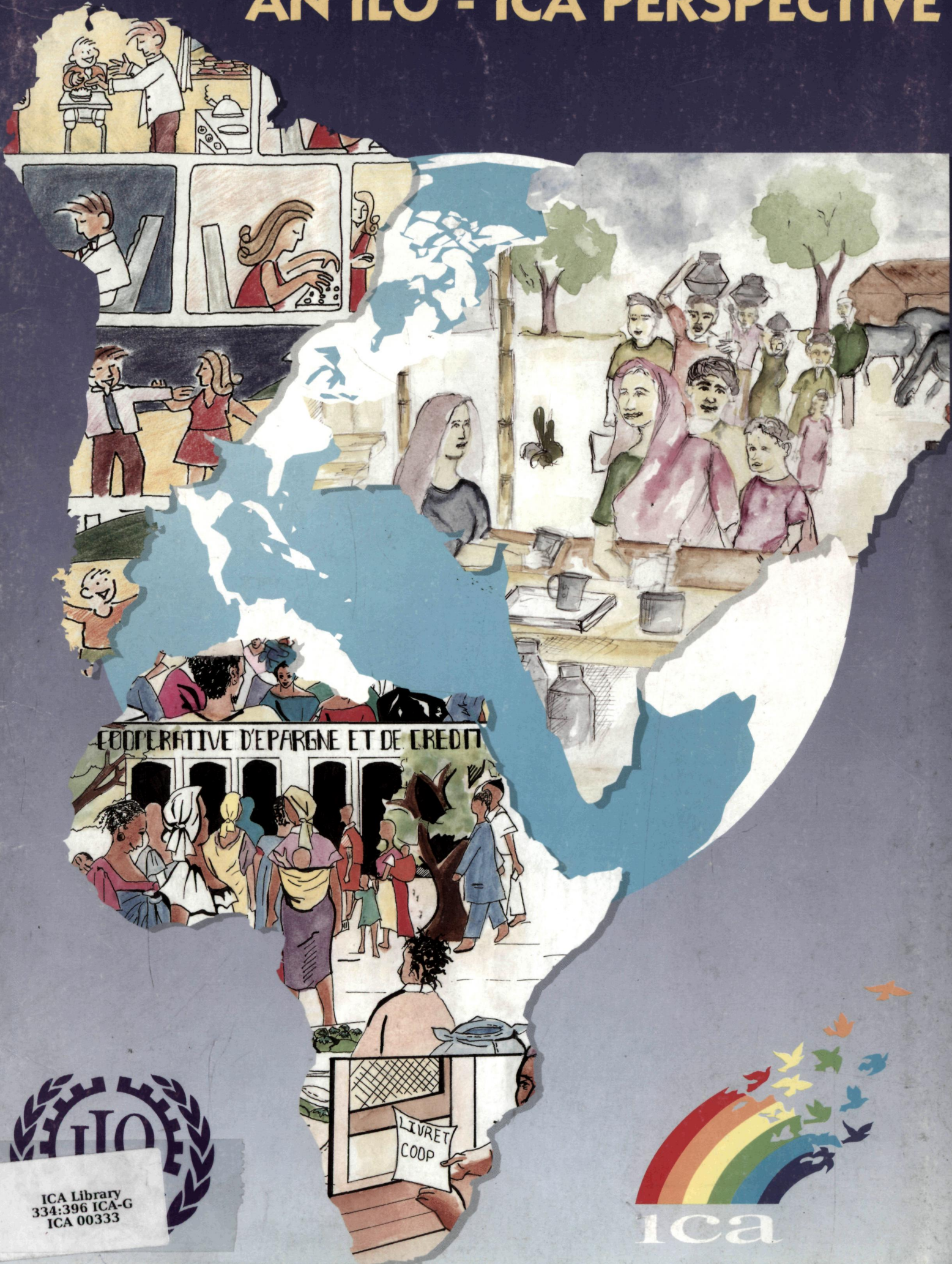


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GENDER ISSUES IN COOPERATIVES: AN ILO - ICA PERSPECTIVE



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***2 Hours
on
Gender Issues
in
Cooperatives***

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- an introductory session on gender issues for cooperative leaders

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Foreword

The idea to develop a 2-hour introductory session on gender issues in cooperatives for cooperative leaders and policy makers originated from discussions on gender issues held at the third Working Session of the ILO COOPNET Programme. The COOPNET Programme (*Human Resource Development for Cooperative Management and Networking*), collaborates closely with the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in programme activities. The ICA is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves cooperatives worldwide. Both the ILO COOPNET Programme and the ICA are committed to the promotion of gender integration in cooperative human resource development (HRD).

After the COOPNET Working Session, the ICA was commissioned to develop a guide to enable the users (trainers or moderators) to design a 2-hour introductory session on gender issues in cooperatives. A general outline for the guide was discussed and inputs provided by cooperative leaders and policy makers from Asian and African countries who attended an interregional workshop at the International Institute Histadrut (IIH) in Israel in November 1994. This workshop on "Gender Issues in Cooperative HRD: From Theory to Practice", was organized by the ILO in collaboration with the ICA and IIH.

The enhanced participation of women in cooperatives and the benefits for cooperatives of involving women as equal partners in cooperative development are issues that are given special attention in the guide. The main aim of the 2-hour sessions for cooperative leaders and policy makers is therefore to generate increased gender awareness and to encourage the integration of gender issues in cooperative development.

It is important to note that this guide should be used as a tool to facilitate the planning and design of gender sensitization sessions. It outlines the possible contents of these sessions and includes additional background information on gender. The complete "package" contains a sensitization module accompanied by transparencies which will assist the user in the preparation of the session. The package also contains a poster which can be displayed to promote the sensitization session, and leaflets which can be distributed to participants after the session.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the initial draft guide was tested by professional trainers and institutions in several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Their comments and inputs were greatly appreciated and have been extremely useful in compiling the final version.

