

Promoting Women's Employment for Sustainable Development

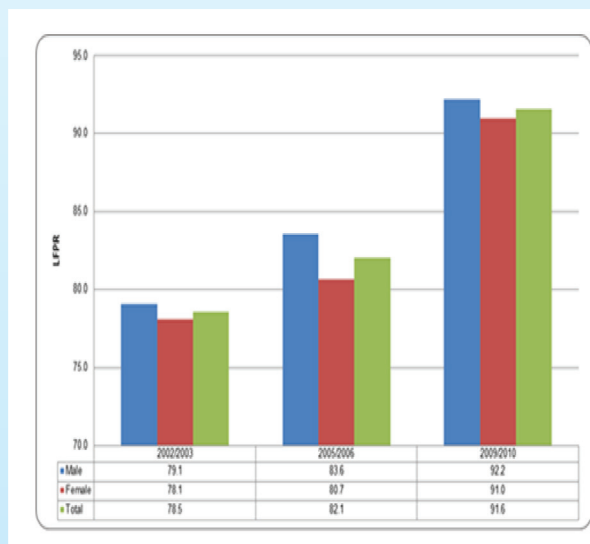
Step it UP for Gender equality

As we celebrate International Labour Day, it is important to recognize that decent jobs and a dynamic economy are mutually supportive, as incomes from work underpin consumption and investment. Jobs are not only a way out of poverty, but also give women and men a sense of identity, self-esteem and respect by society. The absence of job opportunities for women and exclusion from the labour market increase inequalities, weaken social cohesion and diminish trust in political leadership and institutions.

According to the Uganda Labor force Survey 2011/12, Ugandan labor force is estimated at 9.8 million for persons aged 14-64 years, of which 53% are female. About 80% are below the age of 30 years. 85% of the labor force is based in rural areas and about 30% are illiterate. The current labor force participation rate is at 80% and participation levels show that rural women have higher participation rates than their urban counterparts.

Uganda Labour Force Participation Rate

Source: UNHS



Women's access to income through decent employment and social protection is the most transformative way to promote women's economic empowerment and the achievement of substantive gender equality. It strengthens women's agency and bargaining power, with broader benefits for families and communities.

Women's economic empowerment and gender equality can be achieved by extending women's opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, access to social protection, and better prospects for personal and social development.

The relevance and quality of education can also hinder the economic empowerment of young women and girls. Too often girls complete education that does not prepare them for the job market. ICTs are particularly relevant in this regard. ICTs are ubiquitous – 90% of all future jobs will require ICT skills. ICT skills can enhance women's employability, as well as their opportunities and for life-long learning. However, due to many factors, girls' and

young women's access to basic ICT is limited. The gender specific issues around digital divide means that women and girls have less access, awareness, literacy and technical skills than men and boys to ICTs.

This means that settings where the most formidable challenges to girls and women education and decent work exist, are also the very settings where technology solutions maybe less ably applied. Limited job searching skills and networks further constrains women to fully leverage marketable skills for work.

Through a new flagship program, UN Women in close partnership with private sector, aims to expand young women's opportunities and capacities in advanced ICT technical, entrepreneurial and vocational skills and expand opportunities for internships and job placement programmes.

Why address gender inequalities between women and men in employment? Why is it important?

Today women and men participate in the labor market, but on different and unequal terms, and the barriers to women's full participation put the brakes on economic growth and recovery.

Poverty disproportionately affects women, and cultural and other forms of marginalization and gender-based stereotypes reinforce the perception of women's primary role being a domestic role while men's public roles are seen as "natural", contributing to marginalization of women from access to resources, including in the world of formal work.

As we mark Internal Labour Day, we need to develop a judicious mix of macroeconomic, labor market and social protection policies to promote gender equality in employment, drawing on the raft of good practices to advance national action. Attempts to ensure better working conditions for women require more than narrow, specific targeted and directed programmes.

Wages Globally



Such efforts must be part of broader macroeconomic and sectoral policies that focus public spending on employment creation and decent work for women combined with universal access to quality essential social services, such as health, education, child care and various forms of social protection.

We need to enact policies that we consider effective to reduce gender gaps in employment and help households reduce the gender bias in their work decisions. For example policies and programmes are needed to improve infrastructure which can alleviate household work.

Share of women in non-agricultural wage employment			
	2002/2003	2005/2006	2009/2010
Total	30.1	28.8	36.18
Urban	38.6	33.3	39.19
Rural	25.2	24.8	33.09
Central	32.0	32.1	39.0
Eastern	33.3	27.9	27.9
Northern	32.1	24.1	27.0
Western	24.4	23.4	41.3

Source: UNHS



There is need to promote women in non-agriculture wage employment

Today millions of women walk miles each day to fetch water or to find transport, or spend huge amounts of time preparing food because they simply do not have access to the simplest of technology that many of us take for granted. They lack time-saving household appliances and they lack electricity and clean water.

Thus greater investments are needed in infrastructure and public services, such as electricity, sanitation, clean water, and transportation. These investments improve labour market conditions for women by reducing the time needed to complete household tasks and by improving mobility. Policies and programmes are needed to provide care services, especially child care, to reduce the burden of care and support women's participation in the labour force.

Moving forward, UN Women will support women organizing in labour and product markets to improve the terms and conditions of employment and exchange. UN Women will also support gender audits of existing labour laws and corporate commitments to redress existing gender inequalities.

UN Women is a UN agency for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

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