framework within which region- and country-specific strategies can be designed and implemented. For the most part the identified actions do not entail additional tasks or resources. Nevertheless, it is stated that IFAD will be seeking incremental funds to accelerate their implementation.

## Gender mainstreaming initiatives within other 'gender geographies'

Gender-biased world views are present in every society. The gender researcher Naila Kabeer has described what she calls a 'geography of gender inequality':

> …the nature of gender relationships and the inequalities which they embody vary considerably in time and place leading to a 'geography of gender inequality'.[15]

Kabeer points to the fact that people within different sociocultural settings find themselves in divergent spaces of this global 'gender geography'. Accordingly, gender may have different connotations from place to place and the explicit roles of men and women differ. However, the 'gender geography' almost inevitably mirrors inequalities between sexes. In this way, each and every one of us finds her/his roots within specific gender-constructed contexts – a fact we ought to be aware of when we are dealing with people from other areas of the world. In order to avoid being circumscribed and limited by such a geography, we should develop an ear that is sensitive to voices other than the ones we are used to listening to and cultivate a readiness to change our ingrained views.

So far, we have described certain features of the Latin American and Caribbean gender geography and have tried to relate this geography to efforts to address gender issues within rural development projects that are cofinanced by IFAD. IFAD's other regional divisions have tried to mainstream gender in their projects and activities, confronting idiosyncrasies and particularities within their various fields of action. These divisions have, like the LAC Division, documented their efforts, misgivings and successes in reports and booklets. In 2006, IFAD launched an evaluation of the gender programmes carried out by its different divisions, including the LAC Division. Even if IFAD's regional divisions differ in their gender strategies, they are all inscribed within the Fund's Strategic Framework.

What follows are short accounts of some gender equity initiatives undertaken by IFAD's regional divisions.[16] These descriptions of specific gender geographies are generalizations in the sense that they present concerns that exist within certain regions and most themes may almost be regarded as emblematic. Nevertheless, each gendered realm presents unique idiosyncrasies – what is truth and convention in one place may be absent in another.

**Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States**

Since the collapse of the communist system, poverty in the former communist countries has increased at a pace unparalleled elsewhere in recent times. Preliminary studies and field observations indicate that the burden of the transition period has disproportionately harmed women.[17] Within the socialist regime, gender equality was conceived as a major achievement. Men and women had equal access to schooling, health care and employment. Childcare was considered to be a state responsibility, as was reflected in the large number of nurseries, kindergartens and day care centres. Nevertheless, the transition to a market economy has provoked growing gender disparities. This is particularly reflected in alarming trends: women now make up a large percentage of the rural poor; they are vulnerable to violence and illicit trafficking; they are increasingly excluded from economic opportunities and participation in community management; and in their search for employment, there is hardly any protection against discriminatory practices such as unequal pay. In some countries, such as Armenia, a return to traditional values is noticeable in the growing gender inequalities in the labour market. The number of woman-headed households in the region has increased while the number of day care centres has decreased. There has also been a decrease in the availability and quality of reproductive health services. The growing gender disparities are particularly pronounced in rural areas. Although literacy rates are still high, they are decreasing for girls in rural areas. Men often migrate to cities or abroad, leaving women behind to care for children on the farm and to become trapped in subsistence production.[18]

As is argued in IFAD's strategy paper on the region, the situation in rural areas in general is precarious. Many heads of rural households are new farmers. They turned to agricultural production to cope with the loss of employment after the collapse of the communist system. Despite extensive land reform, rural incomes have remained stagnant. Some of the reasons for this are limited access to technologies, poor market access, scarcity of rural credit and limited off-farm earning opportunities.[19]

Several activities are being carried out to address the current situation and to support sustainable development by mainstreaming gender equity. The Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States Division has developed a position paper on key gender issues in the region and established strategies to address them in the context of poverty alleviation. Staff from IFAD, counterpart agencies, projects, cooperating institutions and selected civil society organizations are being trained in gender analysis and are trying to incorporate gender issues at policy and project levels. Efforts are being

made to make project documents (including monitoring and evaluation systems) more gender-sensitive. Lenyara Khayasedinova, Gender Programme Manager of the division, stated the following during an interview:

> Concerning gender mainstreaming and gender training, IFAD is one of the leading organizations in the region. It is true that legally there are no inequalities. However, as the Soviet commitment to gender equality eroded, traditional patriarchal value systems once again rose to the fore. In an attempt to alleviate poverty, countries in transition have focused more on urban development while rural areas have been neglected. Rural women are bearing the brunt of this neglect since they do not have the opportunity to be mainstreamed into livelihoods associated with the market economy.

The 'Programme on Gender Mainstreaming in Central and Eastern European Countries: A Community Driven Approach' was launched in 2002. It aims at building the capacity of IFAD, counterpart agencies and project staff to better address gender dimensions and empower rural women through technical assistance, training and pilot income-generating activities. Partnerships with government institutions, NGOs and international organizations in the area of gender mainstreaming have been established in five countries in the region.[20]

**Near East and North Africa**

For the past decade, the Near East and North Africa region has been undergoing structural changes. These have included the liberalization of the economy and the decentralization of government administration.[21] Nevertheless, this has not always improved the situation of poor people. About 55 million rural people in the region live in abject poverty (with incomes close to US$1 per day). They face two major types of constraints.[22] The first constraint concerns natural resources: the land is fragile, soil fertility is declining, water resources are limited, and climatic shocks (for example, floods and drought) occur frequently. The second constraint is related to the institutional context and includes political neglect of the rural sectors, a poor physical and social infrastructure, poor drinking water and sanitation facilities, unequal land distribution, insecurity of land tenure and unsustainable management of natural resources.

Rural people, especially women, have little political influence. Many are not reached by social safety nets or poverty programmes, and are poorly organized. Grass-roots and civil organizations hardly exist. Political conflict is

also a major factor that aggravates the situation of poor rural people.[23] In combating rural poverty, some households transgress traditional gender roles and redivide responsibilities and resources between women and men. In some areas, both women and men are now income earners. The number of men and women in the job market is increasing. Women are taking up studies and jobs where men once predominated (in Syria, for example, approximately 50 per cent of the students in the faculty of agriculture are women). Also, women are assuming added responsibilities to fill the labour gap created by the migration of men in search of better wages.[24]

The Near East and North Africa Division faces specific challenges in working with the rural women of the region. These include women's limited mobility, high levels of illiteracy and traditional gender roles.[25] The measures that IFAD implements are aimed at providing women with information, skills and services, reducing their workloads (for example, through providing access to potable water points and energy-efficient stoves), and increasing household income and food security (for example, through providing credit services to women and small businesses run by women and organizing them in local associations that respond to their own needs).[26] Projects, however, are not always as successful in reaching out to women. The division encounters many institutional constraints that impede women's participation. Among them are ill-equipped local agricultural institutions that are not set up to work with rural women. The government agencies that implement IFAD-sponsored projects have administrative and financial procedures that are not adapted to gender mainstreaming. They often lack a special budget for women-related activities. Budgets still often go to activities that target men. Staff working in projects lack knowledge of gender and development. Although there is a need for gender training, projects often give preference to technical training that yields instant results, such as increases in productivity. Considering these institutional constraints, gender mainstreaming is a matter not just of cultural change or additional investments, but also of institutional change and reorganization. These institutional constraints generate a large demand at all levels (IFAD staff, project staff, counterpart agencies, cooperating institutions and consultants) for capacity building on methods to integrate women as beneficiaries and active participants. In response to the demand for capacity building of this sort, the Near East and North Africa Division has developed a technical assistance grant programme for women.[27] In October 2001, a programme of action to reach rural women in the Near East and North African region was launched.[28] This programme covers ten countries. Other countries in the region are also expected to benefit from improved gender sensitivity analysis in reviews and evaluations.

**Western and Central Africa**

Like the regions described above, Western and Central Africa is a highly diversified and heterogeneous entity, with a great span of geography, bioregions and cultures where colonial boundaries cut across ethnic and cultural lines, often dividing single ethnic groups between two or more countries. Generally speaking, despite the wide variety of cultures in Western Africa, from Nigeria through to Senegal, there are some apparent similarities, while Central Africa demonstrates wider diversity. At the institutional level, some countries in Western and Central Africa count upon a long and well-ingrained tradition of associational life that in most countries serves as the backbone for a thriving civil society. However, political and social institutions in many countries are weakened by a deep-seated political instability.[29] This has a negative impact on the social and economic well-being of the population, not the least when it comes to issues related to gender equity.

The traditional associational life is to a high degree reflected at household level. A common type of household evident in several areas of the Western and Central African region has been described as a 'place of exchange', where husbands and wives are responsible for their own activities, keep separate accounts and separate their expenditures.[30] Products and labour are often exchanged between men and women. The decision-making process is the result of a bargaining process between household members. Each household member enters the bargaining process with his/her individual power, which is determined by his/her endowment of resources and socio-economic role. In the decision-making process, gender asymmetries in work and resource distribution generate conflicts of interest, which, if overlooked, undermine growth and poverty alleviation strategies.

It is common that women have usufruct rights to the land. This implies that to determine women's access to land, usufruct rights and security of access may be more important criteria than land ownership. Studies have shown that women's access is less secure than that of men.[31] The gender division of plots is based on the division of labour within households. Women are normally responsible for the family's nutrition and their husbands will give them land that they can use to provide for the family. They can use this land as long as they are married. Thus, a first structural factor of insecurity of tenure is found in the case of divorce or the husband's death. Also, the short-term allocation of plots between households and their members as a result of changes in household size/compound (for example, in the case of polygamy) leads to insecurity of access to land. It appears that women tend to be pushed onto marginal land and that they have fewer and smaller plots than men.

A positive sign is that traditional barriers to women's acquisition of land have begun to break down and women are increasingly acquiring land through the market. Most rural women have limited access to income-earning activities. There are two reasons for this. First, due to women's dual role, there is competition for women's labour within the household and in the community. A woman's domestic and caring work takes one third to one half of her working day and includes, in addition to cooking, such tiring and time-consuming tasks as fetching water and wood. Second, for the most part women do not have control of other forms of household labour that generally are performed by male family members and/or hired outsiders. Both factors limit their possibilities as independent farmers and may contribute to inefficiencies in their farming activities. Labour exchange with husbands is very common in sub-Saharan Africa, but it is rarely based on equal terms. Sometimes, husbands compensate their wives for this disparity, but often they do not. The rule seems to be that women's farm labour on men's plots is provided under customary laws and is felt by women to be an obligation included in the marriage arrangement. The implication is that women cannot count on having men work on their land, and this has consequences on productivity.

Women's access to formal rural finance, and indirectly to inputs, is constrained by their common lack of collateral, which in turn is directly linked to the gender-biased access to land. Women's access to education is less than that of men – girls tend to do housework instead of being sent to school. As a result of unequal access to education as well as other constraints, women lack a political voice.

In order to address these constraints, the project managements are adopting a comprehensive strategy for reducing women's workload, developing suitable microfinance options for income-generating activities and increasing rural women's empowerment through the support of women groups. In 2001, a three-year programme – the Programme of Action to Assist IFAD Projects and Programmes in West and Central Africa to Reach Rural Women – was established to help the division move towards the GAD approach. The aim of the programme was to provide tools with which to better reach rural women and men in IFAD projects and programmes through appropriate gender-sensitive design and implementation.

The programme components included participatory rural appraisals for the development of village-level, gender-equity needs assessments and action plans, the establishment of gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation indicators, and collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) regional office to undertake vulnerability analyses and mapping.

UNIFEM offered support for the inclusion of women's issues in strategic documents and in the establishment of mechanisms to strengthen women's farmer organizations and to empower women. Two regional training workshops were held in 2003 as part of a plan to train personnel in all IFAD-sponsored projects and cooperating institutions in gender mainstreaming. The workshops led to the development of project-level strategies and action plans for gender equity, including gender-disaggregated budgets and indicators. Evaluation reports are currently reviewed from a gender perspective to identify lessons learned in the region.

In 2005, the division initiated a Plan of Action for Improved Gender Mainstreaming aimed at supporting gender mainstreaming at the project design stage by: i) providing all mission members with guidelines on the prerequisites for gender design; ii) having the design provisions reviewed by the gender focal point; and iii) providing access to funds for hiring gender experts through the division's Programme of Action to Reach Rural Women. Furthermore, in 2003 a memorandum of understanding was signed between IFAD and UNIFEM for the development of a strategy and programme of action to empower women's farmer groups in the region. Information on gender issues is continuously provided through FIDAFRIQUE, a communication network connecting IFAD-supported projects within the region. The division also participates in the Hub's activities, where a gender expert is advocating the participation of rural women at national and regional fora.[32]

**Eastern and Southern Africa**

Taking into consideration a great variety of local particularities, IFAD's Eastern and Southern Africa Division has identified a number of gender constraints that, generally speaking, are more or less comparable to those identified in Western and Central Africa. In the first place, there is the heavy workload of women. The gender division of labour often means that men do not perform caring or other reproductive chores. A second gender-related constraint is that women have limited control over assets. This is related to the fact that women often do not have any inheritance rights, while men make decisions regarding the acquisition and use of resources. A third constraint is women's limited participation in local decision-making. Men often refuse to let women attend public meetings, thus restricting their political participation. A fourth constraint is unequal power relations within households and the unequal distribution of household income that emerges from this inequity. Husbands tend to control family earnings, which is manifested in the fact that the sale of crops and assets are the prerogative of

men. Also, men may use income meant for the household for other purposes. In addition, some women experience an internalized sense of inferiority.[33]

In 2001, IFAD's Regional Assessment and Strategy for Eastern and Southern Africa established that 'any drive to include the poor in the development process that fails to address the specific problems of inclusion of poor women is likely to have a limited impact: addressing gender relations is an essential aspect of all development activities.'[34] There are several rationales for such a statement. We will pay particular attention to an issue that is at the centre of gender relations in the region, namely the current HIV/AIDS pandemic. Any rural development initiative must address a vast range of problems related to this epidemic, particularly since there is an intimate relationship between gender inequalities and HIV/AIDS.

IFAD's attention to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the region[35] is based on concerns for: i) the magnitude of the epidemic; ii) the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on the agricultural sector relative to other sectors; and iii) the close association of HIV/AIDS with poverty, poor nutrition and household food and livelihood insecurity, something that directly impinges upon IFAD's mandate of economic empowerment of the rural poor.

While sub-Saharan Africa is one of the hardest hit regions, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is far from being unique to Africa. Most observations from this continent about the relation between gender and HIV/AIDS are equally valid for other parts of the world. In general, women are biologically more vulnerable to HIV infection than men and are infected at a younger age. The risk of becoming infected with HIV during unprotected vaginal intercourse is between two and four times higher for women than for men. Women are also more vulnerable to other sexually transmitted infections, and an untreated sexually transmitted disease in either partner multiplies the risk of HIV transmission by 300 to 400 per cent. With regard to age of infection, average prevalence rates of HIV infection in teenage girls can be up to five times higher than those in teenage boys. This discrepancy is due to girls' and young women's biological vulnerability and to the coupling of young women with older men, who have more sexual experience and are thus more likely to expose girls to HIV. This partly explains why more women than men are infected with the HIV virus in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 12 women living with HIV for every ten men.

HIV/AIDS exacerbates the social, economic and cultural inequalities that define women's and men's status in society. Inequalities, such as lack of employment opportunities and poor access to education, health services and information, make more women than men vulnerable to HIV infection and the impact of AIDS.

AIDS has a disproportionate impact on the lives of women survivors in relation to men survivors. Upon the death of their spouse, women often lose their house, land, livestock, plough and other resources. In Zambia, for example, it was found that not only does the death of a spouse reduce household productivity and livelihood options, but the impact is often exacerbated when associated with property grabbing by the deceased's relatives.[36] The burden of caring for people living with HIV/AIDS and for orphans falls largely on women. It has an impact on their work time, entitlements, income and savings, and especially affects woman-headed households in terms of their economic security and social status.

Thus, it has been argued that the illness and/or death of a woman has a particularly dramatic impact on the family in that it threatens household food security, especially when households depend primarily on women's labour for food production, animal tending, crop planting and harvesting. When women fall ill while their husbands are working in urban areas, the overall socialization and education of their children and the management of the household may be seriously affected. Moreover, studies have shown that children's nutritional status is more closely related to the mother's work and income than to the father's.[37] A survey conducted in 2000 in two districts in Zimbabwe found that 65 per cent of households where a woman had died had ceased to exist.[38]

Gender influences the ability of survivors to cope with the shock inflicted by AIDS. An FAO study in Uganda found that male survivors tended to remarry within one year of their spouse's death, while women had more difficulties in finding a new husband.[39] Another FAO study underscored the difficulties female survivors and their families had while coping with the loss of a breadwinner, a parent or a household head. Some had, for instance, been forced to shift from a matooke (banana) and groundnut farming system to a cassava/sweet potato farming system, resulting in less nutritious and varied diets and a reduction in cultivated areas.[40]

Furthermore, in some parts of the region there are several traditional, cultural and sexual practices that may increase women's as well as men's vulnerability to HIV infection.[41]

To conclude, while HIV/AIDS is eroding the social fabric of African societies by unravelling socio-economic safety nets, exacerbating gender inequities and fragmenting, or dissolving, a growing number of households, any entity engaged in rural development has to seriously address gender issues related to the pandemic.

Throughout an HIV/AIDS epidemic, measures need to focus on rehabilitation to help restore livelihoods and rebuild or re-establish basic

services in the medium term. Socio-economic safety nets stretched to the breaking point may need to be substituted with other mechanisms. Rehabilitation measures could include financial support and training programmes for households fostering orphans; apprenticeship programmes for adolescent orphans; training in agricultural skills for orphans; and the rehabilitation of agricultural extension services to address the needs expressed by farmers, including those who are directly affected by the epidemic.

In IFAD's gender-strengthening programme in Eastern and Southern Africa, project planners and implementing agencies gather empirical information on the different gender roles within and between geographic areas, ethnic groups and farming systems.

The division strives at a systematic integration of gender and HIV/AIDS concerns into the IFAD project cycle, extending beyond problem analysis to the identification of concrete entry points and response measures.[42]

**Asia and the Pacific**

In the last three decades, significant progress has been made in reducing poverty in the Asia and the Pacific region. Three decades of economic growth – especially agricultural growth – were coupled with a 60-70 per cent reduction in poverty. Particularly in East and Southeast Asia, there has been a drastic fall in the number of poor people. Despite these striking achievements, poverty is still a massive problem. The Asia and the Pacific region accounts for two thirds of the world's poor people. Half of these people live in South Asia.[43] The poor are the landless and marginal farmers, indigenous peoples, people of low castes and internally displaced persons. Seventy per cent of the world's indigenous peoples live in Asia and the Pacific. They are often deprived of the lifestyles they value and are subject to extreme forms of exploitation by officials and traders. Poor people in general are often landless or have limited access to land. Their households tend to be large and to have a low level of education, a large number of dependants and a high rate of unemployment. Access to technology, credit and inputs is limited, as is access to electricity, piped water and sanitation.[44] The South Asia region, where the largest concentration of poverty can be found, is characterized by alarming gender inequalities. IFAD acknowledges that:

> The extent to which IFAD and other international and national organizations are able to make an impact on poverty in Asia in the coming decades will depend on the extent to which they are able to alter gender relations.[45]

One outcome of gender inequalities is the remarkably low ratio of females to males. The worldwide ratio is 106 women to 100 men, while in Asian countries it is 94 to 100. Female infanticide, neglect of female children and families' preference for sons are identified as causes for female mortality. An IFAD country programme evaluation of Nepal has made it clear that gender inequality is one of the main causes of chronic malnutrition among women.[46] The region's high economic growth in recent decades has raised optimism which, at times, was coupled with the belief that economic growth automatically alleviates poverty. Nevertheless, there is growing evidence that economic growth does not diminish gender inequalities.[47]

In order to address gender issues in this region, IFAD cooperates with partner organizations such as UNIFEM. An example is the IFAD-UNIFEM Gender Mainstreaming Programme in Asia. The programme is supporting IFAD's project staff in defining relevant strategies and action plans to reinforce gender policies, both conceptually and operationally. Methods are being developed to analyse gender issues in such a way that project design and implementation capabilities can be strengthened. Project management staff are being trained in gender equity issues, and international and regional networking is being strengthened.[48]

The above exposition of the various contexts of gender geographies, of which a rural development organization has to be an integrated part, highlights both the importance of discerning the general themes related to a gendered reality and how they are manifested in different socio-economic settings. In the following chapter, we will illustrate how IFAD-supported projects address the specific gender issues within a strategic framework anchored in local realities through collaboration with municipalities and grass-roots organizations and in daily interactions with individuals. Each collaboration is unique and influenced by a wide range of sociocultural codes and sets of behaviour.

## Endnotes

1/ ProGénero (2004), p. 4.

2/ ProGender is financed through an IFAD Technical Assistance Grant.

3/ CARD stands for 'Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management Rural Development Project'.

4/ Bello (2004); IFAD/ProGénero/CODERSA (2003); IFAD/Promer/ProGénero/IICA (2004); Moreira (n.d.); ProGénero (2003); ProGénero (2004); Ramírez (2003); Rotondo and Vela (2004); Schreuel (2003:2).

5/ *Proyecto de Pequeños Productores Agrícolas de la Región Sur-Oeste*.

6/ UNOPS is the arm of the United Nations that provides management services for the United Nations system and Member States. As one of IFAD's cooperating partners, UNOPS is often called upon to participate in loan negotiations between IFAD and governments; UNOPS sometimes also participates in the last phase of project appraisals. The Office participates in start-up workshops to explain UNOPS and IFAD administrative procedures for loan disbursement, procurement, supervision and audit. The Office provides a complete package of reporting services, analysing the financial status and progress of the projects and making specific recommendations to executing agencies, the host government, IFAD and other clients involved in the execution of the projects (UNOPS/IFAD (1999), p. 5).

7/ PRODERNOR and PREMODER.

8/ Programme for Rural Development and Reconstruction in the Quiché Department (*Programa de Desarrollo y Reconstrucción en El Quiché* – PRODERQUI) and Rural Development Programme for Las Verapaces (*Programa de Desarrollo Rural de Las Verapaces* – PRODEVER).

9/ Interview with Ingrid Schreuel.

10/ Schreuel (2003:1), pp. 6-7.

11/ Ibid., p. 1.

12/ Ibid., p. 5.

13/ IFAD (2003:3), p. 4.

14/ Ibid., p. 5; IFAD (2002:1), p. 5.

15/ Kabeer (2003:1), p. 3. See Kabeer (2003:2) for a more detailed exposition of the concept.

16/ These short accounts were prepared in collaboration with the regional divisions' focal points: Ganesh Thapa, Lenyara Khayasedinova, Carla Ferreira, Rasha Yousef Omar and Cristiana Sparacino.

17/ Gender profile in Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, www.ifad.org (visited June 2006).

18/ Ibid.; IFAD (2002:3), pp. 6-7.

19/ IFAD (2002:3), p. 2.

20/ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldavia.

21/ IFAD's Strategy for an Equitable Development of Women and Men in the Near East and North Africa Region, www.ifad.org (visited in June 2006).

22/ IFAD (2002:4), p. 4.

23/ Ibid., pp. 2-5.