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Transparencies

- 1 A Gender and gender relations.
- 1 B What is a role? What are gender roles?
- 2 A Statements for the "buzzing discussions".
- 2 B Statements for the "buzzing discussions" (cont.).
- 3 Picture: Woman carrying a bundle of "roles".
- 4 Women's "double day".
- 5 A Division of labour.
- 5 B Loss of land.
- 6 Gender issues in cooperatives.
- 7 Aims of the gender sensitization session.

Introduction

The contents of the package

This the package contains a sensitization module with accompanying transparencies and additional information material for the trainer/moderator. The package also contains a poster which can be displayed in order to promote the sensitization session and leaflets which can be distributed to participants after the session.

Objective

Participants are sensitized to gender issues and understand the need for gender integration in cooperative HRD.

Outputs/activities

- Participants examine and reflect on the traditional roles of women and men and division of labour in their community, society, cooperative sector or organization.
- Participants understand why women should participate in cooperative development as equal partners with equal opportunities and treatment.
- Participants are made aware of the need for women's increased access to cooperative training and education and access to decision-making levels.
- Participants have an understanding of the concept gender and of gender analysis and planning.

Target

The main target group of the package is cooperative leaders and policy-makers. However, it is hoped that the package will serve as a source of inspiration and continued interest in gender issues for the users (trainers or moderators) who may not have dealt directly with gender issues prior to this training session.

The trainer/moderator

The person in charge of the course should be a trainer or moderator with good knowledge of cooperatives or similar organizations.

Equipment and facilities needed for the session

Equipment: An over-head projector. If not available this can be replaced by a flipchart and markers or a blackboard. A poster is also included.

Facilities: The room should be arranged for discussions so that the participants can see each other's faces without obstructing the view to the screen or blackboard.

Planning the session

The trainer/moderator should:

- study the contents of the module, and, if possible collect the necessary gender-related data and statistics from the relevant country or countries and cooperative sector. (A checklist to assist in the collection of relevant data is included on page 7 of the module);
- prepare the session (preferably after having identified the actual participants and assessing their exposure to gender issues, if this is possible. If not, this can be done at the beginning of the session).

Duration of the session

The training session is estimated to last for approximately two hours.

Context of the session

It is envisaged that 2-hour gender-sensitization sessions can be held in connection with training seminars or workshops. Short gender sessions can also be held or as part of larger conferences or meetings for cooperative leaders and policy makers.

Approach and method

The module contains relevant information on gender-related issues and is meant to give ideas and inspiration to a qualified trainer to enable him/her to prepare a 2 hour introductory session on gender issues in cooperatives. Two hours is, of course, an extremely short time in which to "sensitize" cooperative leaders to gender issues, and too short for the participants to properly "digest" the newly acquired knowledge. However, the session should provide cooperative leaders and policy makers with some food for thought and this in itself can be considered a step in the right direction.

The success of the session will much depend on the trainer's/moderator's approach. Generally speaking, the more actively involved participants are in the sessions the better, since gender is a *live concept*. Ideally therefore, if the trainer/moderator has more time, the participants should be encouraged to draw on their own *real life* experiences - from their homes, the community or the workplace. Participants could also be challenged to re-value the roles of women in the workplace/community, or, for instance, of everybody in the

household. For the ultimate aim of gender approaches is to improve the quality of family life and life in general.

Similarly, the trainer/moderator may wish to select certain sections/topics to elaborate or concentrate on, depending on the target group. The main idea is, however, that the trainer/moderator is able to stimulate enough interest in gender issues among the group that they continue to reflect over gender issues after the session and are motivated to apply gender-sensitive approaches in their working environment.

It is suggested that the poster included in the package is used to promote the sensitization session. The poster can be displayed on a notice board or outside the meeting room.

Each of the three illustrated transparencies in this package represents one of the three regions: Africa, Asia or Latin America. The illustrations depict the same motives as on the poster and can be used by the trainer/moderator during the session when deemed appropriate. When and where to display the other text transparencies is otherwise indicated in the module, but the trainer/moderator can design the session according to his/her own use.

Topics covered in the module

- (1) Personal perception of gender issues including gender roles and the concept of women's "double day".
- (2) Women's position in society in general and in cooperatives in particular. Statistics on the actual situation in the country/sector/institution concerned would be an advantage if these can be provided by the trainer or moderator. This would then clearly illustrate the relevance of the issues and the existing imbalances. A checklist is included in the package to assist the moderator in the collection of relevant gender-specific data/statistics.
- (3) The importance of gender integration in cooperatives and the benefits of promoting women's enhanced participation. How to involve women in cooperative development in general, and in decision-making and managerial positions in cooperatives in particular.
- (4) Background information for the trainer/moderator:
Additional information on gender awareness, gender analysis and planning. If the trainer/moderator is not familiar with these concepts, this section will be useful for him/her. Although this section is not part of the two-hour session, the trainer/moderator may wish to include some of the information given here in the training session.

The Sensitization Module

**Topic 1. Gender roles. Personal perceptions of gender issues.
Women's "double day".
(Three steps. Total estimated duration: 60 minutes)**

Session Guide

Step One: *Introduction: The gender concept and approach, and gender roles*
(15 minutes)

The trainer/moderator introduces the theme "gender sensitization". The aim of gender sensitization is to make people aware of the power relations between men and women in society and to understand the importance of affording women and men equal opportunities and treatment. In this particular context, the purpose is, furthermore, to make people aware that there are also gender-related problems within the cooperative sector and that women must be more involved in cooperatives in order to strengthen the cooperative movement and enhance the financial and social position of women. Moreover, one must ensure the equitable distribution of the benefits of cooperative development.

