

Gender and Skills Development: A Review

Background paper for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012

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**GENDER AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW
BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE EFA GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT 2012**

**By Alícia Borges Månsson and Ulf Färnsveden
(Hifab International, Sweden)
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United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

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Prepared by:
Alicia Borges Månsson and Ulf Färnsveden
Hifab International

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ACRONYMS

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
CEDELS	Local economic development centres
CLAEH	Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana
EFA	Education for All
ENVILA	Belarus NGO (name stands for moral values, hope, faith, love)
GALAE	General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
ICT	information and communication technology
ICT4IE	ICT for Illiteracy Eradication
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (United Nations)
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NADEZHDA	networking, activity, development, efficiency, zest, hard work, drive and achievement
NGO	non-governmental organization
PAPPUM	Programme to Aid the Population in the Periphery in Urban Montevideo
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in 2000 by then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. It originated in the widespread realization that millions of girls were still unable to fulfil their right to education, despite almost universal endorsement of this right through ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. When UNGEI was launched, more than half of the children out of school were girls – and despite progress in many countries, that reality still holds true.

UNGEI promotes girls' education and works for gender equality in education through a network of partners at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. The initiative works specifically to eliminate barriers that keep girls out of school. UNGEI envisions a world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential, leading to true equality between the sexes. Its work is driven in particular by two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Goal 2, which calls for universal primary education, and Goal 3, which promotes gender equality and empowerment of women.

Since 2008, UNGEI has prepared an annual Gender Review of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR). The objective of the review is: to critically examine the strengths and gaps that emerge from monitoring EFA goals from a gender perspective; and to inform advocacy messages on education and gender equality in key thematic areas for governments, development partners and civil society actors.

In 2011, rather than providing an after-the-fact review, UNGEI contributed to the development of the GMR by commissioning a background paper that addresses skills development from a gender perspective.¹ The paper explores elements of gender that should be included within the larger analytical framework on skills development for marginalized youth aged 15–24, and includes:

- A review of secondary data identifying available information and gaps in the area of gender and skills development, including an extensive bibliography;
- A gender framework to analyse and understand skills development within the broader context of EFA goals and gender and labour market linkages; and
- Examples of successful strategies that empower young women in the labour market.

UNGEI welcomes the GMR 2012 focus on skills development for marginalized groups, including girls and young women. It is particularly timely considering the structural changes in the global economy, the geopolitics of offshore production, the growth of the service sector and the changes wrought by the ongoing global financial crisis. What this paper clearly indicates is that while there is a lack of reliable information and statistics to analyse the impact of these forces on girls and young women, especially those from marginalized groups,² there is a near absence of well-documented and evaluated

¹ The paper was developed by Hifab International at the request of UNGEI.

² Seguino 2009.

interventions and strategies to address skills development among marginalized youth. Much more research is needed on gender and skills development, employment and integration in the global economy, and women's empowerment.

There is no evidence that women have been more affected than men in the ongoing financial crisis. But there is some evidence to show that in most of the developing world, women are increasingly joining the ranks of 'vulnerable' workers who are considered "less likely to have formal work arrangements, and often carry a higher economic risk."³ Women and girls in poor households are vulnerable everywhere, but especially in countries with high child mortality rates and low rates of female schooling.⁴ Clearly, the global economy requires new skills and measures to address macroeconomic issues from a gender perspective if MDG 3 is to be achieved.

The World Bank's 2012 World Development Report, *Gender Equality and Development*, clearly asserts that gender equality matters, for both development outcomes and policymaking. It matters because gender equality is both a core development objective in its own right and also smart economics. It enhances productivity and improves other development outcomes, including prospects for the next generation and for the quality of societal policies and institutions.

GENDER, EMPLOYMENT AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Globalization in the form of trade liberalization increases the flow of goods and capital across countries and also contributes to economic growth. But its impact on the poor depends on the sector and on the stage of the development cycle. For example, agricultural growth tends to reduce poverty and improve food security during the early stages of development, as happened during the Green Revolution in India. In contrast, rapid growth that widens income inequality – which has occurred in both industrialized and developing countries during the past two decades – is likely to hurt the poor. Women are disproportionately affected by widening inequality, because they tend to earn lower wages and to have less education, fewer skills and less mobility than men.⁵

Globalization may also affect the mix of formal and informal employment in the developing world.⁶ As globalization increases, multinational corporations that invest in developing countries provide more employment opportunities for women, exploiting their willingness to work for low wages and their lack of mobility. These companies, particularly in the textile and clothing industries, have increased women's employment possibilities, although the jobs are often characterized by long working hours, job insecurity, unhealthy working conditions and low pay.

³ International Labour Organization 2009.

⁴ Walby 2009.

⁵ Nallari and Griffith 2011.

⁶ Benería 2001.

In Viet Nam, for example, the growth in manufacturing has provided more jobs in non-farm employment.⁷ This has led to increased mobility of labour from rural to urban areas, especially among women in search of higher-paying opportunities. But young women unable to obtain these jobs often seek work in low-skilled, low-paying occupations, including domestic work. These women cannot compete equally with men in the private sector partly because of discrimination in the recruitment process and partly because they frequently have less education and fewer skills than young men.

The vast majority of the working poor still earn their living in the informal economy, which is characterized by low average earnings, high risk, lack of social protections such as health insurance, and the absence of labour unions to protect their rights.⁸ Informal workers, however, are beginning to organize. For example, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, street and market vendor associations are combining into larger organizations,⁹ and growing numbers of associations are joining StreetNet International, the international alliance of street and market vendors.

In response to these issues, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed the Decent Work Agenda. It calls for creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue through workers' and employers' organizations. Ensuring fairer conditions for workers requires governments to take action to implement international labour standards, which address pay equity, social security standards, discrimination, equal treatment, and reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.

Although there is little reliable data on informal workers, women are believed to constitute most of the informal workforce in the developing world.¹⁰ This is partly because they are largely confined to the most flexible and lowest-paid industries due to their domestic responsibilities and gender inequalities in education and the formal labour market.

The relationship between informal employment, gender and poverty has three characteristics:¹¹

1. The informal economy is heterogeneous but can be meaningfully classified into segments: employers who hire others, informal employees, own-account operators, casual wage workers, industrial outworkers/home workers and unpaid contributing family workers.
2. Men tend to be over-represented in the top segment (employers) and women tend to be over-represented in the bottom segments (home workers and unpaid contributing family workers). The relative shares of men and women in the

⁷ Kabeer 2005.

⁸ International Labour Organization 2010.

⁹ Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.

¹⁰ Benería 2001.

¹¹ Chen 2004.

intermediate segments – own-account operators and informal wage workers – tend to vary across sectors and countries.

3. Gaps in wages or earnings in the informal economy are significant worldwide. On average, employers have the highest earnings and home workers have the lowest, while own-account workers and wage workers earn somewhere in between, depending on the economic sector and country.

Because a higher proportion of men are in the top segment, they tend to earn more than women. Wages or earnings are lower in the informal economy than in the formal economy, and a higher percentage of people working in the informal economy are poor. Employment in the formal economy is, however, no guarantee of escaping poverty.