24/ IFAD's Strategy for an Equitable Development of Women and Men in the Near East and North Africa Region, www.ifad.org (visited in June 2006).

25/ Ibid.

26/ Ibid.

27/ Ibid.

28/ Programme of Action to Assist IFAD Projects to Reach Rural Women in Near East and North African Countries, www.ifad.org.

29/ As in many parts of the world, several African countries are plagued by conflict. For example, since the early 1960s Senegal is alone among the 17 countries comprising the West African subregion for having managed to escape direct military rule; each of the others has experienced an average of three coups d'état (with the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, which experienced its first in 1999 and a failed one in 2002) and countless coup attempts (Olukoshi (2001), pp. 1-2).

30/ This section is based on the 'Programme of Action to Assist IFAD Projects and Programmes in West and Central Africa to Reach Rural Women', www.ifad.org (visited in June 2006). The programme is a plan of action based on experiences gained from IFAD-supported projects. Accordingly, the document does not intend to present a comprehensive picture of gender relations within the heterogenous cultural environment of the vast region of Western and Central Africa. To obtain an impression of the diversity of African gender studies, see, for example, Oyewumi (2005) and Cornwall (2005).

31/ Saito (1994).

32/ The Hub is a small non-partisan unit financed by several donors, hosted by UNOPS, with a management committee composed of representatives of Western and Central African intergovernmental institutions, as well as civil society and donors including the European Commission (EC), IFAD, UNIFEM and the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs (http://www.hubrural.org).

33/ IFAD (2000:2), p. 7.

34/ IFAD (2001:4), p. 46.

35/ The following description is based on the 'Strategy Paper on HIV/AIDS for Eastern and Southern Africa', issued by IFAD in October 2001, available at http://www.ifad.org/operations/regional/pf/index.htm.

36/ Relatives typically dismantled the home, taking bricks, iron sheets and furniture, as well as productive assets, such as a husband's sewing machine, hunting gun, hoes and cattle (IFAD (2000:3), p. 28).

37/ Devereux and Eele (1991), cited in Forsythe and Rau (1996), p. 29.

38/ Mutangadura (2000).

39/ Topouzis (1995); Mutangandura (2000).

40/ Barnett (1994).

41/ This is a very sensitive area since at times some of these practices have been blown out of proportion, thus leading to generalizations based on individual and local customs that vary widely within the region. However, some practices such as ritual cleansing (in which the surviving spouse is 'cleansed' and freed of the dead person's spirit through sexual intercourse with a family member of the deceased) and widow inheritance (a practice, which traditionally was a social safety net for women, allowing a brother or close male relative to inherit the widow) may effect the spread of HIV/AIDS. These two examples are taken from a World Bank report (World Bank (1996)). The practice of widow inheritance occurs in various African communities. The relation that the practice has to the spread of HIV/AIDS has been studied among the Luo people in Kenya (Biruk (2005)). Ritual cleansing also occurs in various parts of the region, though it has mainly been studied in Zambia, a country that has a law against the practice and where alternative ritual practices for achieving the same goals are encouraged (Mwilu (1993)).

42/ As with the other regional divisions, the Eastern and Southern Africa Division initiated a programme to strengthen the gender focus in its projects. It addressed the issues raised by an assessment of gender aspects in ongoing projects, particularly stressing the importance of gender mainstreaming during the project design phase.

43/ IFAD (2002:5), pp. 2-3.

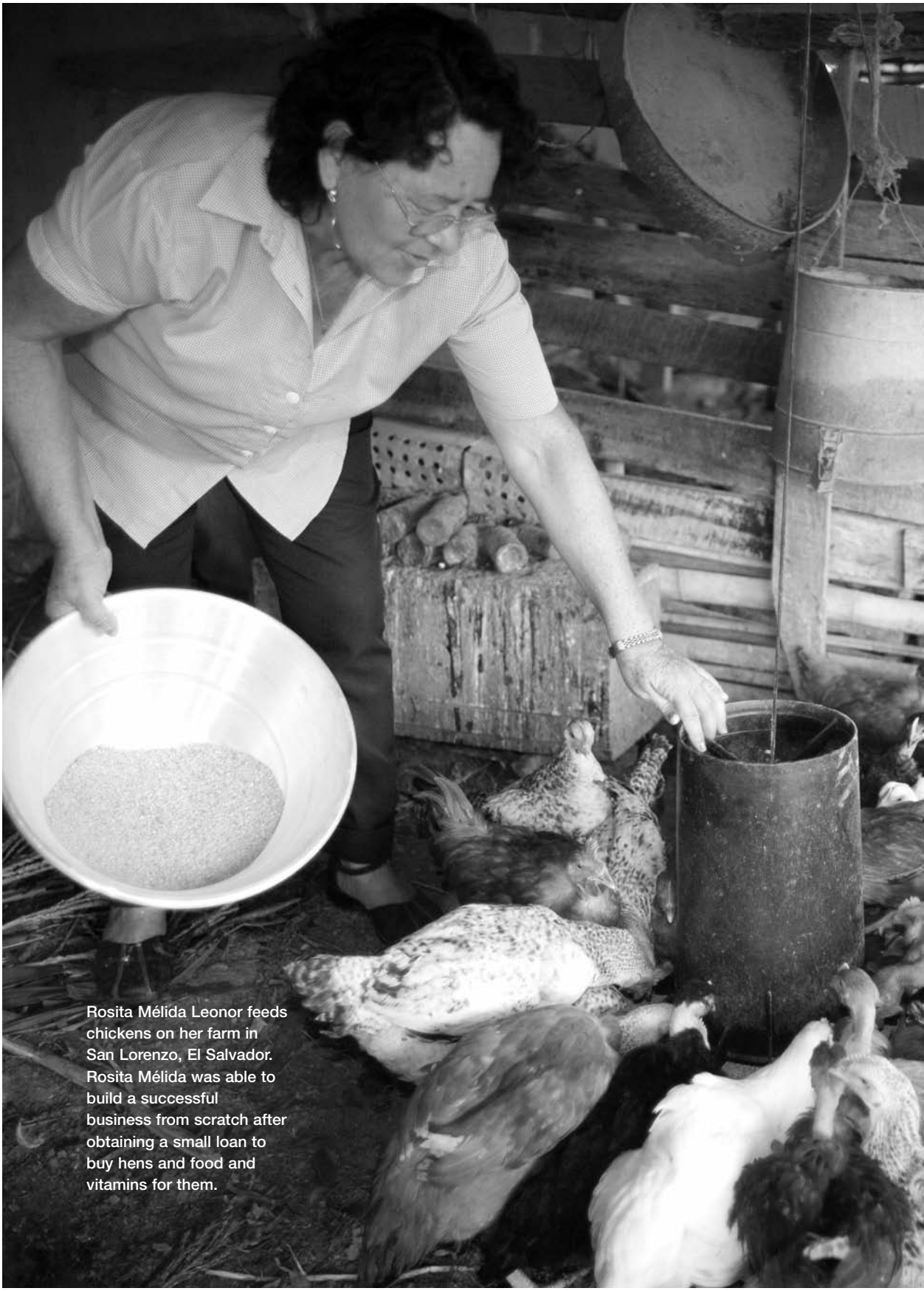
44/ Ibid., p. 4.

45/ Ibid., p. 9.

46/ IFAD (1999:3).

47/ Gender Mainstreaming: IFAD's Experiences in the Asia and Pacific Region and Lessons Learned (2000), www.ifad.org (visited June 2006).

48/ Based on information provided by the division and quoted in Schreuel (2002) and IFAD (2003:3).



Rosita Mélida Leonor feeds chickens on her farm in San Lorenzo, El Salvador. Rosita Mélida was able to build a successful business from scratch after obtaining a small loan to buy hens and food and vitamins for them.

Chapter 7

# Lessons learned

The PROSGIP and ProGender programmes brought together people in an open exchange of information and insights. Lessons were learned and knowledge was acquired. The experiences of projects that have integrated a gender equity approach in a successful way were collected, as were the experiences of those projects that could improve their gender strategies. In this way, IFAD was able to collect a wealth of practices and knowledge on the mainstreaming of gender, and to develop recommendations and guidelines.

In this chapter, we present some insights and instruments developed through the PROSGIP and ProGender programmes. In the first section, we argue that every programme and project functions within a political structure: it would be impossible to successfully execute IFAD-supported programmes and projects without the support of governments. In El Salvador, IFAD played an active role in strengthening such governmental support through the establishment of a gender unit at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. In the second section, we explain why a gender equity approach should be incorporated in all stages of the project cycle; that is, from project proposal to monitoring and evaluation. We describe the different stages of the project cycle and the importance of including a gender approach from the project design onwards. In the following section, we present an example of how a gender analysis was carried out during the design phase in the Grenada Rural Enterprise Project (G-REP). In the fourth section we discuss a manual to guide rural organizations towards gender equity. In the fifth, sixth and seventh

sections, we discuss issues related to gender and environmental management, rural microenterprises and rural financing.

The case of the PRODAP Support Programme for Women is discussed in the eighth section. Despite positive developments, several problems remain when it comes to gender mainstreaming. In a final section we present some examples of difficulties and setbacks related to gender mainstreaming that have affected some projects. In the context of this chapter, we also refer to Annex II in which we outline some prerequisites and recommendations for mainstreaming gender in projects.

## Political embeddedness

Development projects do not function in isolation. The various reforms they aim to bring about cannot take place without an adequate legal framework and political structures that are supported by national governments. By now, most Latin American and Caribbean countries have legislation that supports the general goal of gender equity and eliminates barriers to equal participation in productive activities and decision-making. Nevertheless, to assure the implementation of national laws that support gender equity, ministries and other governmental agencies ought to be equipped with offices and staff that monitor and evaluate efforts to promote gender equity initiatives. Development cannot be considered as a simple matter of reallocating economic resources. Power also has to be redistributed, and limiting attitudes have to be changed through legislation, and political and educational efforts. If a gender equity approach is to permeate a given society, there must be the will and conscious efforts at all levels of that nation's decision-making arena.

IFAD aims to address rural poverty by reaching the poorest people and by collaborating with entire communities, at the same time as its activities are circumscribed by agreements with governments and implemented by government agencies, local institutions, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). One of the dangers of the close cooperation that IFAD has to seek with national governments is that projects may not be free from political manipulation. The sustainability and continuity of gender initiatives at the level of individual projects are constantly threatened by changes in personnel. Directors may suddenly be dismissed and new directors may be appointed only due to political machinations, and some of them are capable of changing and even disrupting processes that have been initiated by their predecessors. Supervision efforts by IFAD, other donors and cooperating institutions may mitigate the effects of such unwanted changes,

but many projects have gone through prolonged periods when implementation was negatively affected by drastic changes in personnel. Another factor that may threaten the stability of a project is that the staff members of the project management unit often find themselves in difficult situations. Not only do many of them live and work in remote areas, far away from their families, but they also run the risk of losing work and income, not only due to problems such as political influence, but also due to the fact that all projects have limited lifespans. Before the projects are completed, professionals and technicians have to start looking for a new job, and in order to improve their chances of securing a new contract, they may have to manage the project and adapt their work to meet political expectations.

In several countries, the political dimension of gender mainstreaming and its continuity within rural development projects have been addressed through efforts to establish a policy dialogue with governments and sectoral ministries. IFAD has actively supported initiatives that are aimed at establishing gender units to serve the rural sector. Such units can serve as instruments for developing programmes that may be helpful in bridging the most critical inequity gaps.

When support to development projects is negotiated at governmental levels, it is important to ensure that the planned local and regional efforts are supported by national policies that guarantee sustainable access to means for overcoming limitations and inequities between men and women, at least with regard to access to productive resources and services. Furthermore, mechanisms need to be introduced in project design in such a way that project experiences and lessons learned can feed back into development policies.

Some of the lessons learned through PROSGIP and ProGender were integrated into a subsequent Salvadoran rural development programme – PREMODER. This programme was introduced with a focus on compensating for the extensive damage caused by the devastating earthquakes that shook El Salvador in 2001. From its initial phase onwards, PREMODER applied an elaborate gender equity strategy. An innovative and, so far, unique feature introduced with PREMODER was the establishment of the already mentioned Unit for the Strengthening of and Support to Gender Policies (UFAG) at the Salvadoran Ministry for Agriculture and Livestock.

UFAG works closely with the different departments of the ministry, decentralized units and its rural development projects. In particular, UFAG coordinates with the three IFAD-financed projects PRODAP, PRODERNOR and PREMODER in addressing gender issues at policy, strategic and field implementation levels. These projects have had extensive experience with

gender equity and some of the experiences were instrumental in the formulation of a policy document presented by the Ministry in April 2006.[1]

UFAG is assisting the Ministry with the promotion of equitable access to assets, employment and markets in rural areas. The unit is also trying to disseminate gender methodologies and strategies through the rural development projects carried out by the Ministry. The information and experiences collected from the projects will also support the Ministry and the Salvadoran Institute for Advancement of Woman (ISDEMU)[2] in their efforts to generate disaggregated statistics and adequate legislation.

Through its cooperation with UFAG, IFAD is participating in an effort to stimulate an increasing institutional and political commitment to gender equity by involving ministries and other decision and policy-makers in the supervision and management of gender aspects within rural development programmes.

## Integrating gender in project design

Through IFAD's gender mainstreaming process, the awareness has grown that IFAD's outreach to women and men of all generations will be facilitated and become more effective if thorough gender equity thinking permeates an entire project. It is necessary that a gender focus be applied at all stages of the project cycle, from project design and implementation to its supervision and the monitoring of its impact. Also, the commitment to support gender equity should be inscribed in all loan agreements between IFAD and borrowing governments.

The PROSGIP and ProGender initiatives should be considered in relation to IFAD's particular mandate and working methods. Accordingly, to be able to perceive the possible impact of these initiatives we need to have some notion of IFAD's programmes and projects – their design, implementation and supervision.[3]

The point of departure for all IFAD projects is constituted by the relevant Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP). A COSOP articulates the strategies that direct IFAD's cooperation with a national government and indicates sector-specific opportunities and constraints. The socio-economic context, policies and strategies of a certain nation are related to IFAD's strategies. A COSOP must include gender-relevant information and identify constraints and opportunities inherent in prevalent gender structures and policies.

The next phase of the project design is constituted by an inception document, identifying the character and content of the proposed project by

Las Carnitas restaurant, just outside San Vicente, where truck drivers and visitors stop. Preparing and selling food is a common source of employment for rural women in El Salvador.

Ana and Rosa work in Rosa's corn mill in Zapote, Coluco. Rosa pays for electricity and animal feed with the money from the mill. Ground corn is the main ingredient of tortillas and these mills are an important part of daily life in El Salvador.

José Castro is also a member of the *Marañón* cooperative. Here he is teaching other members how to grow cucumbers.

Reidi Rosibel Ventura is only 18 years old but she already has her own business in Nahuilingo, Sonsonate. She raises chickens and ducks, and has a greenhouse for seedlings. Reidi Rosibel's family was extremely poor when she and her father and grandfather joined the *Marañón* (cashew) cooperative, where they received training and credit.

José Vicente Castillo (left), Delia Josefa Molina (centre) and Josefa Francisca Leonor (right) in San Lorenzo, San Vicente. Their main income comes from producing and selling beans.

The thriving market in Chalatenango, one of the most war-torn areas of El Salvador. During the civil war (1980 to 1992), 500,000 Salvadorans were internally displaced and 750,000 emigrated. When the war ended, thousands of ex-combatants and refugees returned, settling in agricultural communities in Chalatenango as part of an internationally monitored land transfer programme.

In El Rosario, El Resbaladero, Juana de Jesús Marroquín prepares for her daughter Erika's 15th birthday. She saved for the party for a whole year. Celebrations of all kinds are a priority for the rural population and many people spend a large amount of their income on these occasions.

At dusk, a man sweeps a street in Nahulingo, Sonsonate.

Tortillas are prepared in the house of Petrona Elida Leonor in San Lorenzo. Making tortillas is an important and time-consuming daily chore for many women in rural El Salvador.

People ride in an open flatbed truck, a common form of transport in rural El Salvador. In recent decades, El Salvador has seen massive population movement. An estimated 2 million Salvadorans, one quarter of the country's population, are now living abroad.

presenting diagnostics referring to the population that is going to benefit, as well as the problems that are going to be addressed. Approximations of costs as well as strategies and activities related to the specific project design are also presented in the inception document. Of course, gender concerns must be present here as well. When an Operational Strategy Committee at IFAD's headquarters has approved both the COSOP and the inception document, IFAD's Programme Management Department authorizes the next steps in the project cycle; that is, project formulation and appraisal.

The project formulation report defines strategies, objectives and activities that later will be addressed and elaborated in more detail in an appraisal report. Such a report evaluates the conceptual, technical and economic aspects of the proposed project, as well as providing detailed descriptions of the socio-economic reality of the intended beneficiaries and their organizations and productive activities. Furthermore, the appraisal report provides a description of the mechanisms that have to be in place for project execution, namely the coordinating unit, the costs and financing, and the cooperating institutions. Since the appraisal report lays down the prerequisites for an entire implementation process, it is an extremely important document. The information presented in this report will provide the backbone for all actions inherent in project execution, as well as its monitoring and evaluation. The report of IFAD's President to the Fund's Executive Board is also based on the appraisal report and constitutes the basis for the Board's approval of the loan. Naturally, all specific gender aspects of the project have to be thoroughly investigated and included in the appraisal report.

The documents that form the basis for a decision about a loan for a specific project (i.e. the COSOP, the inception document, the formulation and the appraisal reports) are prepared by external consultants, working in multidisciplinary teams supervised by IFAD's country programme managers. Often these missions include a specific consultant who is responsible for integrating gender issues, and the theme is also mentioned in the Terms of Reference of the team leader and other team members. The documents are prepared within a relatively short period of time and their elaboration requires the active support and input of local professionals, as well as the participation of the local population that will be affected by the proposed project. The consultation process involving local beneficiaries may vary from project to project and from country to country. Generally, though, participatory workshops are organized to involve male and female community representatives in problem identification and to engage them in the formulation of proposals to solve the problems identified.

The loan agreement that follows upon the appraisal report is a legal document that guarantees that the project will apply all the terms and conditions that a government and IFAD have agreed upon. Accordingly, it is of utmost importance that gender issues are raised during the negotiations that precede the signing of a loan agreement, and that general conditions for the implementation of a gender strategy are included in the final version of such an agreement.[4]

After the signing of a loan agreement and the accomplishment of loan effectiveness conditions, project implementation begins. It is essential that gender concerns are addressed during the first phases of implementation. For example, experience has shown that such concerns ought to be dealt with during the establishment of the project implementation unit and the appointment of key personnel to ensure the recruitment of both women and men professionals. Efforts ought to be made to assure a reasonable gender balance and to find personnel who exhibit concern for gender-related issues.

Generally, the initiation of project activities is officially launched through project launch workshops. Such events have proved to be instrumental in ensuring a consensus for identifying instruments and strategies that will guarantee the maximum participation of men and women in all project activities. The workshops are usually attended by high-level government officials, community representatives, NGOs and other partners involved in project implementation, and thus provide a fertile ground for the promotion of gender sensitization and awareness.[5]

An important feature during the initial stages of a project cycle is the baseline study. Such studies are generally conducted during the first year of a project and are used to determine the socio-economic conditions of the target population within the particular context in which the projects are carried out. Thorough and meticulous baseline studies may serve as excellent tools for identifying fundamental problems and finding strategies to address them. In order to be effective, baseline studies must pay attention to gender-related issues within a given society and provide gender-disaggregated information.

Several projects define their first year of implementation as a 'pilot phase' for 'tuning up' instruments and methodologies and making the necessary adjustments. During this period, agreements are made with participating organizations, while community organization, technical assistance and financial services are initiated. After the initial phase, a period of consolidation begins and mid-term evaluations are generally carried out, assessing emerging problems and needs. Such exercises ought to be supported by gender mainstreaming measures and the monitoring of specific tasks related to the promotion of gender equity. The format of regular supervision

reports also needs to cover gender issues and provide gender-differentiated information about participation and access to assets and benefits.

## Identifying gender equity issues: The Grenada Rural Enterprise Project

Inspired by concerns raised during the PROSGIP series of international seminars and supported by ProGender, several projects have been designed that take gender equity issues into consideration to a much higher degree than before. One example is the Grenada Rural Enterprise Project (G-REP), which was approved in 2001.[6] Ken Whiteman, coordinator of the project, and Vincent Williams, monitoring and evaluation expert, stated the following about efforts made to implement a gender approach in the project:

> Our previous involvement in community development work had already given us some exposure to gender concepts and analysis. However, the Grenada Rural Enterprise Project has taken these concepts and analytical tools to a much higher level. The following factors have contributed to that. In the first place, IFAD's working papers for the project are applying a very gender-sensitive analysis of relevant goals, objectives, components, staff composition, committee formation and the like. The importance of gender equity is present throughout. What also proved to be helpful was the IFAD 'Gender and Natural Resources' Workshop in Guatemala, organized by CODERSA and ProGender, and the abundance of information provided there by other projects. Other workshops, such as the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) workshop in Grenada in October 2002 and the IFAD/CDB workshop in 2003, clarified the gender framework for the project. Rosario Bello, the ProGender Programme Officer, is easily accessible and this ensures ongoing gender support, especially through the design of the baseline survey questionnaire. CDB has provided training and support to the project through its Gender Department. There is now a better working relationship, support and easier access, especially since the Guatemala Workshop, and due to the support of IFAD's Gender Programme.

The appraisal report of G-REP applied a thorough gender analysis, offering gender-disaggregated information while describing the prevailing socio-economic situation of the country's rural inhabitants.[7] The Grenada project may serve as an illustration of how specific gender concerns can be included in the project design and thus permeate an entire project.

In the appraisal report, the analysis of the country's gender equity situation included a description of the roles and life situation of both sexes. Due to the specific situation that characterizes rural areas of Grenada, both gender and generation aspects were particularly focused on. The appraisal report offered several insights into gender roles in agricultural activities, participation in decision-making and organizations, land tenure, small enterprises and education. Woman-headed households were given special attention.

The appraisal report also highlighted the difficult situation of rural youth. Considering that the average population of Grenada is very young (48 per cent are younger than 20) and that younger generations are particularly hard hit by cultural transition phenomena, as well as by other socio-economic problems, many of the project's activities were specifically geared towards young people.[8]

In Grenada, many rural youths lack the skills required to benefit from new job opportunities, particularly in the tourism and light manufacturing sectors. Many of them, especially the males, have not been able to complete their schooling and cannot find steady employment. In addition, the exposure to alternative values and lifestyles (mainly North American) introduced through television, other media and return migration is making it even more difficult for youngsters to accept their deprived situation. Therefore, the promotion of community activities – with an emphasis on involving male and female youths – was considered to be crucial for rural development. The problems of male and female youngsters may differ considerably, due to different social roles and various behavioural expectations attached to them. Accordingly, G-REP's rural investment fund includes such items as the funding of facilities that allow young men and women to become organized around activities according to their interests. In this way, they are motivated to participate in training opportunities and productive activities. The funds are also used to upgrade such facilities as day care centres and pre-primary schools, thus helping teenage and adolescent single mothers to access business opportunities and to hold steady jobs. Since young people are in dire need of better opportunities, emphasis is put on education and training. Teachers in targeted communities are encouraged to develop special training programmes that assess gender equity and environmental issues.