The trainer/moderator will explain what is meant by "gender" and "gender relations" and the "gender and development approach". The trainer/moderator can use the Background Information provided on page 14.

The trainer/moderator may be asked why the term gender is used when one is actually referring to women's issues. It can be pointed out that these issues concern both men and women. Women must be seen in relation to men in society and not as an isolated group. However, the promotion of gender equality, usually implies identifying and addressing women's needs, as women are generally more vulnerable than men on the same socio-economic levels.

Transparency 1A and 1B should then be displayed to illustrate the gender concept and gender roles. A role is the pattern of behaviour of a person and embraces not only a person's position and rights in a community or society, but also his or her duties and obligations.

The trainer/moderator should give an example which is typical to the situation in the society/community in question. For example, in a traditional village a woman's sphere of activities evolves in and around the home where her main responsibility is the welfare and care of the family. She participates in village life according to the prevailing customs and traditions, but seldom engages in economic activities outside the home. Today, however, due to social and economic changes in society, many women are engaged in economic activities outside their homes and villages. Their traditional roles have thus changed and this has resulted in a change in our perceptions of these roles.

Step Two: *Personal attitudes (30 minutes)*

Now that the basic concepts of gender, gender relations and gender roles are understood by participants, the trainer/moderator can proceed to the next item, namely people's attitudes and gender bias. Discriminatory traditions and practices that exist in a society are sustained by people's prejudicial attitudes. These attitudes are influenced by one's socio-cultural environment and, just as the socio-cultural, geo-political and economic environment can change, so can attitudes.

The aim of Step Two is to enable participants to reflect on their own personal value systems and perceptions of gender issues and the effect that discriminatory attitudes can have on women's position in society when translated into public policies. For example, the fact that some people consider a women's place to be in the home, could result in the discriminatory practice of women being hired *only* if there are no men available to do the work. Or, if women are regarded as supplementary income-earners (because their husbands are the main breadwinners), this could result in the general acceptance of women being paid less than men for the same work.

The suggested method for Step Two is that the trainer/moderator organizes so-called "buzzing discussions". Buzzing discussions is the term used for discussions between two persons sitting next to each other as the discussions will sound rather like the buzzing of bees. The trainer/moderator should be able to provoke lively, buzzing discussions by presenting the following statements to the participants, and asking them to give their own personal views on these issues to the person sitting next to them. These statements are also found on transparency 2A and 2B.

- Men are the heads of households and all decisions that affect the family should therefore be taken by them.
- Men and women should share household responsibilities and decision-making.
- A women's place is primarily in the home. Women should therefore concentrate on being housewives and child bearers and not get involved in economic activities.
- Women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.
- Efforts should be made to facilitate women's involvement in productive or economic activities.
- Cooperative education and training are more important for male members as they are the main participants in cooperatives.
- Women and men should be equal partners in cooperative development.
- Women should have equal access to training and education facilities and participate in decision-making.

- Women do not have the right personal characteristics to assume leadership or managerial positions as they are generally too emotional, frivolous, indecisive and lack confidence.
- Women are capable of assuming leadership roles.

The trainer/moderator should stop the discussions after about 5-10 minutes and get the participants to comment on their discussions and diverging views. The trainer/moderator should make a note of the prevailing attitudes and then ask participants if gender roles are static? Have changing socio-economic conditions affected our perception of gender roles?

People's values are influenced/conditioned by the society in which they live. We attach values to the roles of women and men. As roles are not biologically determined but determined by socio-economic and cultural conditions, they can change. When roles change our personal value systems also change.

Step Three: Women's "double day" (15 minutes)

The trainer/moderator may here wish to display the drawing of a woman carrying a bundle of "roles" (transparency 3). This drawing is intended to visualize the now widely used concept: a woman's "double day". The drawing may also enable the trainer/moderator to pose the question of whether this is a fair distribution of roles and responsibilities? On transparency 4, the expression "double day" is explained. Participants should understand the difficulties women face as a result of their heavy workload. Special mention can also be made of the practical problems some women may face in attending evening meetings or training courses far from their homes etc.

The terms "productive" and "reproductive" roles, which often appear in gender analysis, can be used by the trainer/moderator if considered appropriate. These terms have, however, not been used here as the session is rather short and the introduction of too many new terms may distract the listeners from the essential issue which, in this case, is women's heavy workload or "double day" (also referred to as women's "dual" or "multiple" roles).

The trainer/moderator can ask participants how each one addresses the issue of women's "double day" or heavy work burden at home and in the workplace. And can suggest that:

- **in the home** men and women can share responsibilities e.g. housework, childcare, food preparations etc. and,
- **at the workplace** one should be mindful of women's heavy workload and multiple roles when planning and organizing activities such as training programmes, meetings, projects, etc.

Topic 2. Women's position in society in general and in cooperatives in particular.
(Two steps. Total estimated duration: 30 minutes)

Session Guide

Step One: *The status of women (15 minutes)*

The trainer/moderator will find an overview of the status of women in general in the Background Information, page 14. The overview deals briefly with a few selected areas of common concern for women such as poverty, education, employment and equality issues.

Women in many parts of the world have a very low status and are often treated as second-class citizens. Some progress has, however, been made in the last ten years since the UN Decade for Women (1975-85). Nevertheless, the disparities that exist between North and South, rural and urban, rich and poor, still give rise to particular concern.

The trainer/moderator can introduce the topic in general terms by giving an overview of the status of women, and then deal with the main gender issues and concerns in the region. These issues should be localized to the country or countries in question. For example, land tenure issues will vary from country to country and from region to region. However, in many countries in the developing world, only men can hold legal land rights. Women, who are increasingly becoming heads of households as a result of migrant labour, economic and political upheavals and environmental degradation, are not permitted to own land and this restricts their access to loans and credit facilities for agricultural improvement. (Approximately 20% of households worldwide are female-headed and this figure is steadily increasing. In rural areas of Africa and the Caribbean the proportion is even higher).