Given these dynamics, economic crises often place a disproportionate burden on women, especially poor women, migrants and minorities.¹² Gender-specific implications of the global financial crisis include the following:¹³

- **Greater unemployment:** As a result of gender norms that perceive men to be the more 'legitimate' job holders, especially when jobs are scarce, women are often the first to be fired in sectors affected by economic crises. Even when gender norms do not operate explicitly, women, who have typically entered labour markets after men, are more likely to be let go first during retrenchments, under the common policy of 'last hired, first fired'.
- **Lower wages:** Around the world, women earn less than men for similar work. In addition, men's greater power in the workplace puts women at a disadvantage in negotiating wages and hours.
- **Falling demand for exports:** Economic crises tend to significantly reduce demand for textile and agricultural exports. Women predominate in these industries and are therefore disproportionately affected by job losses.
- **Less access to finance:** Of the estimated 133 million micro-finance clients in 2006, 79 million (59 per cent) were women, and women constituted 85 per cent of the poorest 93 million clients.¹⁴ Declining liquidity in the financial sector is expected to reduce women's access to credit.
- **Increased stress and violence:** Rising food and fuel prices add stress and hardship to families, increasing the incidence of violence against women.
- **Discriminatory monetary and fiscal policies:** Government responses to recessions often hit women disproportionately, such as through cuts in public sector budgets. This is particularly acute in countries where women participate in

¹² Antonopoulos 2009.

¹³ Antonopoulos 2009.

¹⁴ Daley-Harris 2007.

the formal sector primarily through jobs in state-supported health, education and social services. Reductions in spending on health and education also reduce access to basic services. Girls and women tend to shoulder a heavier burden in such cases, such as when girls are withdrawn from school to help with household work, or when reduced access to health and social services increases the burden of domestic 'caring work' by women and adolescent girls.

- ***Declining remittances:***¹⁵ Empirical evidence suggests that declining remittances have an impact on gender roles in complex ways and are contingent on the larger context of social and cultural processes and change that affect the community. For example, Haitian women, through migration and remittances, have been able to change the political landscape and have challenged traditional gender roles. In contrast, in Morocco, the lives of migrants' wives have remained largely confined to domestic chores and agricultural work. Although women have tended to have more control over the use of their husbands' earnings and in child-rearing, this gain in authority has been temporary, with no long-term impact on gender relations in the larger community.

Economic growth alone cannot eradicate gender inequality. It is structurally informed by laws, cultural practices and government policies that have resulted in a social hierarchy that grants more power to men and boys than to women and girls. Improving access to training, education and skills development will help to ameliorate this inequality by facilitating young women's employment. Having more women in the labour market will also influence gender relations in society.

The mismatch between education, training and labour market demand

Between 1995 and 2005, youth unemployment rose globally by 14 per cent, from 74 million to 85 million. In 2005, youth accounted for 45 per cent of all unemployed people but only 25 per cent of the working-age population.¹⁶

The discrepancy between skills and the needs of the labour market is a major factor preventing young women and men from finding or maintaining stable employment.¹⁷ Higher unemployment rates and increasing worldwide competition highlight the need to raise the education and skill level of the workforce. Poor education quality leads to a significant mismatch between labour market needs and the skills of graduates. For example, newly created jobs increasingly require critical thinking skills, but in many countries schools fail to develop these skills.

Girls and young women are especially affected by these realities. Girls are at high risk of dropping out in the transition from primary to secondary school because of both supply and demand factors. Secondary school is more costly per pupil than primary school, and few low-income countries provide secondary school for free. In addition, distance to

¹⁵ de Haas 2007.

¹⁶ Levine et al. 2009.

¹⁷ European Union 2009.

school often increases at the secondary level. This leads parents to discourage girls from continuing, due to risks to their reputation and marriage prospects. Thus, particular focus should be given to education quality and the social barriers affecting girls aged 10–14.

Girls and women with disabilities suffer from double discrimination – based on gender and disability. They often face physical and mental abuse, including rape and other forms of violence. Exclusion of people with disabilities is common; according to UNESCO, only 2 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries go to school.

Academic subject matter is another area of gender inequality. Women are the majority in such fields as health and welfare, education, and humanities and arts. But they are under-represented – in some cases significantly – in such fields as engineering, manufacturing, construction and science. This trend in turn influences women’s professional choices and income levels. Consequently, efforts are needed not only to achieve parity in education but also to help overcome the political, economic and social barriers that hinder females from pursuing employment in traditionally ‘male’ fields and making use of their education and skills.

Young women also lack equitable access to public vocational training, apprenticeship programmes and other job-training programmes. These are crucial for developing skills useful in emerging markets and value-added activities. Efforts are needed to open up job-training opportunities in field beyond those considered ‘suitable’ for women, which are often lower paying than jobs considered suitable for men. Efforts are also needed to get women into job-training initiatives that will prepare them for the new jobs available in the global economy.¹⁸ A 2009 World Bank report about technical and vocational education and training in Afghanistan identified the lack of marketable skills for young women as the most important barrier to female participation in training and job placement.¹⁹

Finding employment is more difficult for young women than for young men, partly because curricula and teaching materials often reinforce traditional roles that may deny women opportunities for full and equal participation in society. This is despite recent investments in girls’ education and educational systems that are sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women.²⁰

As an UNGEI report states, “...on the supply side, females should not be limited to certain subject areas in their training and education by any constraint other than their own choice, while on the demand side, more emphasis should be placed on creating

¹⁸ UNGEI 2008, p. 21.

¹⁹ World Bank 2009.

²⁰ Yet the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which entered into force in 1981 and has been ratified by 187 countries, requires States Parties to “take all appropriate measures” to eliminate discrimination against women in education and employment, to provide equal access to the same curricula as men, to reduce female drop-out rates, to organize programmes for women and girls who have left school prematurely and to take other actions aimed at helping the educational and professional advancement of girls and women.

jobs, particularly those of the calibre that allow women to make the most of their education and skills.”²¹

Studies show that demographic growth in many developing countries, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, has created a large cohort of young people under 25 years old. This is raising rates of enrolment in all levels of education.²² These trends have major implications for education and labour markets. An enormous increase will be needed in human and financial resources to provide more and higher quality education. Similarly, labour markets will face difficulties in absorbing all these new workers. For instance, in Egypt, despite many efforts to increase employment rates, employment levels remain low compared with those of other regions.²³

Despite decades of efforts to promote gender equality in the labour market by governments and international organizations, imbalances persist.²⁴ Women face more obstacles than men in entering the work force, retaining jobs, developing in their working life and combining work and family life. Privatization and economic reform have shrunk the public sector and diminished government’s role as an employer. This too has hurt women more than men, since women tend to seek public sector employment, mainly because it tends to provide more social security and more equal opportunities than the private sector.

Women working in the public sector tend to be employed as teachers and nurses, underscoring traditional gender stereotypes of women as caregivers. This occupational segregation has resulted in underuse of women’s labour and feminization of certain occupations, which in turn has reduced overall wage rates. The lack of gender equality can also be seen in pay differentials, unequal career opportunities, gender differences in sick leave and under-representation of women in high-level positions. The shrinkage of opportunities in the formal sector also means a loss of jobs available to women with higher levels of education.²⁵

Challenging labour market stereotypes

In many societies, gender bias reduces economic opportunities for girls and young women. Deprivation and discriminatory cultural norms force many girls from poor families into early marriage and childbearing, where they are extremely vulnerable to HIV, sexual violence and physical exploitation. The burden of domestic tasks – such as caring for siblings or the elderly, tending to livestock and collecting water and firewood – also restricts girls’ access to educational, social and economic opportunities. Poverty compels

²¹ UNGEI 2009, p. 21.

²² World Bank 2007; Jesús Alquézar et al. 2009.