In Grenada, much importance has been given to the fact that it is not sufficient to provide gender equity training to project coordination staff and beneficiaries: all personnel provided by co-executing agencies must also be gender-sensitized. The needs identified by men and women beneficiaries and participants through participatory processes form the basis for the project's

annual work plan and budget. Funds for a gender specialist, didactic and promotional material, as well as specific gender activities were incorporated into the budget for project coordination.

The project monitoring and evaluation system provided specific indicators to measure gender equity efforts within each component of the project. Guidelines were also offered to staff of both the project coordination unit and co-implementing agencies. A section on gender equity issues was incorporated in the monthly progress reports from co-implementing agencies and rural service providers. Gender-related issues were explicitly discussed during loan negotiations. Government representatives were quite familiar with the gender topic. They proved to be well aware of the need to mainstream gender in the development activities and insisted on increasing the allocation of specific resources to that end.

## Closing the gender gap in rural organizations

During the PROSGIP exercise, several CBOs pointed out that they had difficulties in measuring gender equity in a simple fashion. They were in need of easy-to-handle tools that would enable them to establish how far an organization had come in achieving the objective of gender equity, as well as to assess the gender equity situation at the moment an organization is constituted. Measuring participation simply by counting the number of participating men and women is far from sufficient. Attitudes, expectations, criticism and participation in actual decision-making also have to be traced and monitored. In response to these queries, a handbook was developed: 'Closing the Gap – Manual to guide rural organizations towards gender equity'.[9] The particular gender issue the manual addresses is how a rural CBO can measure and promote gender equity within its own structure and through the identification of affirmative action. The manual was developed through a participatory methodology. It was initiated in response to the needs of CBOs and prepared in close cooperation with them. ProGender made an assessment of the situation of various organizations that were participating in three selected projects. Then, the manual was developed in close cooperation with those who would be using it in the future; their recommendations concerning their own specific reality were integrated in the manual. Subsequently, the manual was tested by several projects and rural organizations; their recommendations were incorporated into a draft, which was then commented upon by all participants in the process. It has been distributed to all IFAD projects and partner organizations in the region.

The manual presents a simple but comprehensive set of tools to enable rural organizations to measure the actual situation of gender equity within their organization. It also helps to facilitate the identification of affirmative actions that would help to reduce the equity gap between men and women and to measure advances in gender equity and identify necessary adjustments. The measurement tools include a set of general questions about the organization and its goals, activities and membership. This is followed by a set of questions related to gender equity; for instance, the gender distribution of tasks and positions within the organization, eligibility for various positions, power relations, how decisions are taken and presented, and the members' access to services and information. Examples of such questions are: How are decisions taken in the organization? Are women elected to the board of directors? Are there efforts to incorporate men as well as women into the organization?

Another section of the manual is exclusively aimed at women members of the organization. It traces their relations with other members of the group, as well as their access to information, services and benefits. The women are also asked to describe their responsibilities and the gender distribution within the organization. The same set of questions that the women have to answer is also posed to the male members of the group. The manual continues with instructions on how the collected information can be processed and presented, and finishes with recommendations related to how the information can be used and applied to the work of the organization, as well as how further advances in gender equity may be measured.

## Gender issues and environmental management

The majority of the rural inhabitants participating in IFAD-supported projects are peasants, and as such they depend on their natural environment: they use its resources not only to generate income but also for survival and well-being. Modernization processes (for example, food production for international markets, and the large-scale exploitation of such natural resources as minerals, fossil fuels and timber) put a lot of strain on the environment, impeding the efforts of small-scale food producers to eke out an existence. Furthermore, modern agricultural inputs – such as artificial fertilizers and pesticides – put even more pressure on the ecological niches of rural food producers, a situation worsened by increased access to non-degradable materials and consumer goods. In this section, we will touch upon some of the salient themes of an ongoing debate about gender

and nature, and highlight some IFAD-sponsored initiatives related to gender and natural resource utilization.

In some cultures, women's reproductive tasks have been connected with such concepts as 'Mother Nature' and nature's cycles.[10] This is probably due to ideas connected to, for example, women's menstrual cycle, their role as birth givers and their responsibilities for preparing food. Most people have an intimate experience of what birth and nurture mean, and by way of analogous thinking it becomes natural to equate nature with a mother, particularly in a nurturing sense: we are wholly dependent on nature for our survival. We have already described how masculinity and femininity were important features in Andean cosmology, and the same seems to be true in most other agricultural communities. Many feminist theoreticians have emphasized a connection between femininity and nature. Recently, 'eco-feminists' have drawn parallels between male control over nature and the control that men exercise over women. Referring to cosmological systems that stress equilibrium between male and female principles, they point to what they perceive as an assault by 'masculinist' scientific and industrial systems on the ecological health of the planet. Such views have developed into social movements that also have attracted men. These environmental groups often advocate an approach called 'women, environment and development' (WED), indicating that the cultural heritage of Southern communities has been overshadowed by their 'poverty status', which they acquired in the present 'age of development'. WED activists insist on fundamental changes in the dominant discourse of development to incorporate women's voices and contextual considerations such as local knowledge systems, gender relations, cultural specificity and political ecology.[11]

Even if the WED discourse has sometimes been transformed into a more or less vague 'new age' ideology, its mainstream ideology has influenced approaches; for example, the 'multifunctional agriculture concept'. This approach considers agriculture to be not just a food-producing activity, but a human endeavour with spiritual, spatial, cultural and social dimensions that need to be safeguarded and developed. Just like the WID concept, WED has in recent years developed into a gender approach, namely 'gender, environment and development' (GED) or, perhaps more commonly, 'gender, environment and sustainable livelihoods'.

Several women's organizations and lobby groups were active in having gender-sensitive formulations included in Agenda 21, which was the outcome of the 1992 World Summit in Rio de Janeiro.[12] As a result, Agenda 21 specifically mentions gender issues in several of its chapters, and it is

often stated that even if women and men are not specifically mentioned in all sections and chapters, it has to be assumed that all recommendations are directed towards both sexes in an equitable way. However, it has been argued that United Nations action plans and events following the Rio Summit have been largely unsuccessful at mainstreaming gender and social issues. Instead, gender has often been compartmentalized. The fact that 'women's issues' were relegated to a separate chapter near the end of the Agenda 21 document is mentioned as evidence that for most decision-makers, gender mainstreaming remains a fairly unknown concept. GED-oriented groups often argue that environmental concerns continue to remain on the sidelines of the current development discourse.[13]

The relationship between environmental management and gender equity issues within rural projects was discussed during a thematic workshop held in 2003 in Petén, Guatemala. The event was organized and structured in a similar way to PROSGIP's international seminars, in that case studies from several IFAD–supported projects were presented and commented upon. The studies had been prepared by the personnel of various IFAD-supported projects, in close cooperation with beneficiaries.

One of the studies presented was the water-based culture of the Warao people, who live in the Orinoco delta of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This study clearly demonstrated the almost complete dependence of an indigenous community on threatened natural resources. The Economic Development of Poor Rural Communities Project (PRODECOP)[14] stressed the importance of promoting the environmental consciousness of men and women by promoting the introduction of strict water management (boiling and filtering water and finding alternative forms of water harvesting), waste management and general hygiene (constructing latrines). The approach highlighted the importance of informing all members of each household about the importance of resource management and strict hygiene. This endeavour was made possible through a participatory approach in which all community members were mobilized in joint efforts to manage the natural environment in a sustainable way.[15]

A study from Honduras highlighted the hardship that particularly women and children suffer from as a result of unhealthy living conditions, and stressed the importance of organizing the living space and investing in instruments and actions that help rural inhabitants to reorganize their homes and make them healthier.[16] Home improvement, as well as ordering and increasing the productive capacity of fields and pastures, is something that clearly benefits all members of a household. It gives almost immediate and tangible results, and engages all household members in a positive way.

This was further demonstrated by examples from MARENASS, the project in Peru that has been described in more detail in previous chapters.

The Petén workshop concluded by declaring that the rehabilitation, care and conservation of natural resources are responsibilities that must be shared by all members of a community. However, it is important to analyse and identify: i) who has access to and control over the natural resources; ii) in what way exploitation, management and benefits are divided; and iii) who has experience and knowledge of managing the resources in a proper way.

The workshop also concluded that within most IFAD-supported projects, women are still allowed limited participation when communal decisions are made about the use and care of natural resources. Capacity building concerning natural resource management and transfer of technology has so far been mainly directed to male beneficiaries, in their roles as heads of families and prime income providers. In light of this situation, it was proposed that:

- Environmental themes and gender aspects should be mainstreamed in all activities, and operationalized from project initiation.
- Development agencies ought to be sensitized on the importance of implementing gender and environmental aspects in all their activities, and be familiarized with indicators that allow them to monitor activities connected with the sustainable use and care of natural resources.
- Children and youngsters should be taught the importance of taking proper care of natural resources and be encouraged at an early age to take an active part in their maintenance, particularly their community's environment (i.e. keeping it clean and orderly).
- The care and sustainable use of natural resources should be related to such themes as poverty reduction, communal well-being, equity and shared responsibilities.
- IFAD projects should make an effort to find ways to benefit from an innovative, sustainable and profitable use of natural resources (for example, through cooperation with research institutes and other experienced agencies).
- All efforts related to environmental issues should pay attention to gender equity, legal rights and duties, joint decision-making, conflict resolution and cooperation.
- While engaging men, women and youth, the projects should try to find ways to alleviate women's domestic chores and childcare responsibilities.
- It is important to take stock of local knowledge and experiences, and to learn from the knowledge and practices of other projects and initiatives.

The event in Petén illustrated the possibilities of applying a gender equity approach to environmental protection and natural resource utilization. Since men, women and children are directly dependent on their environment, improvements can immediately be felt and appreciated by all community members. The workshop also demonstrated the importance of gender roles – for example, by stressing that activities that demand a lot of physical effort (for example, forestry and the construction of terraces and fences) tend to be performed by men. However, there are several more or less untapped possibilities for women to increase their participation – for example, by working with the development of non-timber forestry products.[17]

## Gender equity and rural enterprises

Although most IFAD-supported programmes and projects focus on improving crops and overall agricultural development, innovations and new ideas to diversify income are promoted and supported. Marketing strategies are constantly being developed within the projects. People are offered training in such topics as product development, reading and writing skills, as well as in efficient bookkeeping, organizational techniques and budgeting. They are also provided with access to information and credit, and improved infrastructure.

A more effective mobilization of women's labour capacity and skills is often viewed as a source of additional household income. Accordingly, most rural development projects include components to support the creation of better possibilities for women to start small enterprises. However, due to issues related to gender inequity, some of these endeavours are still marred by shortcomings.

One major obstacle to the growth and diversification of small businesses started by women and supported by development projects is that they generally originate from activities that are related to women's domestic roles, such as preparing and selling food and drinks, hairdressing, tailoring, sewing, knitting, embroidering and similar activities – endeavours that, due to their nature and the environment in which they are developed, often prove to be of little competitive value and of limited profitability. To this may be added the often poor quality of the products, the lack of a marketing plan, the quite often routinized and weak interest many projects show for these kinds of activities, women's limited access to credit and capacity building, and their lack of education. Other constraints that impede the growth of women's businesses are related to the unequal power relations within the household, which are manifested (as we presented in Chapter 1)

through the gendered division of labour and men's control of intra-household cash flow. Because it is a widespread cultural practice for men to leave the domestic chores and duties to women, women have to divide their time between these duties and their business activities. Often, they organize their entrepreneurial activities around their domestic chores, which means that the time they can spend on their businesses is limited. Their domestic duties also limit their mobility and subsequently their possibilities to invest time in seeking profitable markets. The ideological construct that women should not leave the house too often but should stay in and around the house, may also play a role in limiting women's mobility. The other constraint concerns men's domination of the intra-household cash flows. A woman entrepreneur has to deal with the fact that at times her husband may appropriate her income for his own goals. It may also happen that her husband withdraws his own financial contribution to the household with the argument that it is no longer necessary because his wife now has her own income. The result may be that women have to use all the income generated through their businesses for the daily maintenance of their children and may not be able to reinvest sufficiently. The working capital of their business may thus disappear.[18] When men and women work together in a business, it is often the man who dominates the activities by appropriating the income from the business. In several IFAD-supported projects (for example, in Colombia), it has been noticed that even if women are involved throughout the production process, it is often their male companion who markets the products and receives the benefits.[19]

These remarks should not be taken as a generalization about women entrepreneurs. Depending on the size of the household and the age of their children, there are considerable differences between women entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, these restrictions contribute to the fact that women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's businesses.[20] They circumscribe women's choice of location, the nature of their businesses and their access to high-quality raw materials, information, markets and opportunities to learn effective management skills. Compared to women, men often have higher mobility and better opportunities for exposure to various social settings. When men enter into various business schemes, they seldom need any approval from their wife or other family members. Furthermore, their control of the intra-household cash flow also includes earnings created through the labour of spouses and children. In general, rural men also have a better formal and informal education than women do.

To maximize the impact small enterprises may have on the well-being of rural families and communities, barriers to the equal participation of

men and women have to be eliminated. This can be done by providing credit on equal conditions and establishing affirmative actions aimed at women in the form of education and other measures to increase their competitive skills. If men and women are offered opportunities to participate in income generating activities on an equal footing, not only might the self-esteem of both men and women increase in pace with rising incomes, but also a mutual respect might develop.

The following is a statement made by Sixta de Sánchez de Gasparillal – a Panamanian small business entrepreneur – at an IFAD/ProGender-sponsored workshop on gender and rural microenterprise held in Ciudad del Saber, Panama in 2002:[21]

> Within a household, men and women ought to have the same rights to work and to make important decisions. In the beginning, I had a lot of difficulties with my husband because he considered it to be a waste of time to participate [in the training for small business management]. However, today I can say with pride to my husband that it is thanks to all that paperwork that I now have a better home. I have running water. I see development in my community and we have succeeded in launching a project to improve the school and many other things that fill me with happiness.[22]

It became clear at this workshop that projects that focus on promoting equal opportunities for men and women through microenterprise can opt for two main strategies. The first strategy is to ensure an effective participation of all beneficiaries, regardless of sex, in all activities. This needs close control and monitoring to ensure that there are no barriers to equitable participation. At the workshop on microentrepreneurs, the benefits of this approach were listed as:

- the incorporation of men and women in activities that have traditionally been dominated by one or the other;
- a more effective incorporation of women at decision-making levels;
- a more effective incorporation of socio-political themes such as health, education and social conflict on the agenda of community organizations, a result of the fact that women and men share information and responsibilities in a more efficient way than they would were they separated;
- a shared control of income distribution; and
- an increased appreciation of the contributions of both men and women.

The second strategy involves reaching men and women within their traditional spheres of activities. Their skills are developed separately in such a way that in the end they will reach a state of equitable access to resources and benefits. This strategy often means a focus on women's groups, and the major achievement is that loyal support between group members – something that often characterizes women's groups – encourages self-esteem and makes women's voices more effective and audible, especially because women tend to be more at ease in female company than in mixed groups.[23]

IFAD and ProGender do not judge which strategy is more effective. They may prove to be equally valuable, particularly taking into consideration the gender relations and inequalities that prevail in the different settings where projects are carried out. The effectiveness of each strategy can only be judged by its results – increased gender equity demonstrated by equal access to income-generating activities and services, as well as increased self-esteem among the beneficiaries. It is important that both approaches address inequalities when it comes to possibilities to access services, such as proper education, labour-saving techniques and the development of an infrastructure that alleviates the traditional tasks of women – such as the establishment of health clinics, childcare centres and water facilities.[24]

As in all development work, it is important to avoid dogmatism and inflexible solutions. An open, holistic and heterogeneous approach to gender equity issues is always preferable. The goal must be the benefit of the majority of poor people within a rural community. Christina Suaña – small business entrepreneur and participant in the Development of the Puno-Cuzco Corridor Project (Peru) – stated the following during the workshop with microentrepreneurs:

> The tasks of men and women are being equally divided at work as well as in the home. Our small enterprise is now a family affair. We are also integrating our children, who have been studying and are able to direct us and tell us what we have to do while we are tending our businesses, how we have to make sure that everything is done in a proper way and how we ought to organize ourselves.[25]

The workshop with microentrepreneurs was organized in a similar way as the PROSGIP series of international seminars. Case studies were presented by the projects, illustrating different approaches and solutions created within and adapted to a wide range of different socio-economic settings. Many small entrepreneurs actively participated in the workshop. The focus was on learning from and discussing various concrete examples and

personal experiences. One of the outcomes is a comprehensive manual that presents several technical instruments that could prove to be useful for managers of rural small enterprises. The manual was written with an explicit gender focus.[26]

## Gender equity and rural finance

Many poor rural people perceive the lack of credit as the main obstacle to progress. IFAD-supported projects often reach people who have never had access to credit. They tend to have a strong rural finance component and most of them have particular activities aimed at women borrowers, in particular supporting women's credit committees through capacity building, instruction in organizational skills, the handling of credit, marketing and bookkeeping.

Credit and most other financial services are basic requisites for increasing agricultural production and establishing income-generating enterprises. Farmers need short-term credit to buy improved seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides and to hire farm labourers to work the fields and help them with post-harvest operations. However, many small producers may be reluctant to enter into debt, particularly if their plots are small and their production barely meets their essential needs. A peasant in Guatemala, who wanted to remain anonymous, said the following during an interview:

> I prefer to obtain short-time loans from people I know, even if the terms are bad. I don't like debts that stay with me for many years. Furthermore, with this bad weather you do not know what will happen if you take a loan for corn, which is the only crop I can grow in this poor field.[27]

Accordingly, for a small producer who does not have much land – and who may be illiterate, living in a fairly isolated location and without legal documentation – it may be almost impossible to obtain credit from formal sources, and even if it is possible, it doesn't necessarily pave the way to success. A neighbour of the man interviewed above, who also wanted to remain anonymous, exposed his regrets about credit:

> People convinced me that I had to take credit and, yes, in the beginning the corn grew better with the fertilizers, but as it did not rain, the harvest was very poor and so I could not pay the interest and this is

> quite depressing. Now I have debts, but no harvest and I don't feel good. I have no income. I am worse off than before. I cannot obtain more credit and still it does not rain. It is a heavy burden I carry.[28]

Stories such as these indicate that credit providers should take into account the entire socio-economic and environmental situation of the person who asks for credit. Every rural inhabitant is an integrated part of his/her socio-economic environment, and if a development agency offers credit to such a person, certain prerequisites to enable the person to benefit from the credit must be in place. This means that people who receive credit ought to be offered the possibilities to benefit from it. When people are able to have full legal status, education, self-esteem and control over their life and their environment, they are generally better equipped to benefit from credit and to eventually find a way out of poverty. This applies to both men and women. However, throughout the developing world, many people (and especially women) lack the legal status to access loans even if they are the head of their household; and even if they have such a status, there are several other obstacles to obtaining credit.

A formidable barrier to obtaining credit is lack of collateral. Many rural inhabitants do not own the land they till and harvest, or the home in which they live. They have no security to offer for a loan. In the worst scenario, the only asset a poor person has is his/her body and the work he/she is able to perform with that sole asset. When it comes to collateral, in general women are worse off than men. Many more men than women are recognized landowners, and when they leave their wife and children behind and migrate to a town or another country, they often leave their dependants in a precarious situation. If the man does not return, or becomes sick or dies, the woman and the children he left behind do not own either the land or what they assumed to be their home. This is something that poor women often discover when they apply for a loan.

Lack of land is also related to lack of civil registration: women who are not legally registered cannot obtain land titles through land reform programmes. PROPESUR, an IFAD-supported project in the Dominican Republic, has made an effort to convince couples that they should legalize their relationship and ensure that spouses will have legal rights to assets that are left if someone dies or abandons the household. However, this is not an easy task since it is very common that a man has relationships and children with more than one woman. In various countries (for example, Brazil and Guatemala), IFAD-sponsored projects have been instrumental in providing legal documentation for thousands of women. The Zacapa-Chiquimula

Smallholders' Rural Development Project (PROZACHI)[29] in Guatemala documents the following experience:

> From the beginning, promoters and technicians concentrated on creating the conditions for women to participate in the social life of the villages. This meant, for example, that women had to obtain legal documentation in order to be able to sign official documents and obtain loans. Most rural women were not legally registered and the process of receiving legal documentation for rural women was complicated, particularly since most of them did not have their births registered and thus were officially 'non-existent'. By the end of 1996, PROZACHI had helped 1,368 women obtain their documents, and the process continued until the end of the project's mandate.[30]

Legalization of women's rights to assets, particularly in the form of land, has been of particular importance for projects in rural Brazil that are linked to the carrying out of extensive land reform. Approximately 4.5 million Brazilian women lack any type of documentation.[31]

This is just one example of the disadvantages poor rural women may face when it comes to access to credit. We have already touched upon several other barriers that influence women's possibilities to improve their situation. The precarious situation of many women becomes apparent when one considers the profile of a typical female rural borrower. This is a general profile that is almost identical around the globe:

- Women tend to be inexperienced borrowers.
- They usually request small loans.
- They are not normally involved in the development and extension programmes or structures that act as an interface with lending institutions.
- Widespread female illiteracy means that many are often incapable of following application procedures.

However, it has been shown that if women are offered credit – in connection with other services that help them to organize themselves in supportive, self-managing groups – and if they receive proper education and instruction related to handling credit, combined with other initiatives that may improve infrastructure, self-esteem and decision-making, women often turn out to be excellent users of credit. This fact can be explained through an analysis of prevalent gender roles. Since the traditional female role is to take care of the home, the children and the chores around the home, a woman is also prone

to invest in the domestic sphere, which is where most of her activities are carried out. A man, on the other hand, often has a more extended area of activity, and is more prone to invest in activities and schemes that are not always directly related to the domestic sphere. Generally speaking, a man is likely to take higher risks than a woman, in particular since he often has a more 'personalized' control over his income and is thus able to spend it in a way that not always has to meet with the approval of other members of the household. A man may also spend more on expenditures that are not directly related to his household, but more to his 'independent' and extrovert status, meaning that some money may be lost on drinking, gambling and other activities that do not benefit his family.

Many of the women who participate in IFAD-supported projects tend to invest in poultry and other small domesticated animals, pens and henhouses, foodstuffs and medicines, storage facilities, materials for handicraft, and labour-saving devices (for example, corn grinders, improved stoves and sewing machines). Nevertheless, women, particularly if they are organized, may invest in small enterprises and agricultural production, as well as in the marketing of such products. Men may also spend their credit on similar items and activities; however, they tend to spend a larger share of their credit on the improvement of fields and on various productivity-increasing inputs, as well as on machinery, vehicles and construction.