The trainer/moderator can explain and display transparencies 5A and 5B which illustrates two important issues mentioned in the text regarding the agricultural sector, namely the division of labour and the ownership of land. The example are taken from rural Africa but are relevant to other rural areas in the developing world.

The trainer/moderator should also ask participants to comment on the issues raised, which will also give participants time to reflect over and digest some of the information presented.

Step Two: *Gender issues in cooperatives (15 minutes)*

In this next step the trainer/moderator will give an overview of women's position in cooperatives and identify gender-related problems within the sector. The trainer/moderator

must compile the necessary gender-related data and information prior to the session. A checklist is provided on page 7 to assist in the collection of relevant information. If the trainer/moderator still finds it difficult to collect sufficient, relevant data, he/she can ask participants during the session to assess the general situation in their particular cooperative organization or sector.

The trainer/moderator can start by viewing women's low level of participation in cooperatives from an historical perspective, and then give an overview of the general areas of concern, as in (a) and (b) below. The trainer/moderator can thereafter elaborate where necessary according to the information that has been collected prior to the session. The list of areas of concern is also found on transparency 6, *Gender Issues in Cooperatives*.

- (a) Women's participation in cooperatives is generally low. Women are also conspicuously under-represented at decision-making levels. This low level of participation can be viewed from a historical perspective. In developing countries in Africa and Asia, cooperatives were often originally established by the colonial powers as a means of enhancing cash crop production and marketing. Since the men were involved in cash crop production whilst women tended the food crops, only the men became involved in the commercial sector. The women, although they contributed to the cash crop production in terms of labour, did not become cooperative members and became increasingly marginalized.

After independence, many governments in Africa and Asia retained their cooperative structures as tools for implementing national agricultural and marketing development policies. National cooperatives consequently lost their autonomy and became dependant on or controlled by governments. As most cooperatives were still primarily engaged in cash crop production - still the domain of men - the cooperative membership continued to be dominated by men.

In Latin America the cooperatives were started around the turn of the century either by European immigrants who brought with them cooperative ideas and principles based on the socio-economic trends in Europe at the time, or by governments which introduced them as tools for development. As women were marginalized in the economic sector, they did not become active members of cooperatives.

- (b) Areas of concern:
- Low level of participation in cooperative development and particularly that of women. Are efforts being made to increase the membership?
 - The quality of participation in cooperatives. In what capacities do women participate, as members, staff, office bearers? Are women involved in decision making processes?
 - Constraints to participation in cooperatives such as social, cultural, economic and political restrictions on women, their heavy workload, level of education, selection criteria for members etc. If these constraints exist, what is being done to address the situation?

- Lack of access to and control over resources such as credit, education, training, production inputs, marketing outlets, etc. Do men and women have equal access?
- Cooperative training and education programmes. Do these programmes address women's needs? Are efforts being made to involve more women, e.g. are meetings conveniently timed and are child care facilities available?
- Financial and social benefits. Is it advantageous for women to form cooperatives? Do cooperatives support women groups' income-generating activities?
- The possible existence of gender bias. Do gender-blind policies, practices and services exist within the cooperative?
- Lack of strong cooperative support and commitment to gender issues. How are gender issues addressed? Are gender sensitization programmes carried out?

Check List

1. General information

Compile information on the cooperative organization or sector in question:

- Are women involved in this cooperative sector, and if so, in which way? (For example as members, as employees or helping their husbands who are registered members?)
- What is the percentage of women involved in this sector?
- What are the criteria for becoming a member, e.g. entrance fee, shares, ownership of land? If the latter, does this hinder women from becoming members?
- Are there any legal, traditional or customary constraints to women's participation in cooperatives?
- Do cooperatives respond to the needs of women?
- Do women organize themselves into women-only cooperatives?
- Do cooperatives support women groups' income-generating activities? Can women increase their income through cooperative activities?
- Is the cooperative sector supportive of equality issues? Is gender awareness training carried out?

2. Position of women in cooperatives

In a mixed cooperative or cooperative sector, compare the positions held by men and women:

- Do women participate in mainstream or marginal activities of the cooperative sector?
- What is the ratio of men and women on the board of directors or management committee?
- How many women hold leadership or managerial positions compared to men?
- What kind of jobs are usually held by the cooperative's female employees?
- In cases where the male and female members of staff carry out the same jobs, do they receive the same salaries and benefits?
- If there have been cut-backs in a particular cooperative sector, investigate which positions are the most vulnerable. What category of staff lose their jobs first?

3. Access to resources:

Do women have equal access to the following cooperative services?

(a) Training and education

- Women cannot assume leadership roles unless they have had access to education and training programmes. What percentage of women participate in cooperative education and training programmes?
- Are women's needs and potentials considered when designing training programmes, or is the main focus on male cooperative members/employees?
- Are training programmes easily accessible to women? For example, does the

training take place far from their homes? Are child care facilities available? Is the scheduled time convenient for women with regard to their other responsibilities?

(b) Extension services, technical expertise, modern technology, production inputs

- Experience has shown that female extension workers can communicate better with women than male extension workers. What is the ratio of female to male farmers? And what is the ratio of female to male extension workers in the community/country?
- Do women farmers have access to production inputs such as modern farm tools, machinery, fertilizers?
- Do single women (or female heads of households) have access to production inputs?

(c) Credit and loan facilities

- Do women experience problems in acquiring bank loans and credit? If so, why, and what can be done?