²³ Education Transition Fund, 2009. The report states that Egypt has improved activity rates – defined as the percentage of the population, both employed and unemployed, that constitutes the manpower supply of the labour market – (from 46 per cent of the population aged 15–64 in 2003 to 50 per cent in 2007), employment rates (from 41 per cent in 2003 to 46 per cent in 2007) and unemployment rates (from 11 per cent in 2003 to 9 per cent in 2006).

²⁴ International Labour Organization 2007.

²⁵ Spierings, N., and J. Smits 2007.

many young women to seek employment in the informal sector, where they find themselves limited to low-skilled jobs with minimal income potential, long hours and unequal power relations that often lead to exploitation. Girls' opportunities are particularly limited in rural areas, where they face restricted mobility and access to education.

In all societies, certain jobs and roles are considered 'male' or 'female'. Society defines characteristics as masculine or feminine and attributes different behaviours, roles, values, norms, perceptions, expectations and responsibilities to men or women accordingly. Each society is different, and every society develops and changes its practices over time, so norms, gender roles and relations change as well.

The larger problem is that the characteristics and roles associated with women and girls tend to be valued less than those associated with men and boys. Across the world, women generally have less access to resources and fewer rights, and girls have less access to school and less spare time. This also means that women and girls tend to have less access to power and thus fewer possibilities to control and change their lives. This conflicts with article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which states that, "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women."

Discrimination in labour markets often reinforces gender disparities. This limits the returns on girls' education, which makes parents sceptical about the benefits of sending their daughters to school. The 2011 GMR (page 11) pointed out that "...gender disparities in labour force participation for the 15–24 age group are high in all regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean, where the secondary school participation rates are in favour of girls." However, the latter does not necessarily translate into enhanced women's participation in the labour market.

Occupational segregation is one of the most significant and deep-rooted aspects of the labour situation in the world today. However, segregation and hierarchy do not begin with the labour market. These phenomena are already apparent in unequal access to education and training, the organization of roles within families, gender-related duties and rights, and distribution of resources.

Education can play a role in breaking down gender disadvantages that hamper the development of women's skills. Strategies include financial incentives for girls' education, developing girl-friendly school environments, improving access to technical and vocational programmes, and providing non-formal education.²⁶

The involvement of youth and their families and communities in developing safe spaces for boys and girls to learn and share ideas is an essential strategy to address the social

²⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2011.

and gender norms that discriminate against girls. The project *Våga bryta mönstret*²⁷ (Dare to break the pattern) summarized in Box 1 shows how important it is to start the process of deconstructing stereotypes at an early stage of schooling.

Box 1. Combating gender stereotypes in Swedish schools

Breaking gender stereotypes at school requires educating staff about the role of gender and sex in learning and teaching them to treat boys and girls as individuals, not as a homogenous group based on assumptions about how the different sexes 'should be'.

A project to break down traditional gender patterns was undertaken between 2001 and 2003 in western Sweden. About 20 groups were set up, representing all ages from preschool to high school. Also included were adults in education systems, such as nannies, preschool teachers, special education teachers, school health care staff, caretakers and school leaders. Since traditional gender patterns are established early, action in preschool was considered key.

The results of the project showed that changing core values is a long process. Change was more successful in preschool and primary school, partly because at this age classes are small and stay together the whole day.

For more details, see Case Study 1 in Appendix 1 (page 31).

The well-being of girls is vital for societies – and protecting girls' rights and fostering their opportunities is crucial for economic development.²⁸ Yet girls remain at the margins of development policies and programmes. Education is not enough to end labour market disparities – gender disadvantages must also be overcome in society at large.

Presentation in the mass media plays a strong role in preserving stereotypes, and it is important to spend resources to make changes in media perceptions. In the Russian Federation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) undertook a project in which Russian journalists interviewed and filmed the daily lives of Swedish people working in non-stereotypical professions. These included a female parliamentarian with children in preschool, a male nurse, a female pilot, a male kindergarten teacher, a female managing director and a 'house husband' caring for his children and undertaking domestic duties. They discussed their professional and family lives and their thoughts about male and female roles. These films were then aired on Russian television, in combination with a talk show that discussed male and female roles among Russian people. The idea was to promote a balanced portrayal of women and men in the media.

The Center for Global Development, a think tank based in Washington, D.C., has produced two editions of 'Girls Count', a paper that discusses why and how to invest in adolescent girls. The 2009 edition had three major recommendations.²⁹

²⁷ Larsson 2004.

²⁸ Levine et al. 2009.

²⁹ Levine et al. 2009.

- **Count girls.** Disaggregate data of all types – health, education, programme beneficiaries – by age and sex. Doing so will make girls more visible to policymakers and reveal where girls are excluded.
- **Invest in girls.** Make strategic and significant investments in programmes focused on adolescent girls, commensurate with their importance as contributors to achievement of economic and social goals.
- **Give girls a fair share.** In employment, social programmes, protection of human rights and all other domains, ensure that adolescent girls benefit equitably. In many cases, this will require explicit and deliberate efforts to overcome household and social barriers.

The paper also highlighted a number of priorities for a range of influential actors:

- **For national and local governments in developing countries:** Create a legal environment that treats girls fairly, deliver social services equitably and ensure that public works and employment-guarantee programmes target young women.
- **For donors and technical agencies:** Support the priorities named above and further contribute to programmes regarding girls and post-primary education. The report notes: “Donors must focus on the quality of education and the social barriers in the transition between primary and secondary levels, typically affecting girls ages 10–14.”
- **For private employers:** Practise non-discrimination (based on gender, marital status or pregnancy) in hiring and pay; provide fair wages and employment benefits to both men and women; and improve young women’s access to and control over their earnings.
- **For civil society:** Advocate for changes in social attitudes and norms; create safe spaces for girls; offer informal education, including school-to-work programmes; and protect informal-sector workers by advocating for their rights, organizing workers and providing them with social and economic services.

The paper also noted that such actions provide a starting point for setting agendas country by country and should inform donor and technical agencies and private charities about where gains can be made.

PATHS TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The term ‘skills development’ refers to the productive capacities acquired through education and training in formal, non-formal and on-the-job settings. Skills development initiatives enable individuals at all economic levels to engage productively in livelihoods

and to adapt their capacities to meet the changing demands and opportunities of the economy and labour market.³⁰

Specific job skills – literacy, numeracy, languages, vocational skills and information and communication technology (ICT) – are not enough. Also needed are ‘soft’ skills that are fundamental to succeeding in the work world, such as knowing how to learn, search for a job, manage people, work on a team, speak in public, network and behave in a self-confident manner.

New jobs require more innovation, entrepreneurship and knowledge of technology (see Box 2), while also demanding increasing flexibility of workers. More women are working as subcontractors or home workers in manufacturing, while seasonal employment is increasing in the agricultural sector. Increasing numbers of jobs are temporary, coming with few or no benefits.

Box 2. Ending the ‘gender digital divide’ in Egypt

The Government of Egypt has invested in ICT as it works to build a knowledge-based society and seize opportunities for women’s employment and empowerment. As part of an effort to transform the ‘gender digital divide’, the Government has initiated a programme known as Information and Communication Technology for Elimination of Illiteracy (ICT4EI). Its objective is to eradicate illiteracy among 10,000 people every year in 10 of the country’s 27 governorates. The programme involves collaboration with the non-governmental sector to create educational content on compact discs that trainees can use anywhere, such as at home or in community centres or NGO offices. This approach makes training available in remote areas.

