

## FAQs / USEFUL DEFINITIONS (UN sources)

- **What does ‘gender’ mean?**

**Gender:** refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.

(<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>)

- **How could we define rural employment?**

*Rural employment* is any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed by rural people by force or for remuneration, profit, social or family gain, in cash or kind, including under a contract of hire, written or oral, expressed or implied, and without regard to whether the service is performed on a self-directed, part-time, full-time or casual basis. This definition includes farmers, fishers, forest users, pastoralists, those performing domestic work, and other self-employed rural peoples; temporary, casual, piece-rate, own-account, migrant, and home-based workers (vegetable market vendors, day labourers, artisans etc.) in the informal sector; part or full time contract workers, farmers, sharecroppers, and tenants; small, medium and large farm, food processing, and off farm enterprises; and both unionized and unorganized workers. It also recognizes the global context and rural to urban continuum within which employment occurs, and that many workers and households obtain revenues from both rural and urban (small and large cities) areas and from multiple locations and countries.

(Source: *FAO Draft, Rural Employment Strategy “Productive, fair and just employment for rural development and food security”* – 2009)

- **What do we mean by ‘gender equality’?**

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society. Gender equality starts with equal valuing of girls and boys.

(Source: *ABC of Women Worker’s Rights and Gender Equality, ILO, Geneva, 2000*  
+other definition on <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>)

- **What do we mean by ‘gender equity’?**

**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

(IFAD <http://www.ifad.org/gender/glossary.htm>)

- **What is Gender Mainstreaming?**

*“Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, and as 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 policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (ECOSOC 1997/2)*

The importance of Gender mainstreaming was firstly recognized through the Beijing Declaration which emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995:

*“... Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively”” (para. 202).*

Then, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted agreed conclusions 1997/2 (see definition above) on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system adopted on 18 July 1997.

(<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/critical.htm#gender>)

- **What do we mean by “empowerment”?**

According to IFAD, empowerment is about people taking control over their lives. It is about people pursuing their own goals, living according to their own values, developing self-reliance, and being able to make choices and influence - both individually and collectively - the decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is a process, which can be long and complex. For women and men to be empowered conditions have to be created to enable them to acquire the necessary resources, knowledge, political voice and organizational capacity.

(Source: IFAD <http://www.ifad.org/gender/glossary.htm>)

In addition, UNESCO explains that “No one can empower another: only the individual can empower herself or himself to make choices or to speak out. However, institutions including international cooperation agencies can support processes that can nurture self-empowerment of individuals or groups”.

(Source: UNESCO GENIA Toolkit for Promoting Gender Equality in Education)

- **What do we mean by “Decent Work”?**

Decent work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as being productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families; offers better prospects for personal development and encourages social integration; gives people the freedom to express their concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all. The Decent Work Agenda is a balanced and integrated programmatic approach to pursuing the objectives of full and productive employment and decent work for all at the global, regional, national, sectoral and local levels. It comprises four pillars, namely:

- employment creation and enterprise development;
- social protection;
- standards and rights at work;
- governance and social dialogue.

*(Source: ILO FAO Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work)*

- **What is child labour?**

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

It refers to work that:

1. is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
2. interferes with their schooling by:
  - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
  - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
  - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination. Children’s or adolescents’ participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children’s development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life (ILO)

*(<http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>)*