Much can be written about gender and credit, particularly within the context of IFAD-sponsored projects, where the credit component tends to be of particular importance. When the right conditions are created, women's borrowing increases and so does their self-esteem.[32] For example, in the MARENASS project in Peru:

> Women's groups were entrusted with the administration of small funds, providing small amounts of credit for the development of micro-businesses, such as agricultural production and livestock breeding and fattening. Some groups are also working to preserve biodiversity through the recovery of seeds of native species and the development of small nurseries. The fund has been successful: average capitalization is around 50 per cent. Ideas about social and family equity disseminated through gender and other types of training, combined with the increased empowerment of villagers, have led to a fairer distribution of benefits among the poorest. Women, especially, enjoy improved status due to training and their increased ability to manage funds. The greater visibility and prestige of women – of their productive and reproductive roles and contribution to the family – have also led to a more

equitable sharing of responsibility within families, further enhancing women's status and position. Women and children have more free time to spend on improving their living conditions and concentrating on education. Women will need to have access to further training in managing microcredit and micro-businesses as continued support for their roles as key decision-makers.[33]

## Targeting women: the PRODAP Support Programme

PRODAP-II, implemented in El Salvador between 2001 and 2007, may serve as an example of the promotion of income generation coupled with the improvement of poor rural women's empowerment and self-esteem. The programme made use of innovative methods to monitor and evaluate progress made in these areas.[34]

An analysis made of gender issues among the target population in the project area during the formulation phase of PRODAP-II revealed the existence of gender inequities and set the stage for justifying and designing comprehensive gender strategies. The proposed strategies were further developed during the implementation stage of the project. The gender analysis made it clear that even though the gendered divisions of labour were different from one community to another, they did exist and needed to be taken into account. In general, women were responsible for all household chores, although they received some assistance from their husbands with the collection of water and firewood, childcare and other chores. Both women and men were active in agriculture. The women worked with their husbands on most crops and only a few activities seemed to be male-dominated. Examples of the latter are soil preparation and bean cultivation. Each day after school, the children helped either their father or their mother with agricultural production or household activities. Men and women also dedicated themselves to other income-generating activities, such as cheese-making or the sale of bread, eggs, poultry and other products. Ten per cent of the adult women in the project area were household heads and, apart from the household chores, were responsible for all agricultural and livestock activities. Due to the many activities the women were involved in, on average they worked more hours a day than the men. As a consequence, they had little time for their personal development or for participation in community development matters, such as committees and training courses. A gender analysis of landed property demonstrated that of the landowners in the project area (they formed 40 per cent of the target group), only 11 per cent were women.

Because women had less access to land, their access to credit facilities was also more restricted. The recognition of women's participation in agricultural and income-generating activities is growing. Nevertheless, in the past they were often offered loans for activities that were not always economically viable. This resulted in higher levels of debt among the women than among the men. As regards illiteracy rates in the project area, 40 per cent of women and men were illiterate. About 25 per cent of the women had reproductive health problems.

In its efforts to ensure the equal participation of men and women and to reduce the gender inequities in the project area, the PRODAP-II project team decided to establish an affirmative action focused on extremely poor rural women, called the Support Programme for Women. There is a tendency for development projects to approach women's economic autonomy through the generation of income in a manner that is separated from the improvement of their self-esteem or empowerment. This often results in compromising the potential of the project's impact. The interesting aspect of PRODAP's Support Programme for Women is the integral approach through which it addresses gender equity and the disadvantaged position of poor rural women in the project area. The idea behind this form of intervention is that although the strengthening of women's economic autonomy is an important condition for reducing gender inequities, as an isolated strategy it does not suffice. Simultaneously, women's leadership capacities and their participation in family and communal decision-making need to be increased and their self-esteem needs to be improved. If one adds the positive effects of teaching women to read and write and the control they have gained over their reproductive health – two important aspects incorporated in the Support Programme – it is evident that the investments made by the project are contributing considerably to poverty reduction.

The selection criteria for female participants of the Support Programme were defined by the Gender Unit, which specifically tried to target poor women heads of household, the spouses of innovative farmers (who play a key role in PRODAP's strategy of human capital building), and women with leadership capacities that are recognized by their communities. Through the Support Programme, PRODAP tried to create a more equal balance between men and women project beneficiaries and to have a positive impact on women. Women's self-esteem, empowerment and economic autonomy received particular attention. The Support Programme has taken the concept of self-esteem to mean women's self-perception as active managers of their own development, who recognize the value of the tasks they perform, and who are aware of equal rights and a sense of personal security.

Empowerment is about the development of capacities to identify and express needs, increased independence in decision-making, enhanced access to and control over resources, and a greater participation and representation in community or rural productive organizations. Economic autonomy deals with women's increased capacities to choose and act independently, as well as more control of resources and thorough participation in decision-making over expenses.

PRODAP-II cooperated with rural organizations that had selected a number of women to participate in the Support Programme. The programme helped these women to develop a business plan, provided them with small non-reimbursable investments, and helped them with the marketing, administrative and product development aspects of their business. The women were also offered the chance to participate in literacy groups, a reproductive health programme and a leadership training programme. The Support Programme also stimulated solidarity and the potential to overcome the fear of belonging to an organization.

In addition to designing and implementing the Support Programme, PRODAP analysed its impact. Measuring economic autonomy is relatively easy, but up to now few projects have been able to measure the impact of project activities on empowerment and self-esteem. PRODAP, with the support of ProGender, measured empowerment through the construction of an index that included five indicators:[35]

- influence on decision-making: when decisions are always taken by both the man and the woman, or by the woman alone; or when decisions are always taken by the man;
- participation in social or productive organizations or informal groups;
- position on the board of directors of an organization;
- self-perception of the influence and control over decisions; and
- absence of violence against the woman.

The self-esteem of the participating women was measured with the help of three indicators:

- perception of one's capacities to exert leadership;
- absence of fear to express one's opinions and needs; and
- perception of one's capacity to achieve one's goals.

Although this was not an independent evaluation based on rigorous statistical methods, its results indicated that the Support Programme had a positive impact on empowerment and self-esteem among the participating women. The empowerment index showed that the women in the Support

Programme exhibited greater levels of control over decisions in their homes in comparison to women outside the programme (94 per cent against 74 per cent). They also had a more positive perception of their influence and control in the organizations of which they were members (69 per cent versus 38 per cent). With regard to the participation in decision-making and the absence of violence, however, no significant differences could be established between women who were in and those who were not in the programme. The analysis of levels of self-confidence demonstrated that almost 60 per cent of the women in the programme showed self-confidence, compared to 33 per cent of the other women. Also, considering income-generating activities, the programme had a significant impact: on an annual basis, the women in the Support Programme generated an average of almost US$1,500 more than did the women outside the programme.[36]

An additional analysis implemented by the project team showed that, even though the incomes generated by the newly established businesses were not very high, they represented a significant increase for the participating families' monthly income, particularly for the woman-headed households. With respect to the use of the income, the project concluded that the women themselves used approximately half of it, for medicine, clothes, footwear and personal care. All women employed part of their profits for the benefit of other family members and to pay for their food, health care, education and clothing. Approximately 40 per cent of the women reinvested in their business, for example in inventory and equipment.

## Persisting challenges for gender mainstreaming

Despite the lessons learned and the continuous exchange of experiences through the PROSGIP and ProGender programmes, projects still have problems when it comes to incorporating a gender equity approach. First of all, the project management team's gender sensitivity may still be inadequate. An evaluation mission to a Central American project whose first phase had applied a thorough gender approach encountered an example of this in the project's second phase. The local personnel and the productive organizations engaged in the project were generally well aware of the fact that all activities had to be directed to both men and women and that disaggregated gender statistics had to be kept. However, the general impression of the evaluating team was that the second phase was immersed in a managerial atmosphere characterized by a dominating patriarchal outlook that obstructed activities promoting positive changes in gender equity. For example, when it came to agricultural production and the

distribution of income, it was quite clear that it was the men who made the decisions, while women were responsible for everything concerning education and family health. The project's gender strategy paid no attention to the fact that capacity building had to take into account needs and concerns expressed by women. No attention was given to the particular time constraints of women or to the barriers they encounter when it comes to language skills and other requirements for optimal learning conditions. Records keeping track of the levels of participation reflected several shortcomings. In the almost 60 events that had been organized by the project, female participation was only 10 per cent, while female participation in productive activities was only 5 per cent.[37] These shortcomings illustrate the fact that a change of project management can easily derail mainstreaming efforts that have been initiated by previous regimes.

Another problem that can still be found in projects concerns the confusion about the conceptualization of gender. What, for example, should gender mainstreaming aim at? An interview with Elmer Barillas Klee, former director of the PROZACHI project in Guatemala, revealed:

> Since the project is going to be transferred to the municipalities, we are currently working with the final report, trying to describe the achievements of the various components of the project. What has caused us difficulties is finding the best way to deal with cross-cutting issues, like the question of gender equity. All technicians have received training in gender sensitization and, generally speaking, I assume everyone recognizes the importance of applying a gender approach. However, gender is an extremely complex concept to handle. Various gender experts have visited us on a regular basis, still … Now when we have to sum up the experiences, we find that the whole gender issue remains somewhat confusing. What are we in reality working with? Empowerment of women? Human rights? Poverty alleviation? How can we measure and present what we have achieved? We are often criticized for not doing enough when it comes to gender equity. Nevertheless, even if almost all our information is gender disaggregated it is still not always so easy to know how we may present and use the information in a practical and simple way. You can easily discern progress in the field of gender equity; nevertheless, gender experts continue to consider our achievements in a compartmentalized way. Even if they like to state that gender equity has to be addressed in all components, and we agree, we do not entirely understand how to do it.

The fast way in which PROSGIP and ProGender have learned lessons and subsequently changed conceptualizations and strategies may also give rise to confusion. Rodolfo Lauritto, Senior Programme Officer at UNOPS, observed:

> A new phase of the gender programme is now being implemented. However, I fear that the transition from the PROSGIP phase was done a bit too fast and maybe somewhat too carelessly. Probably a longer period of reflection upon and recollection of experiences from PROSGIP was needed. More attention ought to have been paid to what really has been achieved in the field. Now there is an apparent danger that models and frameworks are allowed to steer the efforts to implement gender equity, instead of supporting and complementing what is done in the field. The problem in the field is not so much remaining prejudices, but rather a certain bewilderment concerning the advice and instructions offered by the different technical entities supported by IFAD. Prefabricated patterns ought to be avoided. Processes of gender mainstreaming ought to be allowed to develop in accordance with their own pace. This is more important than ticking off lists with indicators.
>
> It is important to avoid falling into the trap of vertical action. Local capacity ought to be supported and trusted. If, for example, positive discrimination works, let it continue, support the process and see what happens. You need a sensitive ear and to leave space for project participants to come up with their own initiatives and solutions. There is a risk that people in the field are flooded with too many concepts and directions. You have to keep in mind that IFAD has learned step by step, through processes. That means that local capacity constantly has to be revisited. I am afraid that too much trust may be put in the capacity of the same experts, people who have been active ever since a gender focus started to be implemented in the projects. They did a good job, but any programme needs renovation. I suspect that IFAD too often asks, 'Who is going to do it?' instead of asking, 'What needs be done?'

An additional problem concerns the position and the work of the gender expert. Elmer Barillas Klee of PROZACHI explained:

> Gender experts are generally focused only on gender. You may still hear from some technicians and beneficiaries that they assume that some of these ladies are working with a particular agenda in mind, that they are too dogmatic. I know that such opinions often are

misconceptions, but – after all – it is something that occasionally is discussed among both technicians and beneficiaries. What often works the best is an efficient, hands-on approach.

At times, project staff may assume that the appointment of a gender specialist automatically guarantees gender mainstreaming and they do not see the necessity of changing their own working methods. Timoteo López gave the following description of a project he was evaluating in 2004:

> A multidisciplinary team has a broad spectrum of expertise but, nevertheless, suffers from an obvious lack of knowledge of the social, economic and organizational realities of the local population. Almost all of the team members take refuge in their academic speciality but ignore the importance of gender, a theme they in reality know very little about. The mandate of implementing gender in all components is limited to demanding that the person in charge of gender do all gender-related work. Component coordinators wait for the gender specialist to do something, but they do not come up with any initiatives of their own accord. They refuse to enter into the subtleness of gender issues and prefer to turn a blind eye to the machismo that reigns in the project. For example, a collaborating NGO offered an excellent opportunity to incorporate men and women within a community initiative. Nevertheless, the resistance of the head of the natural resources component and the technical incapacity of the gender specialist in this particular field meant that the project missed this excellent opportunity to do something effective for gender equity, in spite of the fact that they had all resources at hand.
>
> A theme that few staff comment upon, but it is still quite well known, is that the professional personnel and the technicians of the project management and some of the co-executing organizations seem to nurture a hidden fear of the capacities of rural women to incorporate themselves in productive work. This fear is due to an insecurity that stems from a lack of experience when it comes to engaging oneself with local men and women in dialogue and real interactions concerning gender issues. Instead, the professionals escape to a theoretical outlook that is not at all based on any field experiences. ProGender has made substantive contributions, directly supporting the gender specialist and indirectly with very valuable support material that has been put at the disposal of the project personnel. However, the gender specialist has not been able to

> persuade the people in charge of the components to read and study the material, and much less to try to implement it. They refuse to commit themselves to any substantial efforts to improve their capacities and skills for mainstreaming gender in their daily activities.

Though we should take these shortcomings very seriously, in general the IFAD-supported projects in the Latin American and Caribbean region demonstrate a positive trend when it comes to gender awareness and efforts to mainstream gender. In 2003, 43 per cent of the projects had a special budget for gender mainstreaming and 63 per cent had employed a full-time gender expert. The same year, 53 per cent implemented a specific gender equity strategy, and the majority of the projects had gender-disaggregated data for monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless, only two out of 46 ongoing projects have carried out impact studies of gender equity measures.[38]

Each project has its own prerequisites, its own dynamic. Most people carrying out their various tasks and missions in IFAD-supported projects do very impressive work. Their dedication, idealism and professionalism often work wonders despite all difficulties, not only bureaucratic problems, but also natural disasters, armed conflicts, criminality and diseases that affect them and the people and communities with whom they work. Most of them work incessantly and yet are still able to be welcoming, open-minded and positive. Asked about their work, they mostly express gratitude for being able to do what they do. Many of them particularly stress the unique learning experience it has been working side by side with poor rural people.

One of the most important prerequisites to incorporating gender in a project is the commitment of the project director. It is not without reason that one essential feature of PROSGIP was to invite project directors to participate in the preparatory meetings and subsequently in the international seminars. This was probably an important entry point for the adoption of gender mainstreaming within the various projects. Ingrid Schreuel said:

> The process of incorporating gender equity, to which both the PROSGIP and the ProGender programmes have contributed, has taught us the importance of the political will of the project director and of encouraging his/her understanding of the importance of gender equity for reaching the project objectives. The fact that gender equity is part of IFAD's mandate, that project personnel are trained, and that field personnel have skills and tools become irrelevant if the project director is not willing to give the theme his or her blessing.

The political will of project management to truly empower rural men and women and to integrate gender in all levels of the project cycle is essential to the success of a project.[39] Cesar Sotomayor – coordinator of the Development of the Puno-Cuzco Corridor Project and former director of MARENASS – recounted the following:

> While I was director of the MARENASS project, two years after having started the project implementation, I had the chance to participate in PROSGIP's workshop in La Serena, in Chile. During the period I acted as director of the project, it became evident that this workshop helped us to incorporate gender concerns throughout project activities, particularly since the three regional coordinators were also present at the event. Our enthusiasm spread to the rest of the team, something that helped the inclusion of gender in our daily activities, as well as contributing to changes in attitudes in our personal and professional lives.
>
> Currently, I am working as coordinator of the Peruvian CORREDOR project. The team has a positive attitude, and the fact that the team is an almost 50-50 mix of men and women has been helpful in incorporating gender in an almost natural way in our two operational components. Both gender equity and cultural identity are themes that are continuously valued and enriched.

The staff of IFAD-supported projects have generally been knowledgeable about ways to implement gender mainstreaming. Nevertheless, in spite of all efforts to inform and train extension workers and beneficiaries in gender sensitivity, it may still happen that project staff in different countries and regions encounter difficulties in conceiving what is really meant by the concept. Some of them continue to address gender issues by stating something like 'the project is directed to both male and female beneficiaries and will in an equitable way include them in the carrying out of the various components'. Such a simplified approach to mainstreaming can have the result that women get lost in the current. It has been all too common for gender equity to be added to programmes and projects as an afterthought, or an adjustment. In documents produced by various projects, gender has a tendency to 'pop up' as an additional issue, often included because some checklist of requirements had to be satisfied. The fact that this may still happen is a viable argument for continuing to address gender issues by continuous training efforts and methods and measures to assure that gender approaches are mainstreamed in all IFAD projects.

Another apparent danger related to an inadequate knowledge of or interest in gender issues is the fact that several institutions have interpreted mainstreaming as an indication that specific gender approaches are no longer necessary. Accordingly, earlier efforts to address gender issues have been obliterated or trimmed down. Gender desks and professionals acting as gender focal points have disappeared, while special budget lines for gender equity have been eliminated. Such tendencies have to be scrutinized, particularly since the issue of gender equity is essential for all development work. No one can afford to ignore it.

## Endnotes

1/ See, for example, MAG (2005).

2/ *Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer*.

3/ The following description of the cycle of IFAD's operations is based on IFAD (2003:3), pp. 13-14, and Báez Lacayo (2001).

4/ Gender mainstreaming concerns must be included in Article 3 of the loan agreement that recalls section 7.13 of the General Conditions as actions that are binding for the borrower. Gender equity concerns must also be included in schedule 3A, which includes additional covenants that are used to describe actions for gender mainstreaming (IFAD (2003:3), p. 13).

5/ In El Salvador such a workshop generally lasts three days, one of which is dedicated to discussing the project's overall gender strategy as well as the particular gender strategy of each project component. The first is presented by the project director while the latter is presented by the person in charge of coordinating each component. The cooperating institution participates and the process of monitoring and evaluation of the project's impact is also discussed. In addition, relevant issues included in the loan agreement and in the project appraisal document are addressed. The workshop is attended by community representatives, NGOs, potential service providers, government officials and others. Recently, representatives of the Salvadoran diaspora in the United States have been invited to participate.

6/ The project's main goal was to reduce rural poverty in a sustainable and gender-equitable manner, offering rural households a chance to enhance their income by helping them to recognize and realize economic opportunities. The project was cofinaced with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

7/ IFAD (2001:1).

8/ Ibid.

9/ *Cerrando Brecha - Manual para orientar a organizaciones rurales hacia la equidad de género.* IFAD/ProGénero/CODERSA (2003).

10/ See Ortner (1974).

11/ See, for example, Mies and Shiva (1993) and Harcourt (1994).

12/ More than 100 heads of state met in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which is also known as the Earth Summit. UNCED was convened to address problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development. The assembled leaders adopted Agenda 21, a 300-page plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century (http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html) (visited June 2006).

13/ When the follow-up session on the Rio Summit was staged in Johannesburg during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, a major lobby organized by the women's caucus, in collaboration with supportive governments and NGOs, succeeded in implementing a language that referenced human rights and environmental management. Commitments to secure women's rights to inherit land were specifically included in the action plans that were established in Johannesburg. Furthermore, the WSSD Plan of Implementation called for improved national and regional information, including data disaggregated by sex and gendered indicators. Central to the plan is also gender equality in education, referring to the MDG target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.

14/ *Proyecto de Desarrollo de Comunidades Rurales Pobres*.

15/ Arriechi, Tovar and Salcedo (2004), pp. 95-103.

16/ Anderson and Oliva (2004), pp. 51-61.

17/ For example, in Guatemala, the selection and preparation of *xate* (a decorative fern with a high market value) can be carried out at village level, something that has generally been done by wholesalers and exporters in the capital. Women may also cultivate and care for *xate* closer to their homesteads. It is currently collected under strenuous and non-sustainable conditions in inhospitable areas. Other prime material for various forms of handicraft and food items could be collected and cared for by both men and women in much more sustainable ways (Lundius (2004)).

18/ FIDA/ProGénero/PROMER (2003); Ypeij (2000), pp. 85-97.

19/ Information from the technical staff of PADEMER in Colombia, quoted in FIDA/ProGénero/PROMER (2003), pp. 23-24.

20/ See, for example, Menjívar and Pérez Sáinz (1993), pp. 79, 84 and Berger (1988), p. 26.

21/ The participants were 31 small entrepreneurs (14 men and 17 women) from 16 projects, together with 5 project directors (3 men and 2 women), 14 technicians (10 women and 4 men) from 10 projects, as well as PROMER and ProGender coordinators, and an IFAD representative (FIDA/ProGénero/PROMER (2003), p. 15). PROMER stands for Programme for the Support of Rural Microenterprise in Latin America and the Caribbean (*Programa de Apoyo a la Microempresa Rural de América Latina y el Caribe*). It is an IFAD-financed programme in Chile that was established in 2000 to support rural microentrepreneurs and small producers.

22/ Quoted in FIDA/ProGénero/PROMER (2003), p. 26. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

23/ Ibid., pp. 21-32.

24/ Ibid., pp. 21-32.

25/ Ibid., p. 32. Citation translated from Spanish by the authors.

26/ IFAD/PROMER/ProGénero/IICA (2004).

27/ IFAD (1998:4), p. 33.

28/ Ibid., p. 34.

29/ *Proyecto de Desarrollo Agrícola de Pequeños Productures en Zacapa y Chiquimula*, an IFAD-supported project implemented in Guatemala between 1997 and 2003.

30/ IFAD (1998:4), p. 47.

31/ Projeto Dom Hélder Câmara (2003), p. 18.

32/ Several IFAD publications present accounts of successful financial efforts and reproduce statements made by individuals who have benefited from them. One example is a video and an accompanying booklet from the Salvadoran PROCHALATE project, in which men and women recount how they benefited from the increased financial security that was generated by the project (IFAD 2002:2).

33/ IFAD (2004).

34/ This section is based on IFAD (2006:2), Appendix 11.

35/ Bello (2005).

36/ Ibid.

37/ Based on an interview with Ingrid Schreuel, who participated in the evaluation of this particular project.

38/ PROPESUR and PRODAP. ProGénero (2004), pp. 7-8.

39/ IFAD (2000:1), p. 16.

Elisabeth Ortiz Castillo (12 years old) plays with Esmerech Eleine Guisado (14 years old) in the local schoolyard in Moyabamba Baja, in the Andahuaylas district of Peru.

Chapter 8

# Facing emerging trends and challenges

So far we have described the pursuit of a development agenda that aims to close the gap that still exists between men and women in rural communities, particularly when it comes to equitable access to assets and active participation in decision-making. Emphasis has been on increasing women's self-esteem, offering them access to capacity building, technical assistance and credit, as well as promoting their active participation in decision-making fora. However, less attention has been paid to other key issues that may obstruct women's advancement and gender equality. Important issues that national governments and development agencies ought to consider while designing rural poverty alleviation programmes include improving and safeguarding women's health, especially in view of the global threat of HIV/AIDS. People's health affects their ability to contribute to and benefit from development programmes and should thus be a concern for anyone involved in their implementation. Furthermore, women's health – and particularly their reproductive health – is often undermined by social prejudices and thus should be confronted from a gendered perspective. Despite advances in modern medical treatment, women's general health seems to be worsening in some parts of the world because of their lack of access to health care. This is especially true for sexually transmitted diseases; the situation is the most serious in the developing world.[1] This phenomenon, like many others that occur in rural areas, is to a high degree also linked to globalization and, as a consequence, to rural-urban and international migration.

Processes of globalization are now reaching the most remote corners of the world and provoking changes in local power structures and means of subsistence. Although globalization offers many opportunities for rural people – such as new forms of labour and the chance to migrate – it also brings with it new challenges and the danger of social exclusion. Moreover, globalization processes are far from being gender neutral.