The interactive computer-based tutorial teaches basic reading and writing skills. The curriculum reflects everyday life, using sound and music effects. The results have been promising: ICT4EI recorded 86 per cent attendance among trainees, compared with 57 per cent in similar courses not using the software. Furthermore, while the regular classes had a passing rate of only 40 per cent, the class using the software had an 80 per cent passing rate. The software is currently being distributed in 9 of the country’s 27 governorates by NGOs.

Much of the success of the programme is due to the introduction of the innovative ‘tabluter’, or computer set-up. Built around the concept of a traditional tableya, a low, round table traditionally used for eating in rural Egypt, the tabluter uses a single computer processor that can accommodate four independent users, each equipped with his/her own screen, keyboard, mouse and sound card. This offers rural women an opportunity to learn ICT skills without having to travel far from home. Such an approach respects community traditions, which had prevented women from becoming literate and learning about technology. State commitment and community participation are also ingredients in the programme’s success.

For more details see Case Study 2 in Appendix 1 (page 32).

³⁰ King and Palmer 2006, p. 16.

Many developing countries suffer from ‘skill polarization’, meaning that a minority of workers need specialist skills while the majority need only minor training and skills. This leads to fewer high-level, well-paying jobs and more low-skilled jobs offering little opportunity for upward occupational mobility.

Given the number of people working in the informal economy, that is where investments should be concentrated. Investments in skills development and complementary inputs such as access to credit and technology can play an important role in poverty reduction, particularly for women and vulnerable groups. In many countries, apprenticeships are a very important means of training in the informal sector. Civil society groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious-based providers and for-profit trainers are important and growing providers of skills training in sub-Saharan Africa, for example.³¹

Informal training provided by employers is also largely self-financing, self-regulating and cost-effective. The economic benefits of such training are substantial in terms of wage growth and value-added per worker. Worker training can also raise productivity significantly. Vocational education and skills training are also provided by formal institutions such as secondary schools, universities, and vocation and technical schools.

Skills development through formal education

Substantial progress has been made in increasing girls’ enrolment in primary and secondary school, but gender inequality persists at both levels. The constraints limiting girls’ education and training include factors in the home, community and school. Many obstacles are contextual and vary from country to country. The common constraints include:³²

- **Systemic constraints:** Limited access to quality education and training, especially in rural areas; dysfunctional and poor-quality schools that lack running water and toilets and are unfriendly to girls and sometimes dangerous; overcrowded classrooms; tuition and other schooling costs; and lack of trained and motivated teachers.
- **Content and process constraints:** Teaching methods and materials that perpetuate gender bias and stereotypes, such as different treatment of boys and girls; irrelevant curricula; language issues; and limited or no access to appropriate reading materials.
- **Economic, cultural and social constraints:** Endemic poverty and powerlessness; the burden of household labour; discrimination against girls and

³¹ Johanson 2004.

³² Grown, Gupta and Kes 2008, ‘Seven Priorities, Seven Years to Go: Progress on achieving gender equality’, International Center for Research on Women, Washington, D.C.; GMR 2011; and Herz and Sperling 2004, ‘What Works in Girls’ Education: Evidence and policies from the developing world’, Council on Foreign Relations.

women, including early marriage and restrictions on mobility; self-perceptions; and limited employment opportunities.

The approach to education needs to be holistic, emphasizing early childhood development and early literacy as well as efforts to keep girls in primary school. Investments in nutrition, health and water and sanitation are also important for their educational development. Along with education, girls and young women need access to such services and control over their own mobility.

Primary schooling facilitates preparation for productive work by equipping workers with the basic skills they need to succeed in later training and at work; therefore, such schooling needs to be of high quality and to reach everyone. This is a challenge for developing countries. Girls in particular have unequal access to quality education and to technical and vocational education and training. And even high-quality education does not always translate into higher employment rates due to a mismatch between skills and labour market demand and to social, economic and political barriers.

These disparities originate at diverse points in the educational system, but most can be traced to the primary level. Constraints facing girls include late entry age, poor performance and higher drop-out rates, which translate into lower rates of transition to secondary level. The barriers get higher at the secondary level, where girls face early marriage and dropout due to parental concerns about safety. Secondary education is normally more costly, and parents may opt not to send their daughters if they believe that education does not command social value.³³ In some developing countries, access to secondary and higher education continues to be limited, along with its quality.

Providing quality, relevant education is fundamental for retaining children, especially girls, in school. It is the key to equipping girls with the skills to secure a livelihood and participate in society and the economy. It is also the best way to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge that will allow them to progress through school and join the labour market.

As the 2011 GMR noted, “Gender inequalities in education and employment have profoundly damaging consequences for the life chances of individuals and national economies.” Education and training must be made more inclusive by providing all children with access to education and training and by ensuring that they feel respected, confident and safe, so they can develop to their full potential.

Skills development for out-of-school adolescents

Despite progress in reducing gender gaps in education, in many countries girls continue to have higher drop-out rates. According to the 2011 GMR gender review, girls are disproportionately represented among out-of-school children and adolescents (both dropouts and those who never entered school) and the illiterate population worldwide.

³³ GMR 2011.

Children who leave primary school often do so for economic reasons. As they work, they gather some knowledge and training from parents, elder siblings and the community, and some may attend informal schools or classes at youth centres. But most who leave school will remain uneducated, having missed their chance to gain the knowledge and skills to advance in the labour market. In most cases, the effects will be permanent, consigning them to life in the poorly paid and insecure informal sector, including in agriculture.

Secondary school leavers, with their higher levels of education, may have the option of pursuing further education and training or employment in the formal or informal sectors. Some may opt to undertake higher education and later enter the formal labour market.³⁴ Those with some secondary education have more options than those without, but they normally face the challenges of subsistence (food, shelter and clothing) and of mapping out a career that will provide security in adult life.

Women tend to have more obstacles in accessing training and skills development due to their multiple roles and responsibilities and gender bias in and outside the home. For this reason, investments in post-primary education are especially critical for women and should cover secondary education as well as job training. Skills development also needs to be supported by career guidance and mentoring to ensure girls make a smooth transition to work.

Skills can be acquired in a number of ways. Those working in the formal sector may receive training through employers. Workers in the informal sector learn skills on the job and through family members while working in family occupations. Skill transfer also takes place, although in smaller numbers, through vocational courses run by government agencies. Many NGOs also provide vocational training in the informal sector, reaching out-of-school children, especially girls and young women.

Other approaches, such as Village Training Centres for Development, have been promoted successfully, especially in Kenya, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).³⁵ This approach promoted community ownership of training and education, which enhanced productivity, increased the focus on developing life skills and resulted in an education and training system likely to complement rather than conflict with family responsibilities. The case studies presented in Boxes 3 and 4 provide additional examples.

NGOs also offer 'catch-up' programmes combining literacy and learning for livelihoods, which can support the transition to employment. They include school-to-work programmes, apprenticeships and skills-building through professional centres for adolescent girls. These centres can also offer after-school programmes that teach girls financial literacy and life skills.

³⁴ International Labour Organization 1972.

³⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2004.

Such programmes, however, have mixed results. As pointed out by Mukul Mukherjee in an analysis of training facilities in India, “Skill training arrangements for the informal sector ... continue to suffer from gravely inadequate focus in terms of financial support and quality and content of skill training programmes, as well as in terms of the outreach and impact of training.”³⁶

Box 3. Reconnecting disaffected youth in Sweden

‘Young in’ is a project of the National Employment Services and a young people’s centre called *Fryshuset* in Sweden. It works with young people 16 to 24 years old who are not in education, employment or training, helping them re-engage and become productive. First, the young people undertake a mapping of their background, looking at health, living conditions, schooling, family situation, work experience and contacts with authorities. Based on the results, the centre plans activities to address their needs.