(d) Market outlets and transport facilities

- Do women have equal access to market outlets and transport facilities? Does this also apply to single women and women cooperatives?

4. Participation of women in mixed rural cooperatives

("Participation" in the context of cooperatives, implies that members exercise their rights and obligations as cooperative members in carrying out their activities).

- Is joint membership or dual membership encouraged?
- Do women have a right to vote if the cooperative membership is household-based?
- Is women's role in rural cooperatives/crop production fully recognized or valued?
- Do women members attend committee meetings, join in discussions, exercise their voting rights?
- Are women members involved in decision-making?
- Do women participate in the economic affairs of the cooperative and monitor its progress?
- Is the language used at meetings understandable to all participants, or only those with some formal education?
- Are committee meetings and general assemblies etc. scheduled at times that are suitable for women and are facilities, such as child care facilities, made available?
- Is information about meetings to be held easily accessible to women? Is care taken to use the right channels?
- Do women members participate in elections, and stand for election as office bearers?

Topic 3. Why is gender integration in cooperatives important and what are the benefits of promoting women's participation in cooperatives?

What can be done to integrate women in cooperative development and to enhance their participation in decision-making processes?

(Two steps. Total estimated duration: 30 minutes)

Session Guide

Step One: *Why gender integration? And what are the benefits for cooperatives of promoting women's participation? (10 minutes)*

Below the trainer/moderator will find various points listed which he/she can use in preparing Step One of the session on why gender integration is necessary and the benefits of promoting women's enhanced participation. Alternatively, the trainer/moderator may wish to organize "buzzing discussions" on the same topic, getting, for example, the participants to suggest the benefits for cooperatives (and for women) of promoting women's participation.

- Gender integration in cooperative development is essential because:
 - Active, equitable participation of members, both men and women, is a necessity for sustainable cooperative development. Active participation in the cooperative context means that members are involved in all the functions of cooperatives including planning, decision-making, implementation and financial and management control.
 - Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, mutual responsibility, equality and equity. They practice honesty, openness and social responsibility in all their activities.¹ In order to enhance the credibility of cooperatives as democratic people-based movements in the eyes of the public and cooperative members, the cooperative values must be respected and adhered to.
 - Cooperative principles state that cooperatives are democratic organizations without gender discrimination. But can they be regarded as truly democratic if women members do not have equal access to decision-making levels? If women are under-represented or not represented at all in decision-making, they may find it difficult to accept the legitimacy of decisions taken which do not take their interests into consideration.

¹ ICA: *Statement on Cooperative Identity (draft)*, Geneva, 1994.

- Experience has shown that women in leadership positions are more likely to address gender issues and safeguard the interests of women. As the cooperative movement worldwide incorporates so many women (yet few in management positions), it is important that more women are integrated into the system.
- (2) Benefits of gender integration:
- Women represent fifty per cent of the world's human resources. By enhancing women's productive capabilities and developing their capacities, cooperatives will benefit from this hitherto under-utilized human resource. Many women have special skills in, for instance, marketing and trading, while others have special knowledge and capabilities which have been unacknowledged.
- Cooperatives will become a stronger economic and more influential political force if more women (the invisible workforce) are actively involved.
- Men and women often tackle and solve problems differently. In today's fast changing socio-economic and political climate the need for innovative thinking and creative ideas is becoming exceedingly important also for the cooperative sector. By involving more women in decision-shaping and decision-making within the cooperative movement, one will enhance the prospects of cooperatives, diversify activities and fortify the cooperative movement.
 - In the case of agricultural cooperatives, the involvement of more women in economic activities would result in a more integrated production of food crop and cash crops. This would enhance food security and have a positive effect on the environment as monoculture causes soil erosion and degradation.
 - Involving more women in cooperatives will broaden the scope of cooperatives and improve their social role. Women's and men's priority areas often differ. Women are, for example, often more concerned with social development issues such as employment, health, the environment and children than men.
 - Experiences have shown that initiatives taken by women in cooperatives have accelerated the progress and change of their socio-economic situation. The trainer/moderator can give examples here. Women's involvement in thrift and credit cooperatives in Africa have, for example, been particularly successful. In India the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is immensely successful and likewise the Grameen banks in Bangladesh.

Participants may wish to ask questions about some of the issues raised in this section. The trainer/moderator may also ask for feedback from participants before continuing with the next step on how to enhance women's participation in cooperatives and decision-making.

Step Two: *What can be done to integrate women in cooperative development and to enhance their participation in decision-making processes?*
(20 minutes)

In relation to this topic, a discussion on people's participation in cooperatives *in general* may arise or be initiated by the trainer/moderator. People's lack of motivation and low level of participation in cooperatives may be regarded by participants as the most pressing issue in the present day situation. The trainer/moderator may also wish to evoke a discussion on why women's participation in cooperatives is so low and particularly in decision-making levels.

The trainer/moderator should stress the importance of *democratic participation* in cooperatives; the fact that both men and women should participate equally. The reason why special measures are needed to ensure equal participation should also be emphasized. Regarding strategies for the integration of women in cooperative development and decision-making levels, the following points can be mentioned:

- The cooperative organization or sector must first include gender on the agenda. The formulation of gender-sensitive policies, strategies and plans is essential and these should be drawn up in a joint effort between women and men and not solely on men's terms.
- Cooperatives should address equality issues and make a firm commitment in their mandate to correct imbalances where they exist. For example, cooperatives can state their intention to address the problems of women's access to credit, land, equipment, extension services etc., and/or to take positive measures to include more women in their training programmes, in decision-making and leadership positions.