In this chapter, we will highlight a complex of problems centred on two main clusters: i) women's health, HIV/AIDS and prostitution; and ii) women's employment as domestic workers and in export assembly plants. We will relate these two sets of issues with what we conceive as a very important nexus, namely rural-to-urban migration, as well as women's agency and control over their own existence. While focusing on migration, we will discuss an interlinked phenomenon: the increasing trend towards single-parent households, which is overwhelmingly dominated by the emergence of woman-headed families. We will argue that a gender perspective is essential to understanding these emerging trends and challenges, and such a perspective is crucial for the design of future rural development programmes.

## Gender and health

An organization that is implementing projects within a gendered reality often encounters challenges that are outside its mandate and that have previously been delegated to institutions whose areas of expertise accommodate that challenge. For example, women's health has been a priority for specialized development agencies and NGOs, while rural development organizations concentrate on investments and productive activities. However, as the physical condition of all participants lingers in the background of all rural development projects, it is very important to include health issues in debates concerning gender equity. A woman, or a man, who is in bad health will not be able to benefit from credit, technical assistance or capacity building. Furthermore, health concerns devour a vast amount of rural income, particularly in regions where it is hard to find efficient and cheap health care, if any at all. Preventive health care is of the utmost importance if rural inhabitants are to be able to benefit from any development effort. Dora Vasquez, who had been responsible for the gender unit of the PROZACHI project, explained during an interview in Quetzaltepeque, Guatemala:

> If you ask me about a grave problem related to gender roles and gender equity in this region, I have to mention women's health as a burning issue. Women often set aside their own needs for those of the family and this causes poverty to hit them particularly hard. Before they seek medical attention for themselves, they are often prone to prioritize care and medicines for their children and husbands. Poor women are often reluctant to allow themselves such 'luxuries' and 'expenses'. Accordingly, they cover up their ailments and medical problems. Of course men do the same, but probably for somewhat different reasons – they want to show themselves to be strong and in control of everything. When the body does not cope with the hard work, they may perceive it as a sign of weakness and thus a cause for shame.
>
> It is maybe the same way with many women. What is particularly difficult to detect and get women to confess to are vaginal diseases, like sexually transmitted diseases, but also all kinds of infections and other ailments connected with the reproductive organs. A particularly common problem, one that is considered shameful, is vaginal prolapse, which is often caused by recurrent pregnancies and complicated deliveries. Vaginal prolapse is very common among women in this area. If they reveal such a problem, women are afraid that their men will leave them, or cause problems, so it is only natural that they are not likely to talk about such sufferings with strangers. And … of course, the principal problem is always the money. For example, it costs 3,000 *quetzales*[2] to operate on a vaginal prolapse. On top of that we have all the problems connected with malnutrition, parasites, anaemia … you name it. Poor people often suffer from bad health and I honestly think that women and children are worse off than men.

A very significant health- and poverty-related problem is the recurrent pregnancies of rural women, who often have to work hard while pregnant and soon after delivery. At the same time, maternity welfare tends to be deficient and deliveries complicated, even dangerous. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 52 per cent of the 18 million pregnancies each year are unplanned, and 21 per cent of these pregnancies end in abortion.[3] Low social status limits women's access to economic resources and basic education, impeding their ability to make important decisions on childbearing, health and nutrition. Without knowledge of reproductive alternatives, women cannot demand what has become a recognized right for women and men who live in industrialized nations: to be informed and to have access to safe,

affordable and effective methods of family planning of their own choosing. Family planning is about preventing needless deaths and increasing the well-being of the entire family.[4] It is one of several means to empower women and their partners to make choices about how many children they want to have and when. To allow, or not to allow, family planning ought not to be an issue for political or religious debates. Governments that hinder or fail to provide adequate resources for family planning are in reality contributing to pointless deaths, shattered families, increased poverty and unnecessary suffering. Despite this, contraceptive methods are advised against by powerful political and religious organizations, and abortion is still illegal in nearly all Latin American and Caribbean countries. A woman's right to pleasurable, coercion-free sexuality is difficult to address in a Latin American cultural and social context. This is an area where the renewed crusade of the religious right in Latin America has shown no mercy, constantly supporting anti-choice movements. The catechism of the Catholic Church uses strong language when it comes to condemning birth control:

> […] 'every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible' is intrinsically evil.[5]

Movements that focus on anti-choice positions cloak their condemnations in the guise of a defence of 'traditional family values'. From such a viewpoint, women easily come to be defined as mothers passing on and being attached to values that for centuries have been defined by a conservative patriarchy.[6]

However, not all the blame for obstructing effective measures to promote reproductive health can be put on the Catholic Church. Other religious organizations, including several with Evangelical/Protestant convictions, also prevent efforts to promote family planning. Evangelical churches are growing very rapidly throughout the continent, and many of the proselytizing churches and sects are influenced by views that are against birth control,[7] though there are several organizations affiliated with Protestant churches that promote family planning. Furthermore, representatives of several governments have been instrumental in preventing issues concerning women's reproductive and sexual rights from being put on the agenda during international and bilateral meetings, discussions and negotiations, or included in conventions, appeals and other guiding documents. For example, government representatives hindered

several gender issues (such as questions concerning family planning and women's sexual rights) from being included in the MDGs. Consensus on the MDGs was achieved at the expense of several important women's rights issues that were removed from the agenda.[8]

With few exceptions, Latin American countries have abortion legislation that generally dates back to the early 20th century. Only Cuba and Guyana allow abortion without restrictions other than a limit imposed on the period during which women can readily access the procedure. In Cuba, parental authorization/notification is required.[9] In other Latin American countries, abortion is addressed in the penal code and the prohibition against it is suspended only in extreme circumstances (i.e. a life-threatening situation for the woman, a fatal defect or a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest).[10]

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that in Latin America and the Caribbean, 3.7 million women experience an unsafe abortion every year and that almost 4,000 die from related complications. It is estimated that complications arising from unsafe abortions account for 17 per cent of all maternal mortality; for every 1,000 women of child bearing age (15-44 years) in the region, an estimated 29 unsafe abortions are performed each year.[11] During an interview, Eulogia Hurtado Díaz, President of Andarapa Peasant Community in Peru, explained:

> As a woman and as a mayor working in a very poor area, I know what it means to have more children than you can feed, at the same time as the Church and other influential authorities deny you the right to use family planning. The problem is extremely sensitive here in Peru and I lament that so many people tell me that I am not allowed to talk about it in a loud voice. The reproductive issue is extremely important for all of us poor women.

Peru provides a sad example of the way in which women, and especially poor rural women, are excluded from controlling their own fertility. Peruvian legislation prohibits abortions, despite the fact that unwanted pregnancies and alarming rates of improperly performed abortions comprise a serious social and medical problem. Some 56 per cent of Peruvian women of reproductive age do not use any kind of family planning method. Of the women who underwent an abortion during 2001 and suffered from serious complications, 68 per cent were rural women.[12] In 2001, it was estimated that 352,000 abortions were carried out in Peru; that is, one abortion for each live birth, meaning that 5.2 per cent of Peruvian women of reproductive age underwent an abortion in that year.[13]

While relating the theme of women's reproductive rights to the issue of gender equity, it becomes clear that women suffer from patriarchal attitudes and discrimination, hindering them from taking charge of their own life situation and sexuality. However, while discussing contraceptives and reproductive health, it is extremely important to stress that men are just as much a part of the picture and they have to take full responsibility for their actions and opinions. National governments and development organizations come into the equation because women's childbearing has an important influence on the welfare of rural families: it affects women's work capacity, the health, planning and economy of their households, and their chances of benefiting from the support offered by development organizations.[14]

## Gender and HIV/AIDS

The presence and/or threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is intimately related to gender issues and their influence on the health and economic situation of rural families. In the international development debate, the ravages of the pandemic on African societies have naturally been more in focus than the effects in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the western hemisphere, considered as a whole, the pandemic has not yet reached disastrous proportions. Most Latin American and Caribbean countries have developed strategies to combat the epidemic, and in recent years, the number of cases of HIV infection has not risen dramatically. However, this is no reason for not being well prepared for a situation that at any moment could rapidly become aggravated. HIV/AIDS thrives on poverty and gender inequity. Several Latin American and Caribbean countries present a well prepared hot bed for the rapid spread of the epidemic, and the present state of the development of HIV/AIDS is not entirely reassuring.

It is estimated that 1.9 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are living with HIV. In 2005 alone, an estimated 180,000 individuals contracted HIV. In the same year, around 86,000 people died of AIDS-related complications in the region, making it the leading cause of death among adults aged between 15 and 44.[15] HIV prevalence differs significantly from region to region. The Caribbean is the second-most affected region in the world after Africa, with an HIV prevalence of 1.6 per cent of the population.[16] HIV prevalence varies among countries of the region, with Haiti having the highest number of people living with HIV in the region: 190,000. HIV prevalence among adults in Haiti was estimated at 3.8 per cent in 2005. Less than 20 per cent of the infected population has access to drug treatment.[17]

It is often said that HIV/AIDS is an urban phenomenon. Although it often proliferates in urban areas, the African situation shows that rural areas are also very hard hit. The worst African scenarios may serve as a warning of what might happen in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. In the worst hit areas of Africa, HIV-infected individuals return to their places of origin in the countryside, thus not only spreading the disease and leaving their orphaned children behind, but also putting an extra burden on their relatives and on the health facilities, which in rural areas of Africa (as in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean) are fewer in number and poorer in quality, and where testing facilities are scarce.[18]

When HIV/AIDS spreads in the countryside, food production diminishes rapidly. For example, it was calculated that in Zimbabwe in 1999, HIV/AIDS led to the loss of 61 per cent of the maize crop, 47 per cent of the cotton crop and 49 per cent of the vegetable crop.[19] In several African nations, the death of people of productive age leaves the elderly and children alone to fight poverty. Income drops due to the need to care for sick relatives, to pay funeral costs and to feed additional mouths, while already impoverished families are forced to care for orphans. Poor households in dire situations often have to hire labour to tend and harvest their fields. Theft and other types of property misappropriation, in combination with emergency sales of land and cattle, are exacerbating the situation. Furthermore, members of HIV-infected households have difficulties in finding employment and access to credit. Impoverished people cannot afford to send children to school and the labour constraints force children in HIV-stricken families to work full-time. Woman-headed households, often with elderly women in charge, or even child-headed households, with rising numbers of orphans to care for, are increasing in many areas. In summary, when social services and infrastructure are poorly developed in rural areas, these areas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

All too often, HIV prevention fails women and girls because of their lack of social and economic power. In Latin America and the Caribbean, HIV prevalence has been related to prevailing gender notions that associate masculinity with sexual prowess. Femininity is associated with sexual passivity and innocence, and with motherhood.[20] These cultural constructions increase the vulnerability of both men and women to infection with HIV. Unmarried women's access to information on sexuality is hindered, because such knowledge questions their decency and innocence. There are significant barriers to women's exercising control over their sexuality. Among these is the norm for women to be naive and to avoid taking the initiative in sexual interactions, engaging in them only with

the aim of pleasing their male partners, a behaviour that is combined with the great importance given to motherhood for married women.[21]

Poverty adds to the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS, because poor women are much more likely to sell or exchange sex for money, goods or food. Besides, gender notions not only increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, but also affect the socio-economic impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Women as primary caretakers often have to carry the burden of caring for household members who are infected with HIV/AIDS or for orphaned children. At the same time, due to gender inequalities, their access to health services and treatment is reduced, a situation that is aggravated by women's lack of economic means.[22]

The effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in various African and Asian countries should serve as a dire warning to other regions of the world, indicating the utmost importance of promoting rural development and preparedness in the form of strengthening social, political, human and cultural capital, increasing income and improving rural infrastructure, and (not least) promoting gender equity. The formidable threat of HIV/AIDS, and its impact on economic growth and the well-being of the rural population, ought to be highlighted and addressed in all rural development projects. International development organizations and national governments need to focus on finding ways to counteract and/or prevent the spread of the pandemic and its devastating effects.

## Gender and prostitution

While addressing gender issues, particularly such sensitive areas as reproductive health and women's sexuality, it is common that development workers are unaware of, or avoid perceiving, a highly visible phenomenon that touches the core of distorted gender relations, namely prostitution. While discussing gender relations in a rural development context, it is quite uncommon for this theme to be put on the agenda. Nevertheless, prostitution and brothels are highly visible in the Latin American and the Caribbean cultural context and daily life, while commercial sex is visualized through a wide range of cultural expressions. It is not only in paintings – such as the cheerful brothel scenes depicted by Colombia's great painter, Fernando Botero – that we encounter prostitution. Many of the different art forms that blossom in the rich cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean provide other examples.[23] One could say that prostitution forms an intrinsic part of the culture of the region and that its widespread existence is often related to machismo, male sexuality and violence against women.[24] The sex industry in

many Latin American and Caribbean countries is growing, exploiting not only poor women and men, but children as well. One of many similar stories told about child abuse in relation to prostitution is the following:

> Adriana was born in Crato, Brazil when her mother was only 14 years old. Her mother's family was ashamed and refused to accept the situation, so they sent the young pregnant girl to a house where women in prostitution lived with their babies. After Adriana was born, seeing no other options, her mother remained in the house and became a child in prostitution herself. Adriana went to live with her grandparents and two uncles. When Adriana was 7, her mother married a man who was able to provide for them and she had a short period of happiness. But two years later when her stepfather died, her mother returned to prostitution. Adriana, along with her new little stepbrother, went back to live with her grandparents and her uncles. […] When she moved back to her grandparents' home, Adriana was sexually abused by her two uncles. She ran away with her stepbrother and stayed with a friend in Fortaleza, one of the main tourist resorts on the north-eastern coast of Brazil. Many young people in Fortaleza have little education and few employment opportunities, and so they see prostitution as the only economic option. At the age of only 13, Adriana herself became a child in prostitution through her friend's family who were involved in the trade.[25]

According to the Preda Foundation,[26] prostitution among the millions of street children[27] in Latin America is a consequence of the region's poverty. A 1999 study of 300 street children by Nicaragua's Family Ministry revealed that more than 80 per cent of the children had started to work as prostitutes to support themselves and to buy drugs during the year under investigation.[28] Latin American and Caribbean prostitution long ago ceased to serve an exclusively local clientele. The expansion of Latin American and Caribbean sex tourism has continued unabated during the last decade, partly as a result of the promotion of tourism as a development strategy. Resource-scarce regions, where tourism has experienced considerable support from the government, have proven to be fertile areas for the growth of sex tourism. While views of sex-for-sale between consenting adults may differ,[29] at least the arena of child sex tourism ought to be offensive to all human beings. The Swedish NGO ECPAT has on several occasions pointed to the severity of the problem. In their countries of origin, few tourist sex offenders are considered as either paedophiles or criminals, and they would probably not view themselves as such either. It is mainly the alien status

they obtain in the countries they visit that makes them capable of abusing children. The fact that they tend to perceive themselves as being confronted with a 'different culture' apparently fosters feelings of superiority and invulnerability.[30] ECPAT estimates that worldwide more than one million children, many of them in Latin American countries, enter the sex trade annually. In 2001, the Colombian Ministry of Justice reported that there were at least 25,000 child prostitutes in that country.[31] In 1999, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the 'high incidence of exploitation of children in Costa Rica, related to tourism';[32] in the same year, *Casa Alianza*, a non-profit advocacy group for street children in Mexico and Central America, estimated that some 5,000 street children in Honduras were involved in sex tourism. Similar problems exist in Paraguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the Dominican Republic.[33]

Although it may be argued that issues associated with prostitution are alien to the context of gender mainstreaming within rural development projects, we nevertheless consider it important. Rural and urban phenomena are often viewed and discussed as if they concerned worlds apart. However, towns and countrysides are intimately connected. Even if prostitution is almost habitually referred to as an urban phenomenon, it exists in the countryside as well, although in a rural setting prostitution may have features that are different from those in an urban environment.[34] Attitudes and culturally determined behaviour formed in rural areas reflect and interact with urban world views. Furthermore, it is often people with a rural background – who as a result of their migrant status and lack of contacts, legal protection and knowledge – are forced to accept occupations that leave them open to abuse, such as prostitution. If gender-consciousness training in rural areas discussed and paid attention to gender-related abuse in urban areas, rural-urban migrants might be better prepared for the gender-related hardships that often await them in towns and cities. Furthermore, any discussion of gender-related phenomena needs to take into account the economic and sociocultural basis for gender-related discrimination and abuse, irrespective of their urban or rural settings and origins.

Prostitution is to a high degree supported by socio-economic conditions in rural areas that force young people to migrate to urban slums, where many of them encounter obstructions to progress and the attainment of a steady income. In their quest for better opportunities abroad, as well as within their own country, many women migrate with the hope of finding a secure income, only to find themselves trapped in prostitution. Thus, gender inequality could be a powerful force behind migration, as women are unable to meet their needs and expectations in their communities of origin.

## Gender and migration

Migration is significantly reshaping traditional social and economic structures of rural communities, in both positive and negative ways.[35] Development organizations that support poor rural families in overcoming poverty soon find that essential members of these families are making their living abroad, far away from their dependants. A fairly new challenge for those who are trying to address rural poverty is to take these new social and economic realities into consideration and to integrate them into innovative strategies for promoting rural development. The complexities of the migration phenomenon need to be effectively incorporated into the development agendas of both developed and developing countries, as well as those of multilateral organizations.[36]

Approximately 25 million individuals from Latin America and the Caribbean are living abroad, mainly in the United States, Canada or Europe.[37] There is also large-scale intra-regional migration. Both urban and rural areas are impacted by the migration flow. Most towns are receiving a constant flow of migrants from rural areas; many of these migrants consider the towns to be stations on the rural-urban-international migration route.[38] However, due to improved communication and the presence of relatives and friends abroad, it is becoming more and more common for migrants to initiate their travels abroad directly from their home village. Cheaper forms of communication, information exchange and travel make it possible for most migrants to continue to maintain strong ties and frequent contacts with their communities of origin. Today's migrants do not have to leave their home country thinking that they will never see their relatives and their communities again. Accordingly, while cooperating with local communities, development workers soon become aware of the fact that even villages that are apparently isolated are affected by the economic and sociocultural influences of the diaspora.

As in all other social contexts, gender plays an important role in migration. Looking at migrants from a gender perspective, it is interesting to note that international migrants are perceived as being predominantly male, despite the fact that women's share of international migration is steadily increasing.[39] There is a general trend towards a 'feminization' of international migration, and this trend affects all components of migration flows. In 2000, nearly half of the international migration flow was composed of women.[40]

Women who migrate and work outside the home tend to value their self-sufficiency. Many become aware that their voice carries at least as much weight as those of their male relatives. For example, while considering a return to their country of origin after saving their earnings for several years,

many Dominican women migrants question the possibility of reintegrating themselves in paternalistic household prototypes since it may mean giving up their new-found social and economic independence.[41] It is important to note that while women migrants find themselves empowered in the new country, they often face great challenges in balancing their new way of life with the way of life in their country of origin. Women migrants abroad often face long working hours, financial obligations (including sending remittances to the relatives they left behind), family responsibilities (raising their children in the country of settlement, or dealing with guilt and worries over having left their children behind with relatives) and acculturation issues (including discrimination).

One of the social effects of migration is that it changes the traditional make-up of families, thus influencing parent-child relations. In certain regions (and especially in rural areas), age ratios change, as do gender roles and relations.[42] Several studies have explored the social and psychological effects on families that have been left behind by women migrants, and found that the social costs of migration may be high in terms of exacerbating social problems, including juvenile delinquency and marital break-ups.[43]

Among the more beneficial results of rural migration is the money the migrants send home. Most men and women who leave their home and family to work in another place, either in their own country or abroad, tend to send money to those who remain behind, particularly if they feel committed to maintaining their children, spouse or parents. Both men and women may be away from home for years, trying to save money to build a house or set up a business. Men and women may also leave their households to do seasonal work on plantations; men in particular may be away during agricultural low seasons to take up unskilled work for a limited time in urban centres, working in mines, factories, construction, in the transport sector, or as soldiers or security guards.

Compared with the total volume of worldwide remittances,[44] the Latin America and the Caribbean region is the main recipient: in 2004, for example, it received US$36.9 billion.[45] For most migrants, the simple explanation for sending money 'home' is probably their dedication to their family, who continue to struggle against poverty. It appears that migrants who remit the most (and most often) are generally of working age,[46] have children or parents back in the country of origin, and have been in the country of settlement long enough to earn enough to support themselves as well as send money home. Migration occurs as a result of decisions taken by families, and migrants are often linked with their families by an implicit 'contract' that guarantees their loyalty to and part of their income for the

family in exchange for its support of the migration decision.[47] Each year, the average Latin American or Caribbean migrant in the United States sends approximately 10 per cent of his/her income back to the country of origin in the form of remittances.[48]

Gender is a key factor in the likelihood of remittances being sent and received, and becomes relevant in both the economic and social effects of migration.[49] In many Central American and Caribbean countries, some agricultural communities are changing from being male-dominated to being female-dominated. Although the 'feminization' of agriculture in these countries could be seen as a positive trend, it is important to recognize that most of these rural women must still bear additional household and family responsibilities. As a result, their daily workload is increased. This situation rarely confers more power to women in the domestic sphere or in village decision-making, which tends to remain under male control even during increased male migration.

A study on the use of remittances in Central America found that among the families with migrants abroad, the incidence of woman-headed households was much higher than among families without migrants.[50] Accordingly, in Central America, the woman head of household plays an important role in the use of remittances. While considering worldwide migration, there are relatively few studies looking at the development potential of migration and remittances from a gender perspective, and relatively few development actors are implementing programmes that are aimed at migrants and have a gender perspective. A complete understanding of the development potential of migration and remittances will not be possible until gender issues are properly addressed in current studies of the phenomenon. One obstacle to a comprehensive analysis of migration and remittance issues from a gender perspective is the inadequacy of many of the available statistics, which to a large extent continue to be gender-neutral.

## Domestic work and *maquiladoras*

The majority of 'unskilled' women rural migrants end up engaged in either the informal sector that develops around marginalized areas of urban centres, as domestic workers or in the expanding sector of export assembly plants.[51] In this section, we will highlight gender patterns within the areas of domestic services and *maquiladoras*. The reason for shedding some light on areas that apparently do not concern the rural reality is our conviction that while addressing gender issues in rural areas, it is important to try to promote a holistic view in order to discern patterns of a gendered discourse

that permeates an entire society. Furthermore, as mentioned above, since most of the domestic and *maquiladora* labour markets are furnished to a great extent with women workers from rural areas, they directly influence rural communities and the relatives who have been left behind.