The participants can receive guidance, hear motivational talks, find a mentor and participate in study visits, apprenticeships and short-term jobs lasting three to six months. They also receive life skills training and job search assistance and participate in activities to raise their self-image.

The ultimate goal is for youths to feel better about themselves and develop closer links to the labour market. A programmatic goal is for at least 45 per cent of the youth to return to school or find a job. All activities in the programme have a gender perspective, and there is regular monitoring of data addressing the gender balance in interventions.

For more details, see Case Study 4 in Appendix 1 (page 35).

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The global demand for skilled workers is growing, as is the population of entrants into the labour force: 1 billion people will be of working age within the next decade. The great majority of those about to enter the workplace are in the developing world. In fact, young people aged 15–25 in developing countries represent 85 per cent of the world’s population in that age group. Yet many are not prepared for the jobs of the future, and lack opportunities for such preparation. For example, an estimated 89 million more training places are needed by 2015.³⁷

Efficient and effective technical and vocational training is needed that links public and private sector employers and is relevant to the local culture and economy. Certain

³⁶ Mukherjee 2004.

³⁷ Kurt D. Moses, Vice President and Director of the Academy for Educational Development, ‘Youth & ICT – The Emerging Challenge’. Presentation at the International Vocational Education and Training Association Conference, November 18, 2009.

general principles should be taken into consideration in developing training programmes, including:³⁸

- **Relevance to the labour market:** This requires communication with markets about their needs. Nearby public and private employers should take part in developing the curricula and invest in it. A local market study is useful for learning about current and future employment needs. Training should be demand-driven.
- **Gender capacity building:** All teachers and employers participating in training programmes should receive gender training so they avoid stereotyping and are aware of social constructions and norms. As part of developing competencies, there should be an analysis of the relative participation of young men and young women and equality of resources provided. One objective should be to promote each gender's participation in non-stereotypical areas.
- **Development of competencies:** Analysis of the necessary competencies and sub-competencies should be made nationally and locally. This will ensure they reflect the standardization necessary to make them nationally acceptable while also taking local context into account. The employers who will validate the skills developed by trainees should participate in certifying the competencies.
- **Development of 'soft skills':** Employers need workers with attributes such as timeliness, productivity, networking ability and teamwork. In many countries, it will take time to inculcate these qualities. Customs should be respected, but trainees need to learn the qualities that industries require. This also helps employers to adapt their practices and expectations to the local context.
- **Long-term funding:** Funding from international donors is often short term, so other sources of funding must be found. But empowering young women and addressing long-standing gender discrimination requires long-term commitments. Ongoing government support is needed, and international funding agencies also should consider longer-term commitments to protect initial costly investments in infrastructure, materials and teacher training. But requiring trainees to pay might be counterproductive for females, because families who have to pay are more likely to pay for males. One possibility is a system of grants for girls' participation, which would help to motivate families.
- **Access for trainees:** Easy and affordable access and availability of transportation to the site are important, especially where the training centre is located at a distance. Mobile training centres can also be considered. Another way to reach trainees is to integrate vocational training into the formal school system. Plans for such an approach must consider the timing of the training to address security concerns that could affect the participation of young women and girls.

³⁸ Adapted from Management and Training Corporation. 2010.

Another issue to consider in skills development is the level of resources (capital) for development in the area of intervention. Capital in the following forms should be mapped before training needs are assessed or curricula developed:³⁹

- Human capital: individual capacities acquired through education and training, aided by health and adequate nutrition.
- Social capital: the resources of civil society, including a robust local government, social networks, actively participating citizenry and a culture of entrepreneurship.
- Natural capital: the accessible local natural resources and historical patrimonies.
- Economic capital: infrastructure for development, services for production, microenterprises and cooperatives, a specialized financial sector and local systems for innovation.

An important component of skills development is a labour market analysis, which identifies the supply of labour available for jobs. Gender issues need to be integrated into this analysis. Public and private partners must be committed to supporting the training and must be made aware that promoting female education and training reduces poverty and inequalities.

The curricula should be developed in parallel with the labour market analysis, along with an action plan for implementation, with clear objectives and responsibilities. Participation in training must be planned to ensure equity, considering not only practical and immediate needs (such as for income) but also more long-term strategic needs (such as developing an equitable labour market). Young women and young men may have different training needs and objectives. Timing of training, transportation to and from the training facilities, and support for child care must be considered. Cultural issues need to be taken into account. Micro-entrepreneurship training ought to be included, especially in areas that lack formal employment options (see Box 4).

³⁹ Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana 2006.

Box 4. Training centres in the urban periphery in Uruguay

Between 2002 and 2009, the European Commission supported a programme, called *PAPPUM*, on the outskirts of Montevideo to help vulnerable women and youth find work. The initiative, focused on an area in economic decline, began with market research, a labour market analysis and a household study to determine availability of local resources. The area had previously been home to textile industries, so the research started from the assumption that there must be a pool of people with textile experience, who might be employable in a different niche of the industry.

Next, two local training centres, called *CEDELS*, were established. They worked to train people for jobs in the formal sector and to set up microenterprises. Another component supported urban agriculture to encourage food self-sufficiency. A third component worked on local participation, by opening the doors of the *CEDELS* for everything from meetings with politicians to local enterprises, credit institutions and social organizations.

From the beginning, *PAPPUM* focused on sustainability. That included building participatory networks that could put pressure on local companies and the municipality. Collaboration between public, private, academic and NGO sectors was emphasized. Training was provided by staff from the municipality as well as by employers.

For more details, see Case Study 5 in Appendix 1 (page 36).

Overall, improvements in gender equality and empowerment have a strong correlation with women's access to secondary and higher levels of education. Higher levels of education increase women's chances for formal employment and the gains from employment. Gender inequality in wages is reduced for those with higher levels of education. Women are more likely to be agents of change if they have post-primary education.⁴⁰ Therefore, it is important to promote measures to increase post-primary education for girls and also additional measures to retain them in post-primary education for the sake of women's economic empowerment. Investment in early childhood education enables girls and women to participate in post-primary education and income-generating activities.

⁴⁰ Grown, Gupta and Kes 2005.

Box 5. Networking to support entrepreneurship in Belarus

In Belarus, the *Nadezhda* project worked to combine promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women with training of men for responsible fatherhood. It also worked with empowerment training camps for young women in school and training of women entrepreneurs, along with networking, with similar projects in Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Sweden. Business activities were started with women's entrepreneurship networks from the four countries. All activities were promoted in the mass media and through people in high positions. This project is a good example of how skills development combined with gender initiatives contribute to empowerment at individual, group and societal levels.

For more details, see Case Study 6 in Appendix 1 (page 38).

CONCLUSIONS: EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH GAPS

Overall, building a gender perspective on skills development allows us to broaden the definition and scope of 'skills development' beyond the realm of technical and vocational education to include soft skills. Such a perspective allows for actively acknowledging and seeking the multiple pathways for skill development that are need-based and context-specific and, in the long term, it allows for challenging traditional gender and social norms and contributing to women's empowerment.

The logical framework provided in Appendix 2 of this document gives further detail on gender and skills development, as well as how and where the skills may be incorporated. However, as this background paper demonstrates, robust information and reliable statistics and proven strategies on gender, skills development, employment and the global economy are severely limited. Much more research is needed to fill the gaps.