The trainer/moderator can also ask participants to suggest other areas where action can be taken by cooperatives to enhance women's participation and access to decision-making levels. Based on the information given earlier regarding women's constraints and areas of concern, the participants should be able to suggest some of the following solutions - with some guidance from the trainer/moderator (when necessary):

- (1) Through awareness creation, gender sensitization, education and lobbying cooperatives can help remove the obstacles to women's equal participation (e.g. membership criteria or legal, traditional, financial, attitudinal constraints).
- (2) Through training and education programmes which are sensitive to women needs, cooperatives can help strengthen women's capacities and capabilities, resulting in their increased self-confidence and enabling them to participate more fully in decision-making and assume leadership positions.
- (3) Cooperatives can consult and involve women when decisions are being taken, particularly those regarding women or which are in women's interests.

- (4) Cooperatives can review their policies and plans periodically to ensure that they are gender-sensitive? Cooperatives can focus on gender in their action plans.
- (5) Cooperatives can establish "gender committees" or units whose tasks can for example be to identify gender-related problems; to ensure that gender awareness training programmes are carried out; to be responsible for gender analysis in programme planning etc. It should be noted here that by establishing a special unit or office for gender issues or programmes, one risks that the gender issue becomes a side-issue that has been taken care of and that women continue to be marginalized in mainstream activities. A gender unit must therefore be part of mainstream activities or have direct access to policy and decision-making levels.
- (6) Cooperatives can use their national organizations and networks to collect gender disaggregated data and help identify different types of projects focused to women's needs which can help them increase their income-earning capacities and alleviate their work burden. For example, they can investigate how much time men and women spend on various chores and activities and how this fits in with potential and economically viable and sustainable cooperative activities.

To conclude the gender session, the trainer/moderator can summarize the main aims of the session, and can also underline that the session is basically meant as an *introduction to gender issues*. The trainer/moderator can furthermore ask participants if they think it has been necessary to dwell on gender, or whether it is a concept that is generally understood and that one instead should be strategizing on how to plan with gender.

The aims of this gender sensitization session have been to make people aware of the fact that:

- democratic participation in cooperatives means that both men and women should participate equally in cooperatives;
- gender-related problems also exist in the cooperative sector;
- women are not a special marginalized interest group but represent half the world's population and contribute to socio-economic development;
- both men's and women's needs and concerns must be addressed equally;
- both men and women should be afforded equal opportunities and treatment within the cooperative sector and should benefit equally from cooperative development;
- both men and women should have equal access to decision-making levels and leadership positions;
- both men and women should share responsibilities and power in all spheres of life;
- women face constraints in their access to and control over resources e.g. credit, training and education etc.

(See also transparency 7)

Background Information

Background Information

1. The gender concept

The term gender refers to the socially-determined and culturally-specific differences between women and men as opposed to the biologically determined differences. The concept *gender* is an important analytical tool in the planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes or cooperative projects as requires that women are considered in relation to men in a socio-cultural setting and not as an isolated group.

One refers to gender issues as opposed to women's issues because the issues concern both men and women. In regard to cooperatives it is important to analyse the role and position of men and women in their socio-economic environment in order to identify and address their different needs, to be able to develop their strengths and potentials and to ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits of cooperative development.

2. Gender roles

Gender roles are roles that are played by both women and men which are not determined by biological factors, but by the socio-economic and cultural environment or situation. For example, in parts of Africa and Latin America unskilled construction work is regarded as *men's work*, whereas in India it is regarded as *women's work*.

Women's productive and reproductive roles: Women are in most societies responsible for all domestic activities such as housework, food preparation and child rearing (reproductive role), in addition to their involvement in economic/income-generating activities (productive role).

This "double day" results in general in a heavier workload on women than on men (although this also depends on social class, age or ethnic group). In the poorer rural and urban areas, for example, women are often engaged in activities such as food crop production, assisting in family cash crop production (planting and weeding), market gardening, informal commerce, small-scale manufacturing etc. in addition to their household and family care responsibilities.

It is important to distinguish between the productive and reproductive roles when planning women's programmes as women spend a lot of time on reproductive activities and productive work. It should also be noted that women's work in both areas is often not remunerated and therefore does not appear in official (or national) economic statistics.

3. Practical and strategic gender needs

Because women and men have different gender roles, they also have different needs. Practical gender needs are those which address women's and men's immediate needs in relation to their roles in society. Strategic gender needs on the other hand, refer to the need

to change the existing gender roles and to address equality issues. Although cooperative organizations (and governments) have policies of equity and equal opportunity and express the need to improve the status of women, special intervention is often required to correct the existing imbalances in society and to improve the status of women. A few examples of activities which address strategic gender needs are:

- improving women's access to resources such as credit, land and education and training;
- enhancing women's participation in cooperatives and their access to decision-making levels;
- ensuring that women are afforded equal treatment in regard to employment opportunities, promotion, wages etc.

4. The gender and development approach

The gender approach views *gender relations* and the *inequitable development process* as the essential problem areas to be tackled. (It differs from the Women in Development (WID) approach which regarded women as the problem area and focused primarily on women's integration in the development process).

The gender approach seeks to empower disadvantaged and vulnerable groups - including women - and to transform unequal relations. The ultimate goal is to attain equitable and sustainable development with both men and women involved in decision-making processes.

| Gender and development: | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| The focus | is on the relations between men and women. |
| The problem | is the unequal relations of power between men and women on the same socio-economic level. This results in the unequal distribution of the benefits of development and hinders women's full participation in the development process. |
| The solution | is to empower the disadvantaged and women, and to transform unequal relations. |
| The aim | is to attain equitable and sustainable development with both men and women in decision-making and leadership positions. |
| How? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhance the democratization and de-officialization process of cooperatives. - identify the (practical and strategic) needs and interests of men and women which can improve their condition. - enhance women's access resources including credit and education and training facilities etc. - involve women in decision-making. - enhance women's access to leadership positions e.g through quotas or "affirmative action", which is action taken to correct the already existing imbalances. |

5. Gender analysis and planning

The aim of gender analysis is to analyse the position of men and women in a society or community and to identify the specific needs and strengths of each. This method is applied in the planning, management, implementation and evaluation of programmes in order to ensure the equal participation of men and women according to their identified needs, special skills and potentials. Cooperative policies and programmes can also be adapted to the needs of the specific target group by applying this method.