**Domestic work**

Domestic work is considered to be a natural extension of women's traditional role in society; that is, as the ones who are responsible for the maintenance of the home and the family. It is not without reason that in Latin America and the Caribbean the vast majority of domestic workers are women.[52] If men are employed as domestic staff, it is mostly to perform roles that have traditionally been identified with masculinity, such as gardeners, janitors, guardians and drivers.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, domestic work seems to share a set of specific characteristics. It is considered to be 'women's work' that apparently does not demand any specific skills or training. Domestic workers are usually recruited among poor rural women, including many adolescents and even children. They often have minimal education and have migrated to the city to escape from rural poverty, to go to an urban school, or to release their parents from the burden of feeding an extra mouth. In countries with a large indigenous population, domestic workers are often indigenous women, whose language, customs, appearance and dress are considered to be inferior to those who belong to the dominant urban classes. Domestic workers are often fairly isolated within their new environments. They work alone or with one or two others. Their work is situated within the private sphere, is largely unregulated and is shielded from public scrutiny. This severely hinders them from becoming aware of their rights and organizing themselves. Domestic workers generally enjoy fewer forms of legal protection than other workers and are accordingly more vulnerable to various forms of abuses and discrimination.[53] Most domestic workers come from rural villages and many of them enter the workforce at a young age.[54]

> When a girl of fourteen arrives to ask for a job, with all her ingenuity, her own world view and language, she encounters great obstacles to communication, a situation which is taken advantage of to lay the foundation and principles of servitude. [...] This young woman's boss will define the salary she earns, the work she does, her working hours, the days she can go out, where she can go and even the language she should speak in the home and how she should dress.[55]

To this dimension of dependence might be added the nature and hardship of the work itself, a situation that often fosters vulnerability to various types of abuses. A *doméstica*[56] generally works long and unpredictable hours, performing hard work such as washing clothes (usually by hand), ironing, preparing and cooking food, washing the dishes, dusting, cleaning, scrubbing and mopping floors, washing windows, doing the shopping, waiting on guests and caring for children and pets. Often her rights are not sufficiently covered by labour codes, and if they are, the secluded domestic nature of her work and her dependence on the goodwill of her employer, often isolate her from any official control. Labour codes in most Latin American and Caribbean countries are gradually being adapted to include domestic workers. However, the process is slow, possibly because the decision-makers themselves benefit from the cheap labour provided by *domésticas* and are thus unwilling to change their own privileged positions.

The legal position of domestic workers is very weak. The Salvadoran labour code, for example, stipulates that contracts do not need to be in writing for domestic work, and the job does not have to be limited to the eight-hour work day or the 44-hour week guaranteed other workers. Instead, domestic workers may be required to work up to 12 hours per day, with one day off for every week of work. They may be dismissed without notice for a wide variety of reasons including 'having vices or bad habits that place in danger or prejudice the domestic order or alter the moral condition of the household' and for committing 'grave acts of disloyalty or insubordination' against members of the household.[57] In other words, the labour code in a wide range of Latin American and Caribbean countries opens up the possibility of abuse of domestic workers. Eva M., a 16-year-old who had worked in three homes since she left the third grade, told representatives of Human Rights Watch:

> When I was ten, I went to work in the first house. I would wash the dishes, make the beds . . . . I slept there. This was in San Salvador. They didn't pay me because they left and went to their mother's house and didn't give me the address. I worked there for four months without being paid. I worked from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. In the morning I would do the cleaning and then make lunch. I took care of the three-year-old child. I would cook, wash clothes.[58]

In addition to these domestic chores, it is common for domestic workers to be obliged to help with their employers' small businesses.[59] The Salvadoran labour code requires all employers to register their employees with the Salvadoran Institute for Social Security; however, this is seldom applied to employers of domestic workers.[60] *Domésticas* are not explicitly excluded from maternity rights, but it is extremely uncommon for such rights to be extended to them. Domestic workers who become pregnant on the job are either fired or kept in work only during the pregnancy; they are then fired or rehired after giving birth so that the employer does not have to cover the costs of maternal care.[61] In order to keep the job, most *domésticas* have to find ways to get others to care for their children. Most *domésticas* fear becoming sick, because they know that it will put them in very vulnerable situations.

To make matters worse, live-in domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to various forms of sexual harassment. One third of the domestic workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Guatemala reported having suffered some kind of unwanted approaches and/or demands from men living in or associated with the households in which they worked.[62] It is hard to establish statistics on this kind of abuse, but it is far from unusual in countries with a huge domestic labour force, particularly one that is largely constituted by young, often poorly educated woman migrants from rural areas. A former official with the attorney general's office in El Salvador stated the following:

> I have known various cases of *patrones* and sons who sexually abuse domestic workers, including cases in which the domestics became pregnant, and then [the families] throw the girls out. We followed at least three cases like this, and at least one was under age [under 18]. [. . .] The rate is huge. It's the norm, whether it's the *patrón* or his sons. It's normal for her – she accepts it. She goes to work in a house, and she has no friends or relatives there, and she is afraid that she will be fired. If she says what is happening, they will fire her and say that she has provoked it. There is no fear of the complaint [process].[63]

The sexual exploitation of domestic workers in the home of their employer is common all over the world,[64] a sorry state of affairs that is allowed to continue due to the extreme vulnerability and lack of legal rights of domestic workers.

***Maquiladoras***

During the last three decades, *maquiladoras* have been established in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. *Maquiladoras* are export assembly plants that produce parts and assemble products for companies based in other countries, usually the United States, Japan and Korea, or in Europe. These industries make use of inexpensive labour in developing countries and of trade agreements that allow for low (or non-existent) taxes and custom fees.[65] To be allowed to establish themselves in the countries where they intend to operate, the *maquiladora* owners have to commit themselves to apply the norms and regulations of labour codes that exist in their own country and those that exist in the host country. Nevertheless, this does not completely prevent abuses.[66]

The vast majority of the workforce in the *maquiladora* sector is constituted by women, and especially young women. In 1997, 88 per cent of the workforce of Salvadoran *maquiladoras* were women. Of the *maquiladora* workers who were heads of household, 88 per cent were women.[67] The great majority of the women were between 20 and 26 years of age.[68] *Maquiladoras* are attracting an important part of the predominantly rural, female workforce. In El Salvador more than 76,000 women are active in the export assembly plant sector.[69] The main reasons for this are related to gendered notions of femininity and masculinity. Management tends to believe that women have nimble fingers and are therefore more dexterous, productive and faster than men. Also, women – and especially young women – are considered to be more patient, docile and obedient than men, and more ready to accept the rigid working rhythm without any protest or resistance. The work is considered to be unskilled, which is why the women receive low wages. Nonetheless, women's dexterity and docility is often learned during a lengthy process of socialization and gender formation inside the home. This often includes learning to embroider and to use a sewing machine. Because these activities are carried out in the home they tend to be economically and socially invisible. These skills are considered to be part of the feminine nature and thus to be of no economic value. Another reason why women form a cheaper labour force than men is the belief that they are not breadwinners. As daughters, their income is seen as supplementary to that of their fathers, and if they are married their income is supposed to complement that of their husbands. Another reason for contracting young women is that they comprise a very flexible workforce. After their marriage or the birth of children, they often resign.[70] It is also reported that *maquiladoras* often fire women during their pregnancy leave.[71] In the words of a Guatemalan *maquiladora* personnel manager:

> Eighteen to twenty-four is the ideal age. They should not be married because when they are married they tend to have added responsibilities. Before you know it, they start to have children, which is a problem. We do not hire a woman if she has small children because it is likely they will become sick and she will often need to go to them. If a woman is large, she will likely get sick often and have to go to the doctor as well. My ideal worker is young, unmarried, healthy, thin and delicate, single, lives close, and does not have previous experience.[72]

While airing such predilections, it is obvious that at least a part of the *maquiladora* sector profits from its use of a predominantly female workforce and tends to abuse and exploit that workforce. For several years, a wide array of NGOs and lobbyists have been monitoring, assessing and trying to persuade *maquiladoras* to apply human rights and decent labour codes to their employees; as a result, improvements have taken place in many countries. However, much remains to be done, particularly since most governments consider *maquiladoras* to be an important tool for development and often tend to stress how beneficial they are for women, who through them will be able to find alternative incomes and eventually a way out of poverty.

*Maquiladora* owners and administrators make the most out of their workforce. Even if they generally have to pay the daily minimum wage that is applicable in the country where they operate, many factories tend to employ complicated and often arbitrary systems of piece-rate pay and incentives based on the production output of an assembly line to determine bonus pay. Such systems generally foster an unhealthy level of workload among workers, imposing tremendous pressure to work overtime in order to increase the monthly income. In a study carried out by Human Rights Watch in Guatemala, almost every worker interviewed complained that the *maquiladoras* demand at least two hours of overtime each day.[73] Many *maquiladoras* did not provide health care,[74] and in 2000 there were no childcare centres operating with *maquiladora* support in Guatemala and very few in the rest of Central America.[75] However, the factories generally demonstrated a huge interest in their workers' reproductive health, at least when they are hired. Even if it is illegal, it appears that many *maquiladoras* either conduct pregnancy testing of their own or require medical documentation certifying that the job applicants are not pregnant.[76] Direct dismissal of pregnant workers currently appears to be less common than in the past. Maternity protection clauses in the labour code and an increasing

awareness among workers and officials about the rights of pregnant workers have had a positive impact. However, most women working in the *maquiladoras* are well aware that having children will mean difficulties for them in the workplace.

In many Latin American countries, the *maquiladora* sector has been able to profit from the marginalized position of, in particular, poorly educated young women from the countryside who are in dire need of remunerated work. However, some governments have come to realize that the *maquiladora* sector has to be monitored and supervised in order to prevent their citizens from being abused. Hard-won and drawn-out progress has taken place in many countries, and *maquiladoras* have become one of the most important sources of employment for women.

## Woman-headed households and poverty

In recent decades, the number of woman-headed households has been growing worldwide. In advanced economies as well as in developing countries and the former Eastern bloc, the proportion of single-mother households and other woman-headed households is increasing.[77] This phenomenon is considered to be among the most important recent changes that have taken place in household and family structure.[78] In the Latin American and Caribbean region, woman-headed households are a common phenomenon; the figure ranges from 17 per cent of all households in Mexico to 39 per cent in Haiti.[79]

The reasons for the growing number of woman-headed households are connected to processes of globalization.[80] Large numbers of women are entering the labour market, which contributes to their financial independence. They migrate to other regions and countries to find work and to start a new life away from the social control of their families at home. Men also migrate for work reasons, leaving their spouse and children behind. They may start a new family, which may result in the final break up with their first family. Conflict and war also produce female household headship because women are widowed or men have to leave their homes (due to threats, the danger of forced recruitment, evictions, violent repression from the warring parties and other irregularities that occur in a war situation).

In addition, worldwide processes of emancipation are occurring; these may help women to stand up for themselves and to stop accepting abuse such as male violence and maltreatment.[81] Changing gender roles and the attention women receive from development agencies and other

external actors may also cause tension within families and create feelings of bewilderment, insecurity and exposure among both men and women. Warnings have been raised about the fact that frustrated men who feel they are being marginalized may turn their anger against women. Such observations may be corroborated by studies of extremely violent male behaviour in similar social situations.[82]

In the Caribbean, there have always been relatively large numbers of woman-headed households. This is because of the specific character of the Caribbean family system, which the literature depicts as matrifocal.[83] In several Caribbean societies, women's economic roles have become as pivotal as their caregiving ones, while the roles of men as fathers and providers have turned out to be more marginalized than in other sociocultural conglomerates. In such women-dominated households, the bond between a mother and her children is the foundation of family domestic units. While these units may exist independently, they may also include other relatives (often female) and thus give rise to extended households. In such family systems, relationships between men and women may be short-lived. 'Visiting' relationships – where women welcome their partners into their home – and unmarried cohabitation are both commonplace and socially accepted, as are female household headship and single motherhood.[84]

All too often, woman-headed households are among the poorest of the poor.[85] However, that may not always be necessarily true. The equation between poverty and woman-headed households is based on two assumptions: first, these households are considered to be an automatic outcome of poverty; secondly, female household headship is considered to add greater hardship to being poor. Concerning the first assumption, poverty is perceived as a cause of rising numbers of woman-headed households because it provokes marital tensions and contributes to declining propensities to marry. In societies and regions that have a high level of male unemployment, women may decide not to marry because men are not able to meet their expectations as breadwinners. Men, in turn, are less willing to marry due to stress or loss of self-esteem. Also, unemployment may lead to greater labour migration, by women as well as men, something that increases the likelihood of marital instability and family breakdown.[86] Regarding the second assumption, the strong association between woman-headed households and poverty is assumed to become most evident through a comparison with male-headed households. After all, the reasoning goes, female heads have to make ends meet without material support from a male partner, while their position on the labour market is less favourable. To a larger degree than men, women are excluded from gainful employment by

gender-segregated labour markets and/or a lack of childcare facilities. When women do have a paid job, they often earn less than men do. The labour market opportunities for single mothers are even further limited, because they have to rear their children alone while coping with paid work.[87] In the Latin American and Caribbean region, women have entered the labour market in large numbers, and the number of women earning an income has increased considerably. Nevertheless, between 30 and 70 per cent of women have an insecure job in the informal sector, and even those who have formal employment earn less than men do.[88]

Although we certainly do not want to deny that many woman-headed households have to endure economic hardship, data show that this type of household is not always and under all circumstances poorer than male-headed households.[89] An important question to ask is whether women who live in a male-headed household are always better off than those who live in a female-headed household. Taking into account intra-household power inequalities concerning the division of labour, access to resources and control over cash flow, the opposite may sometimes be the case. These power inequalities may temper the economic differences between women who live in a male-headed household and those who head a household. Within female-headed households, women may have greater access to resources because they are free from male domination.[90] Becoming a female head of household may be a woman's own choice. IFAD's experience in Western and Central Africa confirms this point of view and adds another argument, namely that not all female-headed households are automatically deprived of male income:

> More and more evidence shows that, *in cases of similar access to resources and decision-making*, women and female-headed households are less poor than men and male-headed households. For instance, in Niger, households headed by women represent 8 per cent of all households. Of these households, 55 per cent are poor, against 64 per cent among male-headed families. A priori, two reasons may be assumed: (i) as heads of households, women are able to make their own decisions, gain better access to resources than if they were married, and can use these resources more productively than do male heads of household; and (ii) in cases where women are de facto heads of households, income transferred from husbands may raise the total household income.[91]

Poverty consists of more than lack of income. Inter- and intra-household relationships, cultural traditions, control over one's labour and income, distribution patterns, personal power and autonomy are all factors that may

or may not contribute to alleviating poverty. While taking such factors into account and comparing them with the prevailing situation for women living in male-headed households, it is evident that some female household heads may have several reasons to feel that they are better off without a husband.[92] Accordingly, policies designed to reach female heads of households should be oriented towards their specific demands and towards strengthening their specific abilities and possibilities.

## Adapting to changing roles and structures

The emergence and proliferation of woman-headed households is a compelling sign of rapidly changing structures in rural areas – and a reminder that policies and strategies for rural development constantly have to adapt to shifting realities. We began this chapter by focusing on women's health, stating that it has all too often been neglected. It is possible to consider this fact as yet another manifestation of male-centred perceptions. It is only in recent decades, with women increasingly being seen as essential providers to rural households, that concerns for the health of rural women have come to the fore. Women's role as child bearers makes them more vulnerable than men to diseases and discomforts. Just like men, women have to be in good health in order to be productive, and since many more women are becoming the main providers for rural households, it is important to safeguard their productive potential. Their health and general well-being must be taken into account by development workers. Of course, the same concern also applies to men.

In some cases, a migrating man has to leave his spouse as caretaker of the household and the productive assets he leaves behind. In other cases, it is the woman who leaves the household and turns into an absent provider of funds to the family she left behind. Patterns of family care and support differ depending on whether it is the man or the woman who leaves the household. It is still very uncommon for a man to be left to take care of the household and the family's assets in the absence of his wife. One reason for this may be the common assumption that it is women who have expertise in rearing children, preparing food and caring for the house and home garden. Frequently, when a woman migrates, she leaves the responsibility for the house to a female relative, and many children in migrant-sending countries are being raised by their grandmother or aunt. This may also be one of the reasons why many migrating women prove to be more efficient remittance senders than men: women tend to feel obliged to invest in home and family more than men do. An understanding of the gender implications of migration

phenomena may help to put in place measures to effectively combat rural poverty. Such measures may aim at changing men's attitudes for the benefit of the entire household, and an acknowledgement of the particular skills of women may maximize the potential of all family members.

We have indicated some problems connected with gender mainstreaming, including the risk that while women are gaining influence and obtaining external support, men may feel that they are becoming powerless and marginalized. They may even end up nurturing sentiments of disdain and jealousy towards women, particularly if they feel excluded and are not allowed to progress in the same way as women. The proliferation of such negative feelings is an argument for providing gender awareness training for both men and women. Men ought to be supported in such a way that they realize and appreciate their own responsibilities as fathers, come to view their families as joint ventures, and collaborate with their spouse to maximize the potential and abilities of all family members for the common good.

Migration is increasingly changing the pattern of societies. This is not a new phenomenon. Several industrialized countries have already experienced rural areas being emptied of young people and cultural traditions subsequently disappearing from a completely transformed countryside.[93] A similar process is now taking place in Latin America and the Caribbean, but at a much faster rate than ever before in world history. Within a generation, the production landscape of most rural areas of the region will have been completely changed. It is an enormous challenge to national governments and rural development organizations to help poor rural inhabitants to prepare themselves for these radical changes and to benefit from the opportunities they bring about. An innovative way to support rural development would be to forge contacts and collaboration with the diaspora that is already engaged in the economic sustenance of the families as well as the economic development of the communities they left behind. Individuals and associations abroad often channel funds to communal projects in their places of origin. If development organizations widen their scope and start to consider rural communities as part of a wider context that includes people in other areas and countries, they could become instrumental in facilitating productive investments and enhancing the multiplicative effects of migrants' remittances.[94]

An extremely important aspect of rural development work is to pay proper attention to the new composition of families that has arisen as a result of migration, recognizing not only the gender, but also the generational issues. Particular attention needs to be paid to children and

youngsters, supporting their education in such a way that they will be well prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead. They should be provided with the skills that can help them to support themselves and their future dependants; otherwise they run the risk of ending up as abused, unskilled workers, or – even worse – criminals or prostitutes. Avoiding such a scenario is the responsibility not only of the rural families themselves but also of society as a whole, otherwise we will all have to bear the consequences.

## Endnotes

1/ Anders Nordström, acting Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), has declared that 'there is a really worrying rise in the number and severity of sexually transmitted infections'. WHO estimates that 340 million new cases of sexually transmitted bacterial infections (such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea) occur annually in people aged 15-49. Many are untreated because they lack access to services. In addition, millions of cases of viral infection, including HIV, occur every year. The sexually transmitted Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection is closely associated with cervical cancer, which every year is diagnosed in more than 490,000 women and causes 240,000 deaths. Around 8 million women who become pregnant each year suffer life-threatening complications as a result of sexually transmitted infections and poor sexual health. Annually, an estimated 529,000 women, almost all in developing countries, die during pregnancy or childbirth from largely preventable causes. WHO: 'Top level push to tackle priorities in sexual and reproductive health, 20 June 2006', http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases.

2/ The interview was carried out in May 2004, when 3,000 *quetzales* were equivalent to approximately US$390.

3/ Center for Reproductive Rights, a legal advocacy organization with headquarters in New York, www.reproductiverights.org.

4/ Worldwide, approximately 120-150 million women who would like to have access to birth control devices are not able to obtain them. It is estimated that 25-30 per cent of maternal deaths could be avoided if access to family planning methods were provided. Furthermore, women who have their first child after 20 years of age have better chances of receiving a proper education (Lindahl (2004), p. 121).

5/ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), p. 629. The quotation refers to the Papal Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.

6/ For example, by the end of 1999, Brasilia hosted the Fourth Latin American Congress of Movements for the Protection of Life. It was organized by the Pontifical Council for the Family and Pro-Life Movements, which has proposed the establishment of a parliamentary group to protect life and the family in each Latin American country and an inter-parliamentary group to act throughout the entire continent. Powerful pressure groups like this try to maintain a status quo that has a damaging impact on the well-being of rural families. See 'The Vatican and Family Politics' written by Gordon Urquhart for Catholics for a Free Choice, a Washington-based organization stating that it intends to serve 'as a voice for Catholics who believe that the Catholic tradition supports a woman's moral and legal right to follow her conscience in matters of sexuality and reproductive health' www.catholicsforchoice.org (visited June 2006).

7/ In the 20th century, most mainstream Protestant/Evangelical groups followed the Anglican Church, which at a conference in Lambeth in 1930 became the first Church to relax Christian condemnation of contraception. Nevertheless, in recent years, movements against birth control, particularly within the United States, have been growing within Evangelical congregations. Among the most extreme and influential is the so-called 'full quiver' movement that opposes all forms of birth control, including natural family planning and sterilization (see Hess and Hess (1990)). Evangelical lobbyists have been widely criticized for their stand against various forms of birth control. This movement, for example, objected to the use of such phrases as 'reproductive rights', 'reproductive health', and 'families in all their various forms', which were proposed at the population conferences in Bangkok (2002) and Santiago de Chile (2004) that were organized to reaffirm the Cairo Consensus from 1994 (see website of Planned Parenthood, http://www.plannedparenthood.org).

8/ Johnsson-Latham (2004:2), p. 36. Apart from women's right to reproductive health, other important gender issues that were intensely debated at the Beijing meeting were also removed from the final version of the MDGs. For example, women's right to own land and issues regarding female inheritance rights (ibid.).

9/ Center for Reproductive Rights, www.crlp.org (visited June 2006).

10/ www.catholicsforchoice.org (visited June 2006).

11/ WHO (2004), Table 3, p. 13.

12/ Fernando (2002), p. 22.

13/ Ibid., p. 49. During the Fujimori government (1990-2000), there were attempts to introduce family planning but in the form of forced sterilization. Several committees were later established to investigate whether sterilizations took place in a coercive or voluntary way. Though these committees differed in their findings regarding the extent of the practice of coercive sterilizations, they all agreed that they had occurred. The sad thing about all this is that most poor women in the Andes, where much of the coercive sterilization took place, actually wanted to become mothers, but they wanted a more limited number of children (Boesten (2004), pp. 172, 179-181).

14/ IFAD-supported projects are usually confronted with the demand to improve health and education services within the communities in which they operate. While the Fund is mainly focused on promoting income and employment generation activities, projects are usually equipped with a community development fund to attend to communal priorities. Projects are also encouraged to enter into collaborations with public institutions and NGOs to carry out initiatives to improve health and other services in rural areas.

15/ Fact Sheet Latin America, 06, UNAIDS, and Fact Sheet Caribbean, 06, UNAIDS, http://www.unaids.org (visited July 2006).

16/ Fact Sheet Caribbean, 06, UNAIDS, http://www.unaids.org (visited July 2006).

17/ Ibid.

18/ UNAIDS http://www.unaids.org ('Issues', 'Affected Communities', 'Rural Communities') (visited July 2006).

19/ Agence France-Press (August 5, 1999) http://www.aegis.com/NEWS/AFP/1999.

20/ Rao Gupta (2002), pp. 2-8.

21/ Within such a sociocultural setting, women might easily be coerced into having unprotected sex, or run the risk of being infected by unfaithful husbands or boyfriends. Nowadays, the typical woman who gets infected with HIV/AIDS is not a drug addict or sex worker, but a woman with only one male partner – her husband or steady boyfriend. About half of all HIV/AIDS infections in the world occur among women. However, there are indications that in the case of unprotected intercourse, women are more vulnerable to infection than men. Male-to-female HIV/AIDS transmission is estimated to be twice as likely as female-to-male. UNAIDS, http://www.unaids.org (visited July 2006).