There is broad concern about youth unemployment and low participation of women in the labour market, especially in sectors that are traditionally male-dominated. There is also a desire to increase the integration and participation of women. Research on gender mainstreaming by sector would help to provide information on the factors that limit female participation and on the skill requirements in specific areas. This would further inform career guidance mechanisms and planning for vocational skills training.

Also needed are studies to capture the nuances of the relationship between education outcomes and labour markets. Labour market information systems and labour analysis would help to improve the match between the demand and the supply of labour. Such studies should include more comprehensive analysis of gender mainstreaming in vocational training, and on second opportunity and adult education.

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* Courtney Allen, who interned at the UNGEI Secretariat from August to December 2011, identified this list of additional resources. Courtney is a Master's candidate (2012) at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDIES

The following case studies from countries around the globe demonstrate the multiple ways of empowering young women so they can enter labour markets. All are good examples providing lessons that, with some modifications, could be applied in different contexts. The criteria for choosing these strategies are that young women are the beneficiaries and the projects all resulted in skills development. The case studies also reflect different contexts.

Case study 1: Combating gender stereotypes in Swedish schools⁴¹

Swedish education law (chapter 1, paragraph 2) states that, “school activities should be developed in accordance with democratic values.” The Government of Sweden has underlined that gender cannot be considered just a matter of attitudes. Changing attitudes regarding gender at school requires all staff to have sufficient knowledge about the importance of gender in learning. It further demands that boys and girls be treated as individuals, not as a group based on assumptions about how the different sexes ‘should’ be.

The project *Våga bryta mönstret* (Dare to break the pattern) was conducted between 2001 and 2003 in the west of Sweden by a unit of the Gothenburg regional authorities working on education, training and networking (GR utbildning). It involved children from preschool through high school, as well as related professionals such as nannies, preschool teachers, special education teachers, school health care staff, caretakers and school leaders. Its objectives were to increase knowledge on gender and to break down traditional gender patterns in 10 schools and 10 preschools in the Gothenburg region, through direct interventions with children and young people participating on teams. It also aimed to expand the contact network between people in the region working in a similar way with children and young people on important life issues.

After selection of teams, several people were trained in gender theory and methods for guiding gender equality work in schools and preschools. These ‘process leaders’ were to develop a methodology and follow-up and also were responsible for organizing seminars and a capacity-building day on gender equality for all staff at each participating school. Workshops were organized for exchange of experiences between teams in the same geographical area.

At the end of the project, a network of participating teams was formed, offering training based on the needs identified from the work with the children and youth. Training was provided to the network on life skills. School leaders were also trained on the establishment of gender plans.

The results of the project show that changing core values is a long process. It was more successful in preschools and primary schools, partly because by nature they work in small teams that are together all day. The teams were more likely to make direct changes compared with the higher grades. Secondary and high schools are bigger and more complex and it is therefore important to develop and adjust teaching methods on gender to reflect a school’s conditions.

⁴¹ Larsson 2004.

Case study 2: Ending the 'gender digital divide' in Egypt

The Government of Egypt is working to transform the country into a knowledge-based society. Enormous investments have been made in developing an ICT sector to increase the country's competitiveness and attract foreign direct investment. ICT also has the potential to open new areas of employment for women (who make up 70 per cent of the country's illiterates), therefore empowering them and encouraging them to become active citizens. Yet gender inequalities persist in access to technology. Under the government's umbrella, NGOs are targeting this digital divide and using ICT to empower women in rural areas, where they face the greatest obstacles to education and use of ICT.

The use of ICT4IE⁴² is one of five related projects under a programme titled 'ICT to Foster Egypt's Sustainable Human Development', which is focused on fighting poverty. The ICT4IE initiative produces educational content that is distributed on CDs and over the Internet, so it can be used in the learner's home, in a community development centre or at an NGO office. Interactive computer-based tutorials teach basic reading and writing skills using content based on the familiar activities of everyday life and dramatized using sound and music effects. The content addresses health, education, political rights, the environment and family care.

The technique improves trainees' retention and understanding and helps to maintain their motivation and interest. The programme is based on the standard curriculum required by the country's General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education (GALAE) for illiteracy eradication. The initiative also trains instructors to use technology and expands knowledge of technology.

The ICT4IE project has had great impact on rural communities. An outreach team has collected many success stories among programme graduates, revealing radical changes in their lives. Some graduates have continued their education and others have obtained better jobs because they are both literate and have computer skills.

To date, the ICT4IE CDs have been used by 5,218 people, of whom about half are women. The great majority – 85 per cent – passed the GALAE literacy exams. In addition, 50 rounds of training of trainers have been conducted, certifying 500 trainers. The CDs have been distributed among 450 'IT clubs' and NGOs. One NGO – Tanweer in Minya governorate – has taught 1,200 illiterates, of whom 900 passed the GALAE exams.

In her study of 90 students in the ICT4IE programme, 'Is ICT Empowering Women in Egypt?', Mona Badran found that classes using the ICT4IE software had 86 per cent attendance, compared with 57 per cent attendance in courses not using software. The class using the software had an 80 per cent passing rate compared with a 40 per cent

⁴² <www.ictfund.org/ModulesEn.aspx?parent_id=118&moduleNo=27&menu_id=128&id=99>.

rate in regular classes. Currently, the software is being distributed in nine governorates and used in various technology clubs and schools.

The project's sustainability was aided through an agreement signed with GALAE. Financial support is provided by the security forces, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and other literacy-related groups. A memorandum of understanding has been concluded between GALAE and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology with the objective of using ICT4IE to eradicate illiteracy among 10,000 individuals in 10 governorates annually.

Among the lessons learned was that ICT can help to reduce the gender digital divide and the literacy gap. The success of the ICT4IE programme is mainly due to the introduction of the innovative 'tabluter' – a computer set-up based on the traditional *tableya*, or table – with one central processing unit that can be shared by four users, offering rural women access from home, and thus respecting community traditions. This resolves a problem that had long stood in the way of women's advancement. State commitment, community participation and involvement of diverse parties are also ingredients in the programme's success.

Case study 3: Training for rural economic empowerment in Pakistan and the Philippines

The Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) project aims to expand economic opportunities and income security through workforce education, skills training, employment creation and local economic development in Pakistan and the Philippines.⁴³ Implemented between 2002 and 2007, it aimed to develop skills and create employment among the most socially and economically disadvantaged social groups: the rural poor, especially women, as well as disenfranchised male youth and persons with disabilities.

The need for productive employment was aggravated by the persistence of instability in the project's target areas in both countries. A similar strategy was used with all target areas and populations, but implementation arrangements were adapted to each country's unique sociocultural characteristics. The key objectives were to improve economic and security conditions as manifested by increasing employment and access to information and financial resources among the target populations in two districts of Pakistan and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Region XII and Davao City areas of the Philippines.

Specifically, the project's goal was to increase vocational, entrepreneurial and managerial skills and improve literacy and numeracy. Another objective was to increase institutional capacities among partner organizations implementing skills-training programmes. These were undertaken among the National Rural Support Programme and branches of the Federal Ministry of Labour in Pakistan, and among the ARMM

⁴³ <www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_099844.pdf>.

agencies and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in the Philippines.

Main findings included the following:

1. According to an evaluation by the ILO, the project met or surpassed almost all of its key targets. It helped to increase employment among rural women, youth and disabled persons in both countries. In Pakistan, the project trained more beneficiaries (3,072) than expected (2,970), and 93 per cent of them used the training to get new jobs. In the Philippines, the overall numbers were somewhat lower (1,897 beneficiaries trained versus 1,743 expected), but the employment rate was about the same, at 95 per cent, three to five months following the training. The project also increased access to information and financial resources. In Pakistan, it helped beneficiaries to form 175 new savings and credit groups and 7 business associations; in the Philippines, 23 new groups were able to mobilize information and financial or other resources for beneficiaries, against a target of 12.