In gender analysis one must first identify the gender differences in social and economic production systems which will be affected by the cooperative activities. And secondly, analyse the implications of these gender differences for the design and implementation of the activities.

■ **The division of labour between men and women**

Who is responsible for which tasks by gender and by age? Is time available to men and women for cooperative activities? Are there imbalances in women's and men's workload?

■ **Sources of income**

Are there imbalances in the remuneration for women's and men's labour? Are cooperative services available to and used by men and women?

■ **Financial responsibilities in the household**

Who takes care of the household income and financial responsibilities?

■ **Access to and control of resources by men and women**

What resources are required for the productive activities e.g. credit, land, training, labour? Who controls these resources and to what extent does this affect the ability to increase productivity?

■ **Participation in the cooperatives**

What are the key differences between men and women's constraints to participation? (e.g. time, labour, access to credit, training etc.) What special strengths, skills or knowledge based on gender roles can be utilized to enhance economic productivity? (e.g. working in groups, marketing skills, indigenous knowledge)

6. General information on the status of women

During the UN Decade for Women (1975-85) focus was directed on women's issues and a favourable legal and institutional climate for women was created. Many governments established special offices for women's issues, and efforts were made to increase women's representation in decision-making and to involve them as key components in development policies. Since then progress has been made in the promotion of equality issues in most countries of the world but there is still often a discrepancy between principle and practice, and many policy approaches still treat women as a marginal minority group.

What is the status of women today? There have been some improvements but generally the situation appears to have deteriorated. On the one hand, there are more literate women today than ten years ago and more women can be found in higher positions in political and economic spheres of life. But, on the other hand, according to a UN report many women are poorer than ever before. The number of women living in poverty nearly doubled over the past 20 years, and women today constitute at least 60 per cent of the world's 1 billion poor.² Studies also suggest that a deterioration of the living conditions of women from low-income sectors often results in violence, a breakdown of the family and mental health disorders. A situation that affects not only the family but the whole of society.

Undoubtedly the most disconcerting development is the widening gap between the North and South, the rich and poor and the rural and urban populations. The conditions of the rural poor in developing countries, have deteriorated drastically over the past years, often due to structural adjustment programmes which have increased the hardship of rural women in particular. Rural women are the first to suffer from reductions in public sector services such as education and health.

In the field of education there are, however, signs of a positive trend worldwide. There has been a decline in illiteracy amongst women from 46.6 per cent in 1970 to 33.6 per cent in 1990, and this trend looks like continuing according to UNESCO.³ But, nevertheless, girls and women still represent two thirds of the world's illiterates. With regard to rural women, their access to education and training facilities is much more limited than for women in the urban areas.

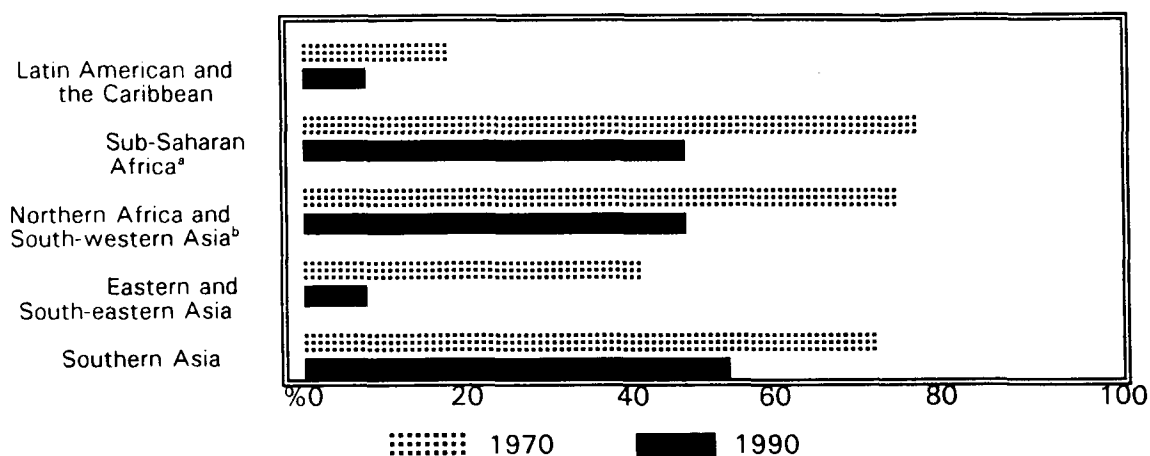
Direct gender discrimination still exists and discriminatory attitudes and practices are widespread. In many parts of the world, girl children often deliberately receive less education, less food and less health care than boys. According to the WHO, one sixth of all female infant deaths in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were, for example, due to neglect and discrimination.

² UN Department of Public Information: *Conference to Set Women's Agenda into Next Century, Background Information*, DPI/1424 Rev. 1, (New York, October 1994).

³ UNESCO, *Compendium of Statistics on Illiteracy*, 1990 edition. No. 31 (Paris, 1990).

Table 1: Illiteracy rates (UNESCO)

Illiteracy rates are falling for young women but are still much higher for young women than for men. Over 40 per cent of young women are still illiterate in Africa and Southern and Western Asia.



^a Includes Sudan; excludes South Africa.

^b Includes Somalia and Mauritania; excludes Cyprus and Turkey.

Note: Based on total population of women and men aged 20-24 years in each region.