22/ Rao Gupta (2002), pp. 2-11.

23/ For example, in literature the action of a number of great Latin American and Caribbean novels takes place in and around brothels, and brothels often play a prominent role in the autobiographies of famous authors. See, for example, Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *La Habana para un infante difunto* (Infante's Inferno; 1979), Mario Vargas Llosa's *El pez en el agua* (The Fish in the Water; 1993) and Gabriel Gárcia Márquez' memoirs *Vivir para contarla* (Living to Tell the Tale; 2002). In 2004, Márquez published *Memoria de mis putas tristes* (Memory of My Melancholy Whores), which tells a story of brothel culture and paedophilia. The titles given within parentheses are those of the English editions.

24/ A BBC report from Guatemala in 2004 linked spiralling violence against women in Guatemala to prostitution, which thrives on the desperate situation of displaced and poor women. Susana Villaran, a representative of the Organization of American States (OAS), complained that 'in a traditional, conservative society such as Guatemala, where women are still expected to marry and to look after their household, many of them [the prostitutes] are almost invisible and violence against them causes little outcry. So far this year [2004] as many as 50 women a month have been killed, and many of them have been prostitutes.' Caistor, Nick, 'Prostitutes play the beautiful game', BBC 6 November 2004.

25/ A story told on UNESCO's site on child abuse: http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/cse/explore_1343.html (visited July 2006).

26/ 'People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation' is a charitable organization that was founded in the Philippines 'to protect especially children and women exploited in demeaning labour, especially prostitution' http://www.preda.org (visited June 2006).

27/ 'Street children' is a term often used to describe both 'market children' (who work in the streets and markets of cities selling or begging, and live with their family) and 'homeless street children' (who work, live and sleep in the streets, and often lack any contact with their family). UNICEF reports that the exact number of street children is impossibile to quantify, but the figure almost certainly runs into tens of millions accross the world (UNICEF (2005), p. 40). Half of them are found in Latin America http://www.mexico-child-link.org/street-children-definition-statistics.htm (visited July 2006).

28/ Barger Hannum (2002).

29/ Conventional approaches to the study of sex workers and prostitution have been challenged through a feminist study by Lorraine Nencel, who on the basis of field research in Lima questions whether sex workers are victims or agents of control (Nencel (2001)).

30/ 'End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes' www.ecpat.se. In 1994, ECPAT calculated that 500,000 children in Brazil were involved in the sex industry. However, this estimate was probably on the high side and has been repeatedly questioned. UNICEF Brazil claimed that the figure was 'unreliable, scandalous and outrageously high'. It is probably impossible to fully measure the extent of child prostitution. Instead of offering figures, the Brazilian Government is making rough estimates to ascertain if the trend is going up or down. For example, in 2002 the Brazilian Government reported to CEDAW that it had found indications that the sexual exploitation of minors was increasing in all urban centres in Brazil (Weibull (2003), pp. 22 and 17).

31/ Barger Hannum (2002). Similar doubts as the ones applied to the Brazilian figures are present in Colombia as well. Nevertheless, UNICEF has recently stated that 'commercial sexual exploitation, as well as international traffic and trade have increased [in Colombia]. However, the government is preparing a bill for a comprehensive law on the protection of children's rights http://www.unicef.org (visited June 2006).

32/ Barger Hannum (2002).

33/ Ibid. In 1994, a survey of commercially organized prostitution in the Dominican Republic found that more than 25,000 children under 18 were sexually exploited at the country's major tourist centres. It was mainly foreigners who exploited and abused them. The children became involved in the sex trade around the age of 12. Of the victims, 64 per cent were girls. This situation led the Dominican Government to adopt new laws to prosecute sex offenders. Intensive training was offered to the country's judges and international conventions concerning child labour and child abuse were ratified (UNICEF (2001), pp. 34-38).

34/ Communal stigmatization and vigilant neighbours tend to be more common in close-knit rural societies than in the more anonymous environment of a metropolis. However, prostitution tends to appear in the informal service sector that caters to drivers and others who congregate on market days in rural areas; in most villages, there are people who offer sex for money or other benefits.

35/ The following section is based on an unpublished discussion paper by Rosemary Vargas-Lundius (in collaboration with Amélie Reuterskiöld and Guillaume Lanly): 'Remittances and Rural Development – A Global Perspective'. IFAD. May 2006.

36/ In 1965, there were 75 million migrants in the world; by 2005, the figure had increased to 185-192 million (IOM (2005)).

37/ Several Latin American and Caribbean countries present a constant, uninterrupted flow of migrants. To take El Salvador as an example: it is estimated that between 1990 and 2000, the increase in migration might have been in the range of 70 to 400 per cent (PNUD (2005), Ch. 1, p. 5). It is extremely difficult to calculate any exact figure on emigration (taking into account the vast number of illegal entries). However, in 2005 the Foreign Ministry of El Salvador (based on different sources of information) estimated that the number of Salvadorans living abroad amounts to approximately 3.3 million. This means that one out of three Salvadorans resides in a foreign country, and of them, 2.9 million (88 per cent) live in the United States (ibid., p. 9).

38/ According to a migration survey carried out along the northern border of Mexico, 42 per cent of Mexican migrants come from rural areas. In 1996, 10 per cent of rural households reported receiving remittances, compared with 4 per cent of urban households (*Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (2002), pp. 33-37).

39/ Zlotnik (2003).

40/ For example, according to the United States Census, the Caribbean region sends more females than males to the United States, with a sex ratio (males per 100 females) of 84.8 (US Census Bureau (2001), Figure 10.2, p. 27).

41/ Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), quoted in Baver (1995), p. 5.

42/ Out-migration can have a significant impact on rural areas by the very number of people involved and the fact that most of them, being young and male, are the most productive household members. For example, in El Salvador there are many rural villages in departments that have historically high levels of out-migration where only the elderly and the very young remain.

43/ For example, a 2004 research project by the Filipino Women's Council in Italy demonstrated that 'transnational' motherhood leads to changes in family and community values as well as role shifts within the family structure. In addition, the separation of wives and husbands leads to serious estrangement between married couples, and problems of holding the family together (Basa and de la Rosa, 2004, pp. 16 and 48). Children of migrants are often called 'emotional orphans' and seem to be more likely to commit crime, take drugs or have children out of wedlock (Wehrfritz and Vitug (2004)).

44/ Remittances are defined as transfers of money by foreign workers to their home country. Accordingly, the concept does not include money sent home by people who are working away from home but are still inside their own country.

45/ Followed by South Asia (32.7 billion), East Asia and the Pacific (20.3 billion), Middle East and North Africa (17.0 billion), Europe and Central Asia (12.9 billion) and sub-Saharan Africa (6.1 billion) (World Bank (2005), p. 29).

46/ Two thirds of remitters are between the ages of 25 and 49 (IDB-MIF (2002), p. 7).

47/ Hugo (1998), pp. 139-149.

48/ Orozco (2002), p. 7. These contributions are substantial and in many Latin American and Caribbean countries they constitute an important part of the gross national income. In 2004, El Salvador received at least US$2.5 billion in remittances, representing 12.6 per cent of El Salvador's total household income. (PNUD (2005), Ch.2, p. 23).

49/ A 2004 survey in the Dominican Republic showed that 58 per cent of the remittance senders are women and 57 per cent of remittance recipients are women. In general, Dominican female migrants abroad send more remittances to their relatives than do male migrants (Suro (2003), p. 16; IDB-MIF (2004), pp. 9 and 28).

50/ Torres (2000), p. 38. The study found that in El Salvador, 48 per cent of remittance-receiving households were headed by a woman, compared to 32 per cent of the non-remittance-receiving households. In Guatemala, 38 per cent of remittance-receiving households were headed by women, compared to 25 per cent of non remittance-receiving households. In Nicaragua, the figures were 52 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively.

51/ Women who have migrated abroad often work in the domestic service area, and as maintenance workers and as undocumented immigrants within a grey zone characterized by service-sector jobs (for example, restaurants) and 'uncontrolled' manufacturing industries (for example, sweatshops, agricultural processing enterprises).

52/ For example, in Guatemala women comprise nearly 98 per cent of the domestic workforce (Sunderland (2002), p. 51); in Mexico, the figure is 88 per cent (Martínez (2003)).

53/ Sunderland (2002), pp. 50-53; Chaney and Castro (1989), pp. 3-4.

54/ The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that in El Salvador in 2002, 21,500 people aged between 10 and 19 worked in the domestic labour sector, meaning that one out of five youngsters in that age category worked or sought employment as a domestic employee (Godoy (2002), p.19). Most of the girls interviewed by Human Rights Watch stated that they had started doing domestic work in other families' homes when they were aged between 9 and 11, often after school and during weekends (Human Rights Watch (2004), Ch. 3, pp. 1-2).

55/ Julián Oyeles – a Catholic priest who directs the *Conrado de la Cruz* project in Guatemala, which provides services and education to domestic workers – quoted in Sunderland (2002), p. 51.

56/ In other parts of the region, they have different names (for example, *empleada* (employee), *muchacha* (girl) or *cachifa* (servant, sometimes with sexual connotations)).

57/ Human Rights Watch (2004), Ch. 5, p. 1.

58/ Ibid., Ch. 3, p. 4.

59/ Ibid., Ch. 3, p. 2.

60/ A summary of the Salvadoran labour code is presented on the site of El Pedregal Free Zone http://www.elpedregalsal.com (visited September 2006).

61/ Sunderland (2002), pp. 73-74.

62/ Ibid., p. 79.

63/ Ima Rocío Guirola of the Women's Studies Institute (CEMUJER - *Centro de Estudios de la Mujer Norma Virginia Guirola de Herrera*) quoted in Human Rights Watch (2004), Ch. 3, pp. 4-5. The sexual abuse of female domestic workers has been identified as a widespread phenomenon in all of Latin America and the Caribbean; see, for example, Oré-Aguilar (2000), p. 368.

64/ See, for example, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, 27th Session, Geneva 27-31 May, 2002, 'The relationship between child domestic servitude and the sexual exploitation of children' http://www.antislavery.org/archive/submission/submission2002-childlabour.htm (visited June 2006).

65/ *Maquiladoras* are particularly important to the economies of several countries in Central America and the Caribbean. For example, in El Salvador, they employed 87,000 workers in 2003 (PNUD (2003), p. 205).

66/ For example, a United States Government list of workers' rights, similar to those designated by the ILO, is generally applied to the establishment of United States-owned *maquiladoras* in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the United States list of workers' rights has one crucial omission: 'equality of opportunity and treatment'. This right is embodied in ILO Convention No. 111, concerning 'Discrimination in Employment and Occupation' (Sunderland (2002), p. 58).

67/ Alvarenga Jule (2001), p. 35.

68/ Sunderland (2002), p. 26.

69/ Alvarenga Jule (2001), p. 34.

70/ Elson and Pearson (1984), pp. 23-24; Benería and Roldán (1987), pp. 50-51. In El Salvador less than 19 per cent of the female *maquiladora* workforce remains more than five years (Alvarenga Jule (2001), p. 35).

71/ Sunderland (2002), pp. 85, 106.

72/ Ibid., p. 89.

73/ Sunderland (2002), p. 85. In Salvadoran *maquiladoras*, overtime is also frequent, though not so excessively abused as in Guatemala (an average of 3 hours a week) and is even less common than in the non-*maquila* manufacturing sector (Alvarenga Jule (2001), p. 37).

74/ By law, *maquiladoras* operating in Guatemala have to enrol their workers in an employee health care scheme known as IGSS; the Salvadoran equivalent is ISSS. However, a survey carried out in late 1999 among 649 women working in 14 different *maquiladoras* found that while 95 per cent had IGSS payments deducted from their wages, only 52 per cent were actually enrolled in the programme (ibid., p. 103). Similar abuses have been reported in El Salvador (see 'Deliberate Indifference: El Salvador's Failure to Protect Worker's Rights', Human Rights Watch, December 2003, Vol. 15, No. 5(B)). http://hrw.org/reports/2003/elsalvador1203 (visited September 2006).

75/ Sunderland (2002), p. 108.

76/ Ibid., pp. 88-102. This was the case in Guatemala. However, the practice is common in many *maquiladoras*. The 'US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices in El Salvador, 2005' stated that even though pregnancy testing as a condition for employment is illegal, some *maquiladoras* had required female job applicants to present pregnancy test results and also fired workers found to be pregnant. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61727.htm (visited September 2006).

77/ Chant (1997:1), pp. 2 and 269; Bullock (1994), p. 17.

78/ 'Preface' by Ghai in Moore (1994): p. i.

79/ Rao Gupta (2002), p. 9. There are indications that the figure may be even higher for Haiti, while both El Salvador and Nicaragua have percentages of single-parent, woman-headed households that are higher than 30 per cent, i.e. the highest percentage in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region, with the exception of some islands in the English-speaking Caribbean (Ariza and de Oliviera (2004), p. 157).

80/ Chant (1997:1).

81/ Ibid.

82/ Studies have been made of contempt for and extreme violence against women among groups of German men returning from the front after World War I. Defeated and shocked by their experiences, front-line soldiers returned to unemployment and social marginalization, finding that women had been emancipated and that some had even advanced socially and economically after gaining security and income while replacing fighting men in industries and offices (see Tatar, 1995; Theleweit, 1987). To a certain degree this situation may be mirrored by alarming reports from Guatemala, where women have been increasingly brutalized and killed. Prostitutes and female gang members are at the most serious risk, but the death toll includes women from all walks of life. Hilda Morales Trujillo, a campaigner for Guatemala's Network for Non-Violence Against Women, stated in a BBC interview: 'The only explanation we can find for the use of extreme violence is as an expression of misogyny, of hate towards women.' She described Guatemala as a male-dominated society that had been heavily militarized during 36 years of civil war, where thousands of men carry weapons and are no strangers to extreme violence. The fact that more and more Guatemalan women go out to work, stay longer in education and express themselves more freely than ever before provokes anger and frustration among some men who feel marginalized after having lost hope and direction in life. Adam Blenford: 'Guatemala's epidemic of killing', BBC, 9 June 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk.

83/ The reasons for this are manifold and were briefly touched upon in Chapter 5 of this book. Among the other factors are the wide range of cultural influences (indigenous, African and European) that throughout history have intermingled in a situation characterized by colonialism, plantation systems, forced migration and slavery.

84/ Ypeij and Steenbeek (2001).

85/ Chant (1997:1); Mencher and Okongwu (1993); Moore (1994).

86/ Bullock (1994), p. 17; Safa (1995), p. 183.

87/ Chant (1997:1), p. 50.

88/ UNIFEM (2000) in Rao Gupta (2002), p. 8.

89/ Chant (1997:1), pp. 48-55. Some researchers consider it as an undeniable fact that poverty affects woman-headed households to a much higher degree than male-headed ones. A survey carried out by ECLAC in Mexico and Central America in 2002 found that an average of 40 per cent of the woman-headed households were poor. In Nicaragua and Honduras, more than 60 per cent of woman-headed households were characterized as poor, while they amounted to a third in El Salvador and Guatemala, and a fifth in Mexico and Costa Rica (Ariza and de Oliviera (2004), pp. 161-162).

90/ Chant (1997:1), pp. 53-54.

91/ Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD-supported Projects in West and Central Africa. www.ifad.org (visited June 2006).

92/ Chant (1997:1), pp. 54-55.

93/ As an example, during the last half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, Sweden lost about 20 per cent of its population to emigration to the United States. The overwhelming majority of the emigrants were rural inhabitants from poor areas of the country. Swedish emigration peaked in 1910, when 1.4 million first- and second-generation Swedish immigrants were listed as living in the United States (at the time, Sweden's population was 5.5 million). Roughly one-fifth of all Swedes lived in the United States immediately before World War I. These massive population movements coincided with a profound change in the productive landscape. Sweden eventually emerged as a changed nation that to a high degree had managed to harvest the positive aspects of migration (Ljungmark (1979).

94/ An example of such an effort is a joint programme initiated by the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank and IFAD. Through this programme, IFAD and the MIF hope to create opportunities for saving and investments in rural areas that will reduce the cost of transferring remittances, improve rural financial services and help people to take better advantage of remittances. The programme supports bi-national rural development projects in remittance-receiving communities, and fosters alliances between immigrant philanthropic organizations supporting their communities of origin and savings and credit institutions.

# Epilogue

If asked what they treasure most about their jobs, many development workers mention the opportunity it gives them to develop as human beings through their interaction with individuals who make their living in rural areas around the world. They value the opportunity to see and experience development from within, by sharing the visions and needs expressed by people who participate in development efforts. It is particularly gratifying to experience how people who have previously been denied access to resources and decision-making are succeeding in becoming empowered, while also acquiring increased self-respect and influence. It is also rewarding to witness how formerly withdrawn and marginalized peasant women are prepared to seize opportunities that are suddenly opening up for them, realizing that there is a viable way out of the poverty trap. It is both touching and fortifying to listen to people who are able to explain how they have gained confidence in their own abilities and gained the respect of others. Some of the stories we have told in this book bear witness to such experiences. They also illustrate that an essential cornerstone in all development thinking is to provide poor rural women and men with the tools and possibilities that can enable them to overcome poverty.

However, gender mainstreaming is much more than the provision of training, sensitization, methodologies and tools that may create conditions for an equitable access to assets, resources and benefits. It is also about inserting gender awareness in the general setting of rural communities, taking into consideration natural, physical and cultural aspects. To that end, we

touched upon the central theme of 'ordering the space'; that is, assisting women and their families in their efforts to become organized and to make their living space as tidy and well-structured as possible. These efforts are then widened to include their neighbourhood and eventually the entire community. Such endeavours have the advantageous result of demonstrating that gender mainstreaming pays off, that it leads to visible and tangible results that can be enjoyed by all community members.

It is important to highlight the all-encompassing character of gender mainstreaming. Ideally it involves and benefits all the people concerned: men, women, youth, children and the elderly. In order to be sustainable, development has to answer to 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.[1] Accordingly, while rural development projects are increasingly forced to pay attention to the new composition of rural families, resulting from migration and other structural changes, it is important to recognize not only gender aspects, but also generational issues.

For our description of the growing importance of gender in development projects and the specific experiences of gender mainstreaming in Latin America and the Caribbean, we took as our point of departure a definition of gender that refers to culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviours of women and men. To demonstrate this, we analysed the situation in two specific countries – El Salvador and Peru – and related existing gender issues to the history and sociocultural structure of these countries.

Machismo is a cultural phenomenon referring to male gender roles that are based on notions of male superiority, virility and patriarchy. An understanding of the origins and manifestations of machismo may be helpful to understand and perhaps even change prejudices and preconceptions that are still present among both rural inhabitants and development workers. Another crucial aspect for understanding gender roles is an awareness of the composition and function of rural households. Rural development organizations focus their activities on the family, and a better understanding of variations in households and intra-household relationships is essential for an understanding of gender dynamics in rural areas. Households are not by definition nuclear households consisting of a husband, wife and children; nor do household members always live together in harmony and strive for communal goals. Extended households, single-parent households and woman-headed households are occurring more frequently than before.

It is important to realize that poor people perceive their situation in many different ways. Material deprivation is only one dimension of poverty, and income measurements accordingly provide only one indication of the level of

poverty. Poor people themselves are often reluctant to be characterized as belonging to a universal category labelled as 'the rural poor'. If asked about their social and economic status, many poor rural people make distinctions between themselves and other people they consider to be even poorer. By doing so, they often point to non-material qualities, such as care of family and relatives, their own sense of responsibility and their adherence to certain cultural values. Accordingly, the sociocultural dimension of poverty is an issue that ought to be addressed in development thinking and included as an important feature in promoting rural poverty eradication.

We tried to highlight the importance of applying a gendered approach to any analysis of the current sociocultural context that a rural development programme or project enters. While analysing the achievements and shortcomings of development projects, it does not make any sense to avoid mentioning conflicts, politics and other dark sides of the rural reality. If development organizations shun such sensitive issues, it is difficult to ensure the sustainability of the programmes or projects, to measure achievements and to discern lessons learned.

Gender mainstreaming is the outcome of a transformation in the thinking about development and women's actual and possible contributions to it. We focused on this theoretical transformation and placed the development of new gender mainstreaming concepts within an international context. We traced how different attitudes developed during the last three decades of the 20th century and how project designers reacted by including gender in all components of rural development projects. The worldwide acknowledgement of the importance of gender mainstreaming was demonstrated and strengthened by the United Nations' Decade for Women (1976-1985) and four United Nations World Conferences on Women. The declaration of the MDGs in 2000 gave gender mainstreaming an additional impetus, though it has to be emphasized that the MDGs have been severely criticized for being too vague when addressing some important aspects of gender equality. Mainstreaming gender now implies the identification of gaps where measures and services have not reached both men and women in an equitable way. It is no longer enough to approach 'soft' areas that traditionally lay within female spheres of activity. All aspects of rural development have to be included in specific gender approaches, including agriculture, livestock management, rural financial services, infrastructure development and economic policies, all of which are coming under scrutiny to ensure that both men and women participate and benefit.

We argued that development programmes and projects are embedded in the institutional structures of the countries in which they are implemented,

and that in order to guarantee the sustainability of gender mainstreaming efforts, it is important to establish institutional structures that can monitor and promote gender-related efforts within rural development initiatives.

We described how a gender equity approach could be applied in all stages of a project cycle and stressed the importance of gender-disaggregated information and participatory processes to identify and address the specific needs of men and women beneficiaries. Furthermore, we emphasized that the commitment to support gender equity should be inscribed in all loan agreements between IFAD and recipient governments.

IFAD's operations have changed profoundly through its efforts to implement gender equity strategies. However, further efforts should be made to ensure that gender issues are guaranteed a central position on the development agenda. Societies are undergoing constant change, and so too are gender-related issues: because their connotations change, gender issues have to be constantly redefined. We cannot afford to forget that the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to attain gender equality. We want to arrive at a world order in which both men and women are able to realize their full development potential in an environment that is free from hunger and injustice.

The word 'mainstreaming' indicates movement, and 'mainstreaming gender' is by definition a process. We are optimistic that such a movement will contribute to the improvement of living conditions in rural areas. According to several of the testimonies in this book, this is in fact already happening.

Since gender mainstreaming is a process, the end-result of such an initiative may not be immediately perceived. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure that the impact and outcome of gender equity are evaluated. All participants – project management and staff, beneficiaries, IFAD personnel, ministries, NGOs and other cooperating organizations – must be supported, stimulated and kept updated if they are to succeed in performing this challenging but rewarding task. Such an active involvement can only be guaranteed by a strict application of gender-sensitive legislation and by complying with established gender equity policies and strategies that nevertheless need to be flexible enough to adapt to specific needs and local characteristics.

We must realize that changing attitudes and deconstructing patriarchal structures and mind sets is not an easy task, particularly when it comes to amending distortions and malpractices that are traditionally embedded in culture and society at large. Some projects have slipped back to old practices; others have prospered and even developed innovative methods for gender mainstreaming.