The project had more modest results in increasing the capacities of partner organizations to provide skills training: In Pakistan, it trained officers and staff of 54 such bodies in project methodology, against a target of 100 organizations; in the Philippines, it met the target of training 6 organizations to design and implement skills-training programmes like those of the TREE.

2. Continuation of activities begun under the TREE project seems highly likely in Pakistan (unless there is a major change in government), and likely but on a more modest level in the Philippines.

3. The TREE project has been successful as a pilot initiative in both countries by identifying and then mobilizing target populations, helping to train them and fostering support that enabled a large majority of the trainees to find gainful employment shortly afterward. To sustain that development trajectory, those trained and employed persons (and their support groups) should now be linked to ongoing economic activity in the formal sector or to other development programmes.

4. The TREE approach has been robust in addressing rural poverty across several settings. The evaluation noted that it enabled pursuit of objectives in diverse contexts: in areas of marginal or vacillating government control (Pakistan) and in helping to heal from a civil war (the Philippines). Evidence suggests that the approach may reinforce political security and help to equip beneficiaries to find better jobs. The approach is also proving effective in helping to rebuild areas of Pakistan that were devastated by an earthquake in 2005. It seems promising for addressing the needs of rural residents marginalized by less dramatic but perhaps more far-reaching economic trends.

The project succeeded in addressing poverty, unemployment and insecurity through community-based skills training and local institutional capacity building. It generated

strong demand for skills training and has the unqualified support of governments, donors, partners and target groups.

The benefits to target groups included increased self-esteem, hope for the future and the ability to contribute to family welfare. Training empowered beneficiaries, both women and men, with skills and the confidence to set up small businesses. The impact of these community enterprises can be expected to grow as they mature and support local economic development.

The project had a wider impact on peace and order in the ARMM. Within the context of basic law and order, project activity itself may help to build a safer environment as beneficiaries and implementing partners see people getting trained, finding jobs and building better lives.

Case study 4: Reconnecting disaffected youth in Sweden

The project *Unga In*, which means ‘Young In’ in Swedish, began in 2009 in Stockholm to help disconnected youth get their lives back on track. Working with the National Employment Service and a youth centre called Fryshuset,⁴⁴ the project works to develop the values of trust, responsibility and knowledge, with a goal of encouraging self-esteem and promoting the inner strength of young women and men. It focuses on youth who ‘hang around’ in subway stations at night and on Internet social forums.

Many of the youth (16–24 years old) who come to the Fryshuset have had bad experiences with public authorities and therefore avoid the employment service. They have little formal academic training and weak social networks. Those accepted into the programme do not work or attend school, are not registered with the employment service and lack social support from the municipality – they are the so-called NEET (not in education, employment or training). The beneficiary group has poor self-image, and very few of them have finished secondary school. One reason for their dropout is lack of family and social support; many are suspected to have learning difficulties or social, medical or physical disabilities. Although Sweden has more unemployment among young women than among young men, most labour-market interventions reach young men. ‘Young In’ has gender balance (data are regularly disaggregated by gender) and a gender perspective in all of its activities.

The project works to empower youth and help them enter the labour market. Their backgrounds are ‘mapped’, assessing health, living conditions, schooling, family situation, work experience and contacts with authorities. The mapping leads to planning of activities such as guidance, motivational talks, mentorship in the workplace, study visits, apprenticeships and short-term jobs (three to six months), which can result in recommendations to prospective employers. The programme offers training in life skills and job-search skills. The ultimate objective is for the young women and the young men

⁴⁴ <www.fryshuset.se/fryshuset/fryshuset_kunskapscentrum.aspx>.

to feel that they have improved their self-image and are closer to finding a job, with a numerical goal of at least 45 per cent of the youth restarting school or finding work.

The method for contacts with potential employers has changed over time. Originally, the idea was for each young person to have as many contacts with employers as possible, but now a closer relationship with a few hand-picked employers is emphasized, in order to build a relationship and provide training. For both employers and youth, the important skills are being curious and willing to understand, and to meet with people who would otherwise rarely encounter each other, in order to create opportunities.

The project staff includes employment officers, social workers, a psychologist and advisers for school and work planning. In the planning and evaluation of its activities, 'Young In' maps all activities based on a gender analysis developed at the Swedish Association of Municipalities in 1998, emphasizing resources, representation, reality and rights.

From the first group of 100 people who began in 2009, 35 have a job today, 14 are back in school, 28 are still in contact with 'Young in' and 23 have left the project without having found work or returned to school.

A key strength of 'Young In' is its wide social network of people who know how to work with young women and young men. It uses flexible and individually adapted solutions, and the young people participate in the activities based on their own conditions. In evaluations, they express satisfaction with the reception and the open climate, which encourages them to come and chat and drink coffee with the personnel at any time. The youth participating have fallen between the cracks in the social network, but through the programme they are gaining self-esteem and reinserting themselves in school or the workplace. In 2011, the project was included among the Nordic welfare institutes' success stories for inclusion of young people.

Case study 5: Training centres in the urban periphery in Uruguay

The *Programa de Apoyo a la Población Vulnerable de la Periferia Urbana de Montevideo* (Programme for Vulnerable Women and Youth on the Periphery of Urban Montevideo), or PAPPUM, was a collaboration between the Municipality of Montevideo and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay, together with the European Commission. Between 2002 and 2009, it created two centres of local economic development called CEDELS (*Centro de Desarrollo Económico Local*) in two marginalized areas, Carrasco Norte and Casavalle, on the outskirts of Montevideo. The goal was to help vulnerable youth and women to find work.

In 2002, the economic growth rate in Uruguay was -17 per cent,⁴⁵ so it was a very difficult period in which to create new jobs. Initially, the focus was on formation of

⁴⁵ Ferrere Lamaison 2003.

microenterprises and support to existing companies. Gradually, the economic situation improved; in the last year of the programme, there were more employment opportunities.

The strategy was to build two local training centres to generate and strengthen coordination between public, private and socio-institutional actors with a goal of creating productive networks.⁴⁶ The programme emphasized citizen participation to strengthen the ties between individuals and the community. The focus was on people living in poverty, lacking employment and other social assets, and with little participation in the formal educational system.

PAPPUM first carried out market research. In addition to studying the labour market in the areas of Casavalle and Carrasco Norte, it undertook a household study to identify resources and competencies, public services and social outlets. It also assessed employment trends, single-headed households, poverty among youth and women, the productivity profile of the few existing companies, the size and investment plans of enterprises, and residential locations of people working in the area. The market research was updated in 2006, to leave a legacy to the municipality and the CEDELS.

The CEDELS offered three lines of activities:

- *Labour markets:* The labour market component had two dimensions: creation of microenterprises and training for formal jobs. The component that worked to create microenterprises, cooperatives and other forms of productive units focused on identifying ideas for service or production in cooperatives, microenterprises or self-employment. All participants had to formulate a project/business plan, with support from the CEDEL. There was also training in ICT, management, administration, marketing, negotiations skills, sales channels and how to form cooperatives, combined with specific vocational competences needed.