Nevertheless, the seeds have been sown and changes are on their way in most projects. What is essential at this stage is that the tools for mainstreaming gender equity are disseminated. IFAD has to make further efforts to adopt a gender equity approach throughout its activities. The Fund ought to be able to guarantee and facilitate the adoption of a gender approach, both at institutional and operational levels, including all steps of its project cycle. PROSGIP, ProGender and all those consulted in connection with these programmes have made one observation perfectly clear: legislation and governmental support are necessary for sustaining gender mainstreaming. Development organizations need to make an effort to motivate governments to include gender strategies in their policies and institutional structures within their ministries and to monitor and safeguard a gender approach in all operations. If all women and men are allowed to participate in development efforts, the whole of society will benefit. This conviction is one of the reasons why a constant effort has to be made to apply a participatory and inclusive approach throughout the project cycles.

The following observations and recommendations sum up some of the important messages we have tried to convey:

- Gender equity has many dimensions. It is a human rights issue and it is about social justice and dignity. It is an instrument for empowering both women and men to realize their own potentials, thus benefiting not only their families, but also their communities. It is a very important element in the fight against social exclusion and poverty.
- Gender mainstreaming is a process that requires an active search for efficient tools and methods for implementing gender equity in rural development activities. Such tools and methods have to be found and tested in close cooperation with the people who are going to use them to improve their own lives. Accordingly, tools and methods should be adapted to the needs and wishes of beneficiaries and harmonized with their specific sociocultural context.
- If the sustainability of gender equity measures is going to be guaranteed, all activities and all decision-making have to be carried out with the active participation of the men and women who will implement and benefit from them. This means that staff of the development projects must listen to the beneficiaries and learn from their experiences, and at the same time should invite beneficiaries to benefit from their expertise and the assets they have to offer. All development work should be based on this essential feature of mutual listening and learning, a reciprocal giving and receiving.

- One of the greatest challenges in rural development work is not only the shifting natural environment, but that the entire social environment is in a state of constant change: people change, production systems change, households change, human relations change, politics change and even gender relations change. Development work has to be on the lookout for these changes and to try to enable rural people to reap the benefits offered by new opportunities that these changes can offer.

Development is often equated with 'progress', although this connotation may not always be entirely valid.[2] Other meanings such as 'open up' or 'unfold' are increasingly being considered to describe more adequately the process of development. When applied to gender awareness, 'development' could thus mean changing views and attitudes by opening up and unfolding new possibilities. On a personal level, it could signify the acquisition of an unbiased way of looking at our own behaviour, as well as that of the people around us. Being aware of the different roles we play may allow us to perceive ways to improve how we live our lives and consequently to find new ways to transform our existence and improve society. Development work often means working with other people and within an environment that is not entirely known to us. The implementation of gender mainstreaming may thus be similar to the process an anthropologist referred to when he described his fieldwork as a 'path toward a clearing';[3] that is, as a walk through a forest while listening to the sounds around you, taking in the smells, looking at things, meeting and talking to people, learning from them, while they learn from you, until you reach a clearing in the forest – something that does not mean that you have come to the end of your journey, only that you have reached a place and a moment for reflection. You pause and look back, while you plan your future actions.

The process of writing this book has been like a journey during which we met people and gained new experiences, only to pause and reflect upon what has been done so far and then think about which direction we will choose from now on. It may be argued that we have dealt with development in its spatial meaning of 'opening up' and 'unfolding'; that is, trying to get an overview of a very complex and challenging issue like 'gender mainstreaming'. Accordingly, gender mainstreaming could be understood as assisting women and men in rural areas in their efforts to gain access to an 'open' space of equal opportunities, where their joint efforts may support them in obtaining better control of their destiny and thus to secure their own well-being and that of coming generations.

In all development efforts, every single person counts. Every testimony, every voice is valuable. All of us, including the reader of these lines, have the right to open ourselves and to reflect upon what the objective of gender equality means in our lives and work. We wish to conclude this book with the statement made at the beginning by Petrona Leonor, from Cantón Santa Lucia in El Salvador: 'I perceive myself as a rough stone that was polished by PRODAP and I shine in such a way that it makes me and other people happy.'

We ourselves were rough stones that have been polished by our interaction with poor people in the countryside. They have taught us what gender equity really means and can accomplish. The joy of learning has been our compass on the journey through the unfolding process of gender mainstreaming in rural development projects.

## Endnotes

1/ WCED (1987), p. 43.

2/ The concept of 'progress' has lately been the object of scrutiny. It has been pointed out that 'progress' is to a high degree an 'occidental' notion that has been used to exploit both natural and human resources in a ruthless way, without taking into consideration the vulnerable cycles of our natural habitat, which has been much better protected and even venerated by other cultural and religious thought systems. For a critical overview of the occidental concept of 'progress', see Nisbet (1980).

3/ Jackson (1989).

# Annex I
# PROSGIP international seminars

**Table 1: PROSGIP seminars – partners and partnerships**

| Co-organizers | Participating countries | International seminar | Number of participants | | Number of participating programmes and projects | Number of participating institutions[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Men | Women | | |
| RUTA | Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama (preparatory meeting in Guatemala) | Antigua, Guatemala 7-11 June 1997 | 29 | 41 | 14 | 8 |
| CIARA | Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (preparatory meeting in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) | Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 8-13 June 1998 | 38 | 31 | 11 | 12 |
| CDB | Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (preparatory meeting in Barbados) | Castries, Saint Lucia 9-13 November 1998 | 23 | 13 | 13 | 16 |
| PROCASUR, INDAP | Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay (preparatory meeting in Uruguay) | La Serena, Chile 20-26 June 1999 | 50 | 57 | 17 | 19 |

## Co-organizers of the international seminars:

**RUTA**

The Regional Unit for Technical Assistance is a technical unit created as a joint initiative between Central American governments (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and the international development agencies World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UK Department for International Development (DFID), Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Development (IICA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IFAD. RUTA has its central office in Costa Rica and a national technical unit in each Central American country. The ministry of agriculture of each country defines the annual course of action and priorities of RUTA, while the international agencies participate in the activities through functionaries assigned to the various units. The agencies also offer monitoring and evaluation of both regional and national initiatives. At the regional level, RUTA cooperates with the Central American Council for Agriculture, an entity composed of the ministers of agriculture of each participating country.

**CIARA**

*Fundación para la Capacitación e Investigación Aplicada a la Reforma Agraria* (Foundation for Training and Applied Research on Agrarian Reform) has its headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and is mainly dedicated to capacity building directed to technical personnel, and managing and executing programmes and projects related to agrarian reform. The foundation also coordinates several projects not directly connected with agrarian reform, but dealing with rural development in general, among them projects cofinanced by the Ministry of Production and Commerce, IFAD and the Andean Co-operation for Development. Furthermore, the foundation coordinates a network of training and capacity building including the countries that participated in the gender workshop/seminar organized in the Dominican Republic.

**CDB**

The Caribbean Development Bank has its headquarters in Barbados. The Bank was established in 1970 to contribute to the economic growth and development of its Caribbean member countries, promoting economic cooperation and integration. The Bank's interest in mainstreaming gender is based on the fact that the recent trends of people-centred social concerns are reflected in the Bank's strategies for investment in its borrowing member countries. Within such a framework it has become natural for CDB to promote the strengthening of gender equality in its operations, staff training and projects. CDB cofinanced several projects with IFAD in the Caribbean countries and currently acts as IFAD's cooperating institution for project supervision.

**PROCASUR**

*Programa Regional de Capacitación en Desarrollo Rural* (Regional Programme for Rural Development Training)[2] is an organization established in Chile. PROCASUR trains technical project teams, developing their analytical, managerial and administrative skills. PROCASUR is financed by IFAD and contributions by various institutions, projects and associated professionals. It is made up of eight cooperating institutions: *Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, Centro de Estudios y Proyectos Alternativos de Desarrollo*, Enterprise Works Worldwide, *Grupo de Investigaciones Agrarias, Instituto de Fomento a la Comercialización Campesinas, Programa Regional de Apoyo a los Pueblos Indígenas de la Cuenca del Amazonas, Programa Regional de Apoyo al Desarrollo de Camélidos Sudamericanos* and *Seguimiento, Análisis y Evaluación para el Desarrollo*.

**INDAP**

*Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario* (National Institute for Agricultural Development) is a Chilean public entity established to promote the development of small-scale agriculture. INDAP executes rural projects all over the country, dealing with irrigation, soil conservation, rural tourism, capacity building for women and youth, and credit to small agricultural producers.

Endnotes

1/ Ministries, NGOs, international organizations and cooperating institutions.

2/ Recently the organization changed its name to *Corporación Regional de Capacitación en Desarrollo Rural* (Regional Corporation for Capacity Building in Rural Development).

Annex II

# Some prerequisites and recommendations for gender-sensitive development projects

In order to be efficient, gender mainstreaming must be introduced, applied and followed up in a strict and systematic way. It may include various prerequisites and specific steps. The following list of prerequisites and accompanying recommendations is based on observations, experiences and recommendations that emerged in connection with the PROSGIP and ProGender programmes. Accordingly they reflect the perspectives of project staff and focus on implementation issues. The role and obligations of project beneficiaries are not elaborated to the same extent.

**Making the gender gap visible and identifying affirmative actions**

The initial step towards creating a viable strategy for gender mainstreaming is to make gender gaps visible. Before any project is initiated, account needs to be taken of differences in the target population's economic and social activities. The age and the sex of heads of households should be investigated, as should the level of education of all family members, the number of people working within or outside the household, their workload and, of course, differences between men's and women's tasks and access to social and productive assets.

While gaining knowledge of the different roles played by individuals within specific rural communities, it becomes obvious that different family members view and understand development in a distinct way. As a result, they tend to adopt differentiated productive and reproductive strategies. It thus becomes necessary to identify the position and situation of men and women separately, identifying and implementing specific actions that may ensure equitable participation in and access to opportunities created by the project. It is also important to consider who does what on a farm, by crop

and by task, as well as who makes production- and domestic-related decisions within the household. Such considerations are the starting point for formulating gender equity strategies and methodologies that may be applied to the specific actions of each project component and sub-component. Results and insights gained from such investigations and a constant interaction with beneficiaries may create an awareness that will stay with all people who are engaged in implementing the projects. Gender mainstreaming means that a familiarity with gender issues is created in such a way that it can permeate the vision and actions of people engaged in development work.

While addressing gender issues within a project framework, it is important to avoid 'stand-alone' and 'add-on' activities. Stand-alone activities can mislead project implementers into thinking that all gender issues can be addressed within discrete, and usually minor components of an overall project. Add-on activities, which often are introduced after the completion of a project design, can prove to be administratively cumbersome and time-consuming since they lie outside the normal framework of operation.[1]

**Selecting project staff**

Since gender roles and attitudes are sociocultural constructs, they influence both social and individual spheres of human attitudes and behaviour, often in a very subtle way. It can be argued that a strict application of rules and guidelines can result in gender consciousness. Nevertheless, a profound change of attitudes generally demands more than that. Gender sensitivity has to be internalized and thus form the basis of strategies that include gender equity aspects in all project components. While interviewing candidates for technical and managerial positions, it may be opportune to ask questions that may help to identify the job applicant's attitudes vis-à-vis gender approaches and gender equity. Preference should be given to candidates who not only possess specific technical skills and experiences, but also show a positive attitude towards gender equality. Such openness may also imply a willingness to understand the specific world view and traditions of the people with whom they wish to collaborate. As gender equity is a cross-cutting issue, it should be the concern of each member of a project management team or unit to ensure the incorporation of a gender approach in all components. Generally, IFAD-supported projects contract co-executing agencies. From a gender equity point of view, it is essential that personnel from such agencies (governmental, NGOs or private enterprises) are recruited in a similar fashion as the one mentioned above and, if necessary, offered additional gender training.[2]

**Taking into consideration the particular needs of men and women**

Knowledge of the different tasks of men and women within specific rural communities, farming systems and positions in social networks can be acquired through research.[3] During such a process it is important to be aware of women's reproductive and productive tasks, particularly the fact that women are often engaged in unremunerated domestic work and remunerated productive activities, and may also participate in various communal activities. This implies that if women are to participate in additional project activities, special conditions will have to be created to ease their workload. Taking into consideration the particular needs of men and women also implies being sensitive to the fact that the situation of women and men with spouses is different from that of single-parent households. When gender-related needs are discussed, often the needs of women come to the forefront. Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that perceptions of men and their needs may be just as stereotyped as the prejudices about women. Men might also have special needs that can be addressed through the project. To achieve gender equity it is important to have an unbiased outlook and to listen carefully to both men and women. Gender roles are not fixed, but are subject to constant changes.

**Introducing gender equity in the project start-up workshops**

Start-up workshops are important in that they bring together all project actors. They are therefore an excellent forum for demonstrating the importance of mainstreaming gender issues, discussing different concerns the project staff may have regarding the project's gender strategy, and providing guidance on how to operationalize such a strategy. Some project-launch workshops of IFAD-supported projects in Latin America and the Caribbean have been quite successful in preparing the ground for and creating enthusiasm around the endeavours involved in project implementation. They foster the awareness of all stakeholders (including beneficiaries, project staff and participating NGOs) of the project scope, objectives, components and intervention strategies. Dedicating a day to discussing the gender strategy of a project is a way of demonstrating the importance of gender equality as well as a reminder that the issue of gender equity cannot be ignored during project implementation.[4]

**Conducting baseline studies using a gender equity approach**

The baseline studies that are normally conducted during the first year of a project may target a sample of rural families in the project area who are potential or actual beneficiaries. A baseline study may be designed in such

a way that questions are posed differently to men and to women. Such an approach may provide an impression of the internal organization of family households, as well as of their economic and social strategies, workload, obstacles to participation, access to resources and other factors that lead to differentiate positions and interests between men and women vis-à-vis development processes and actions. Various techniques have been developed in order to re-create a fairly accurate impression of people's activities and living space. These techniques are meant to be used with groups of potential or actual beneficiaries of and participants in development projects, as well as with CBOs. Foremost among them are:

- the 24-hour clock, which allows men and women to describe their daily activities;
- the annual calendar, used to map the activities of men and women over the calendar year;
- the village map, for men and women to describe infrastructure and resource bases and to indicate who has access to or control over existing assets;
- the future village map, a means to express and visualize expectations and concerns for the future; and
- institutional mapping, which allows men and women to describe local and external institutions, their presence, structure and functions, as well as in which way men and women participate in decision-making processes.[5]

These tools may support gender analyses and may be complemented with in-depth interviews and research to discern the peculiarities of every community, as well as the opinions and needs of different individuals. While describing the context in which gender roles thrive, analytical matrices may be used. These matrices include:

- the context matrix, which refers to factors that limit or facilitate equal access to assets and equal participation in development processes;
- the activity matrix, which helps to identify who does what;
- the resources matrix, which identifies the access men and women have to resources and income;
- the needs matrix, which highlights the particular needs and priorities of men and women; and
- the action matrix, which defines the mechanisms that may be introduced in project design and/or implementation in order to reduce gender inequities.[6]

Carrying out baseline studies is not necessarily limited to the initial phases of projects. Sometimes it happens that a project functions inadequately because initial studies have overlooked certain fundamental issues that are present in the project areas, such as political, ethnic or other social tensions, specific farming systems, a lack of markets or the unforeseen vulnerability of natural resources. A thorough, participatory baseline study may change the course of a project, making development workers and participants and beneficiaries conscious of fundamental problems and helping them to find new strategies to address them. When the CARC project in Ecuador found itself confronted with several problems, it was decided that a thorough baseline study had to be carried out. The initiative saved the project and contributed to its successful termination. As Rudolf Mulder, one of the project's consultants, related:

> Without the baseline study we would not have been able to redirect the project. Everyone was engaged. We all learned something and were proud of the results. The entire process took two years. One year in the field, then we processed the data and went back again. We returned to the interviewees four to five times. It is always sensitive and difficult to raise certain questions; for example, those connected with financial statements and labour division between husband and wife. We all had a hate-love relation with that study. However, in the end we all thought in a new way.[7]

The baseline study mentioned above also proved to be fundamental for a complete reorientation of the project's gender strategy.[8]

**Having a gender specialist who is an integral part of the project management**

Although gender should be the concern of all members of the project management, there is still a need for a gender specialist to support the process of gender mainstreaming. The gender specialist is not responsible for gender mainstreaming; rather, he or she has an advisory role and helps the project manager and thematic specialists to carry out their responsibilities for gender mainstreaming in their respective components. The specific tasks of a gender specialist may include participating in the elaboration of overall project and component strategies; the development and provision of training in practical methods; and the elaboration of monitoring indicators. He or she might also provide assistance in increasing the gender awareness of project staff, training co-executing agencies and supervising training efforts at the beneficiary level.[9]

**Training staff and beneficiaries**

To support the implementation of a gender approach, especially in projects where co-executing agencies are providing services under contract, it is essential that the technical specialists working in the field be trained and up to date in the operational and methodological aspects of the gender equity approach. The extension workers need to work in close cooperation with the gender specialist, who should provide intensive gender training to all field staff, including extension workers, credit agents and promoters. If the extension workers are hired by co-executing agencies, the project ought to include gender training for them as well; the project should also design and implement an effective system for monitoring this activity. It is advisable for projects to offer induction workshops early on in the implementation phase for all professional, technical and administrative staff. Such workshops could focus on the strategies, objectives and targets in terms of achieving the equitable participation of rural men and women in project activities. Furthermore, gender equity training should be offered on a continuous and systematic basis to all project participants, bearing in mind that each group will need differentiated content and depth. Ideally, gender equity training ought to be one of the first actions implemented in a project.[10]

**Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation**

An accurate definition of gender indicators is crucial for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of gender equity measures. To this end, it is important that projects have a monitoring and evaluation system that is equipped with indicators for the various activities programmed in each component and sub-component, ensuring that all information on beneficiary-targeted actions is disaggregated by sex. Project progress reports need to include information regarding the achievement of gender equity measures and their effect on the lives of women and men within the targeted communities.[11]

ProGender, in cooperation with the Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation of IFAD's Rural Poverty Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREVAL)[12] has developed a manual on gender indicators. Such indicators measure the distribution of power among men and women. They also refer to comparisons of gender differences concerning access to education, work, income, legal rights, health and housing. Indicators measure changes in relation to results.[13] If, for example, the impacts of a project are going to be measured and quantified, they can be presented as the number of families with male or female heads of household who have increased their income.

Impact may also be represented by the number of working hours a woman has gained through the introduction of time-saving devices or services. Effects can be quantified by the number of organizations that have contracted technical assistance, or by the number of women, compared with the number of men, who have become members of the boards of communal organizations, compared with the situation that prevailed at the initiation of the project.

Indicators may be characterized as quantitative when they measure quantities and frequencies in the form of numbers and percentages. Qualitative indicators refer to perceptions, practices, opinions, skills and deeds. They describe the situation and life conditions individuals find themselves in. Qualitative indicators may mirror power relations and inequalities. Examples of qualitative gender indicators are whether women are in charge of the strategic and operative plans for the organizations they have joined, or if they develop and present projects to public and private entities.[14] Indicators are neither rigid nor invariable. They provide reference points that constantly need to be revised, changed and adapted to new situations. However, when it comes to analysing the impact of gender equity actions, indicators may nevertheless be adapted to certain sets of themes, such as: i) access to productive resources; ii) access to financial services; iii) access to extension services and technical assistance; iv) capacity building; v) income; vi) resource control; and vii) political power.

The distribution of tasks may also be described by indicators; for example, descriptions of how much time is spent on reproductive, unremunerated work, compared to the time spent on remunerated productive work. Empowerment may be measured through participation in organizations and illustrations of what such participation means for social representation and self-esteem.[15]

**Operating budget**

Projects ought to earmark funding specifically for actions to promote women's participation and to ensure that the gender specialist has sufficient financial means to carry out his/her work. For instance, funds need to be available to purchase gender training materials and to conduct specific studies on the socio-economic situation of men and women in the project area, in particular studies that measure the effect of the project's gender equity strategy. Funds should be earmarked to relieve the workload of women beneficiaries, who otherwise might not be able to attend training events or other project activities, such as for the establishment of day care centres for small children. Projects also need to provide women with low-

cost technologies that will help them to reduce the amount of time they spend on household tasks. Obviously, women should be involved in identifying these activities so as to ensure that they are adequately defined and will have a direct impact on the quality of their life.[16] As consultant Pilar Campaña stated:

> You might say that without proper financing, there are no actions to guarantee gender equity. However, financing is always complicated. When it comes to gender, some projects may have a very specific budget for gender, while others have gender financing spread out under various components. Sometimes you have to assure financing by mixed approaches. Since the budget for project management units is not allowed to be more than 12 per cent of the entire budget, it may sometimes be necessary to finance gender actions under several components. However, there is always a risk that gender 'gets lost' or is 'diluted' if it is budgeted under various components.

The nine prerequisites and accompanying recommendations presented in this annex are not exclusive to achieving gender sensitivity in development projects, but in our experience they have proven to be effective for adapting lessons learned to future project design.

## Endnotes

1/ IFAD (2000:1), p. 16.

2/ Ibid., p. 20. Building on experiences gained from the development of gender awareness didactic material, IFAD-supported projects in El Salvador have developed a set of questionnaires for personnel selection.

3/ For example, in the Cuchumatanes Highlands Rural Development Project in Guatemala, IFAD supported a comprehensive and gender-sensitive study of the functioning of various production systems that later on proved to be helpful for the establishment of new and innovative strategies for technical assistance directed to men and women. The study described in detail how much of their time men and women dedicated to their work, what kind of activities they were engaged in and their particular needs. All data were gender-disaggregated and served as the basis for future technical assistance (Proyecto Cuchumatanes (1997)).

4/ IFAD (2000:1), p. 20.

5/ Ibid., p. 31.

6/ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

7/ IFAD (2001:3), p. 68.

8/ IFAD has been instrumental in developing manuals describing how gender-focused baseline studies may be carried out (IFAD/ProGénero/CODERSA (2003); Bello (2004).

9/ IFAD (2000:1) p. 19 and Appendix I 'Terms of reference gender expert'.

10/ Ibid., p. 19.

11/ Manuals for gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation have been developed by the PROPESUR projects in the Dominican Republic and the PRODAP projects in El Salvador (Ramírez (2003); Schreuel (2003:2).

12/ *Programa para el Fortalecimiento de la Capacidad Regional de Seguimiento y Evaluación de los Proyectos FIDA para la Reducción de la Pobreza Rural en América Latina y el Caribe.*

13/ Rotondo and Vela (2004).

14/ Ibid., pp. 12-22.

15/ Bello (2004), pp. 11-18.

16/ IFAD (2000:1).

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# Polishing the stone

## A journey through the promotion of gender equality in development projects

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius
Annelou Ypeij

After decades of theoretical debate about gender issues, this book offers practical methods for mainstreaming gender equity in rural development projects. Accompanied by straightforward testimonies offered by women and men from rural communities, the reader is taken on a journey through various gender geographies and invited to reflect on the relationship between gender equality and poverty reduction.

Examples from rural development projects in El Salvador and Peru highlight the importance of listening to rural people and adapting policies and practices to ever-changing socio-economic realities. Because these countries have recently experienced periods of internal strife, particular attention is also given to the relationships between poverty, gender and violent conflict.

By combining theoretical discussion with ethnographic descriptions and accounts of development practice, *Polishing the stone* demonstrates that development organizations must adapt their approaches to the reality of the people they try to assist, instead of applying preconceived solutions to poverty. The different perspectives on poverty, equity and respect and the aspirations expressed in the testimonies presented in this book deserve the attention not only of development practitioners, but also of policy-makers, governments and civil society organizations.

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Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty
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