The component on training for the formal labour market was undertaken in collaboration with local employers. It worked to identify job opportunities and technical/professional profiles and competencies, resulting in signing of agreements between the employers and the CEDEL. These agreements stated that the employer would guarantee women 'decent work' (according to the ILO definition) for one year, along with social security protection and child care. The CEDELS paid for the competency development for three to six months, and the employer certified the competency. An agreed number of the certified trainees would be offered employment, but to make better use of the resources, more people were trained and certified than the enterprise had requested. Those not offered employment were directed to other companies or supported to help establish self-employment in the field of their training.

- *Urban agriculture:* This component encouraged local production and supply of agricultural products and use of local resources and the urban infrastructure. The

⁴⁶ Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana 2006.

aim was to enhance industrialization and commercialization of value-added primary products as an extension of an emerging culture of food self-sufficiency and commercialization of products produced in cooperatives and microenterprises.

- *Local participation:* The CEDEL offered its facility for events, networking, social clubs and exhibition, and sales of products and services housed in the CEDEL. Local residents could meet with politicians, local enterprises, credit institutions, social organizations, etc. The CEDELS became the local community centre.

At the conclusion of support from the European Commission, the CEDELS and networks were transferred to the municipality, and they are still working. A total of 274 companies and 124 other productive units were formed and sustained in the market, in a difficult economic situation. A total of 156 people got jobs through direct labour market insertion (this service started in the last year); 64 per cent of the beneficiaries were women and 36 per cent were men.⁴⁷ Four and a half years after the intervention, the two CEDELS are still flourishing.⁴⁸

The results of this programme were recognized both by Uruguay and neighbouring countries, as well as by the European Commission. CEDELS are starting to appear in other parts of the country, some with international funding and others without. A key advantage was the collaboration among diverse actors working for the same objective of community well-being: the national Government of Uruguay, through the Ministries of Education and Culture, Labour and Social Security, and Local Government; associations of neighbours; NGOs; academic and vocational institutions; and private companies.

The two CEDEL buildings have become focal points for interventions for local economic development, using the methodology of training in competencies to ensure flexibility to respond to the jobs provided by the labour market. At first, there were difficulties in collaboration among different governmental actors, and it took two years to bring everyone together. Some partnership strengthening is still needed between the private and public sectors.

Case study 6: Networking to support entrepreneurship among women in Belarus⁴⁹

Sida financed the NADEZHDA project in Belarus, whose name is an acronym meaning networking, activity, development, efficiency, zest, hard work, drive and achievement. It has been implemented since 2004 by the ENVILA women's institute (whose name stands for eternal moral values, hope, faith and love), together with Springboard development consultants from Sweden, the St. Petersburg Social and Economic Institute (Russian Federation) and the Employment Information Centre (Lithuania).

⁴⁷ Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana 2006.

⁴⁸ For current information on the CEDELS (in Spanish), see <www.sociedaduruguay.org/2009/04/cursos-y-actividades-en-cedel-carrasco-norte.html>, <<http://cedelcasavalle.blogspot.com/>> and <www.montevideo.gub.uy/ciudadania/desarrollo-local/cedel-carrasco-norte>.

⁴⁹ Lann 2007.

At first, NADEZHDA copied a successful Russian experience from another Sida-financed project to develop local resource centres for young women. Four centres were established to promote women entrepreneurs. The project also collaborated with other women's entrepreneurial networks in other countries.

NADEZHDA worked to involve both women and men in opinion building, using a network of influential people and experts to promote the importance of women's empowerment in society. Trainings (of 30 school psychologists and teachers) were undertaken in gender equality, with a goal of supporting young girls and boys to develop into empowered adults. The goal was to fight the media stereotype of women, improve girls' self-image and change girls' and boys' attitudes regarding alcohol, drugs and sexuality. A summer training camp was carried out to empower 75 young women 14–18 years old. In an evaluation, the young girls highlighted the project's openness, support for girls' hopes, freedom of choice, equality, respect and ability to express their own views.⁵⁰

The second NADEZHDA project was focused on young women in business in Belarus. Its objective was to promote cooperation regarding gender equality in civil society and create links for development between Belarus and Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Sweden. It also aimed to empower women and develop local resource centres through the promotion of democracy and market economy values to local administrators, civil society, entrepreneurs, teachers, psychologists and students, and to involve men in the project. Another objective was to promote sustainability of ENVILA as an independent Belarusian educational organization. It worked with men to initiate discussions about men's roles and men as fathers in Belarus. This initiative had links to a similar project in Lithuania.⁵¹

The project operated summer camps for young women, created local resource centres to help develop women entrepreneurs and worked to establish social and business networks with women entrepreneurs in the four countries. Men were trained to be good fathers and respectful partners. NADEZHDA continues to advocate through the mass media and the influential men supporting its activities.

The most successful aspect of the project was its effects on gender equality in Belarus. Fathers are more engaged in the education of young men, and attitudes about female entrepreneurship have improved. Today, national television airs success stories about young female entrepreneurs, and their numbers have doubled. Networks of Swedish and Belarusian female entrepreneurs have started to work together. New government rules have improved the situation for female entrepreneurs. The Ministry of Social Protection in Belarus has authorized education for fathers in 50 of the country's family centres. About 500 people have been trained, and trainings receive an average evaluation of 4.9 out of 5.0.⁵²


⁵⁰ Lann 2007.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sida Results from 2010.

APPENDIX 2: FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

	Basic skills	Technical and vocational skills	Productivity and agricultural skills	Entrepreneurship skills	Social skills
What skills?	Basic numeracy and literacy skills as well as languages, time management, etc.	ICT and other technical competencies needed by industries and other employers	Ability to meet goals on time, solve problems, know how to learn, be flexible on work tasks	Management, business development, planning, accounting, financing, work processes, negotiation, sales and promotion skills	Group work, networking, public speaking, self-esteem, job searching, stress handling, male and female communication and gender issues
Why?	Basic skills are an important foundation for assimilating other skills	Having the competencies needed by labour markets increases opportunities for employment	Productivity skills are always requested in the workplace and are also useful for self-employment	These skills are applicable in almost all settings, including self-employment, and for self-empowerment	Every setting and work situation requires interpersonal collaboration; social skills are among the most desired by employers
How?	Ending discrimination against girls through laws, policies and commitments to the MDGs. Today, concrete changes are limited by customs, culture and attitudes	Working with employers to determine labour market needs; increasing the number of women with technical and vocational skills	Training through individual/group tasks and practical applications such as learning by watching and learning by doing	Teach theoretical and practical competencies and provide inspiration from male and female role models; develop business plans; facilitate credit for women	Empowerment and skills development individually and in groups; interaction among women and communication with men is encouraged
Where?	National and local governments through formal schools and second-chance' institutions; training through formal training structures and NGOs	On-the-job training in companies; apprenticeships; vocational training centres; informal training through NGOs	In all settings: school and private, public, formal and non-formal training	In secondary schools, vocational training institutes, local learning centres and through NGOs	Begin to introduce in pre-primary school and consider inclusion in all types of training, formal and non-formal, the sooner the better
Gender?	Facilitate girls' access to scholarships and transport and to a secure environment where they can develop basic skills	Promote and market skills without stereotyping them as male or female. Empower girls with information about the ILO Decent Work Agenda and train employers	Skills should be promoted for both boys and girls – in some cases it could be beneficial to break into separate groups; encourage positive feedback to break down stereotypical roles	Use both female and male role models and teachers; encourage commercial banks to explore financing options for female entrepreneurs	The importance of interaction and communication between boys and girls and their equal participation; promote networking among girls since many existing societal networks are male-dominated



United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
c/o UNICEF
Education Section
Programmes
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

Email: ungei@unicef.org
Web: <http://www.ungei.org>