In the economic sphere inequality is also prevalent. Women today represent 34 per cent of the workers in the formal labour sector worldwide and, although the wage gap between men and women has decreased, women still earn 30-40 per cent less than men for comparable work and more women are still found in traditionally low-paid jobs.⁴ Most women, however, work in the informal sector. The number of women in this insecure sector, unprotected by unions or employment legislation, far exceeds that of men.

Another issue that affects women throughout the world is their heavy workload. Due to the double burden of productive/economic activities and family responsibilities, women work much longer hours than men and do not have much time to spare for other activities (such as participating in meetings or community and training activities). In addition to this much of the work carried out by women is unrecorded and undervalued, or not valued at all since it often does not appear in a country's official statistics. Furthermore, when national surveys are carried out in the agricultural sector, they invariably underestimate the agricultural work carried out by women. For example, the national figures in Egypt showed that 3.6 per cent of the women were involved in agricultural work whereas a local study showed that between 35-50 per cent women were involved. In Peru the national figures estimated 2.6 per cent women involvement and the local figures estimated 86 per cent (FAO).

⁴ UN: *The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics*. Social Statistics and Indicators, Series K, No. 8.

For women in poorer rural and urban areas in developing countries the work load is particularly heavy. Women are often engaged in activities such as subsistence crop production, family cash crop production (planting and weeding and harvesting), market gardening, or informal commerce, small-scale manufacturing etc., in addition to their household and family care responsibilities. (See transparency 5A on *Division of Labour in the Agriculture*).

Women in many parts of the world are regarded as successful traders and entrepreneurs. However small-scale enterprises are difficult to establish and many women are hampered by lack of access to credit and other resources such as training and education. Traditional practices and customs can also often impede women's entrepreneurial aptitudes and potentials.

Poverty, low status and lack of participation and integration into the mainstream have resulted in the marginalization of women. To integrate women into the mainstream is not an easy task, but the first step is to change attitudes and overcome the existing resistance to the change in women's roles. Society must recognize and value women's productive and reproductive roles and their contribution to sustainable economic development.

There has been a growing awareness among governments, policy and decision-makers in recent years that women are indeed important, although under-utilized, contributors to economic growth and development rather than just passive beneficiaries. There is also a growing understanding of the fact that whatever happens to women will have significant consequences for the well-being of future generations in all parts of the world.

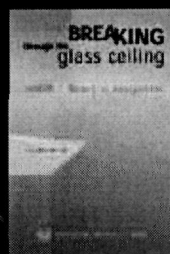


International
Labour
Organization

Breaking through the glass ceiling *women in management*

S U M M A R Y

Forthcoming ILO
publication



by Linda Wirth
ILO Bureau for Gender Equality

S u m m a r y

**Breaking
through the glass ceiling:
Women in management**

*Why close the gender gap?
“Because not only is it the right thing to do,
it’s also good for business.”**

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Introduction

There is no doubt that significant progress has been achieved in furthering the cause of gender equality in the labour market over recent decades. Women have been moving steadily into occupations, professions and managerial jobs previously reserved for men. Their access to education and training continues to improve, providing many with the necessary qualifications to aspire to jobs in senior management. Governments, businesses, trade unions and women's organizations have devoted much thought and energy to overcoming the attitudinal and institutional discrimination that bars women from certain jobs and hinders their career development, while the commitment to fight gender discrimination is renewed periodically at international conferences. Yet, many of the results fall short of expectations. Real obstacles remain, and these are often rooted in the way work itself is organized or in the challenges that face women who try to reconcile work and family commitments. Women are still concentrated in the most precarious forms of work throughout the world and breaking through the "glass ceiling" still appears elusive for all but a select few. Women hold a mere 1 to 3 per cent of top executive jobs in the largest corporations around the world. Some progress has been made in the United States recently with women in 1999 obtaining 5.1 per cent of executive management positions in the 500 largest companies compared to 2.4 per cent in 1996. For women who also experience race discrimination, the barrier to top jobs seems to be made of unbreakable plexiglas.

The hurdles facing women aspiring to management jobs can be so formidable that they sometimes abandon efforts to make it to the top of large firms. They often take their energy and know-how to smaller and more flexible companies or set up their own businesses. By 1996 in Sweden, approximately 20 per cent of start-up companies were being run by women and by 1999 in the United States, 38 per cent of all firms were run by women.¹ In Australia, women make up 35 per cent of the country's 1.3 million small business operators,

and the growth rate of female small business operators from 1995 to 1997 was three times that for men.²

While women have captured an ever-increasing share of the labour market, improvements in the quality of women's jobs have not kept pace. This is reflected in the smaller representation of women in management positions, particularly in the private sector, and their virtual absence from the most senior jobs. Wage differences in male and female managerial jobs stem from the reality that even when women hold management jobs, they are often in less strategic lower-paying areas of a company's operations. They are also linked to the fact that women managers tend to be younger on average, as most senior jobs tend to be dominated by older men. Despite the persistent inequalities at managerial level, the continuous entry of women into higher-level jobs has been noted, although they remain under-represented in senior management. With few exceptions, the main challenge appears to be the sheer slowness in the progress of women into senior leadership positions in organizations, which suggests that discrimination is greatest where the most power is exercised. The importance of gender equality for economic growth and the welfare of families is, however, being increasingly recognized. The effective management of organizations and firms today depends on ensuring a balanced mix of so-called "masculine" and "feminine" attributes, and an increasing number of organizations are adopting measures to attract and retain women so as to benefit from their qualifications and talent in a competitive environment. And the growth in entrepreneurship and increasing numbers of women running their own businesses, both large and small, herald a different future for societies. The economic power gained by women will play a key role in the struggle to sweep aside gender inequalities in all walks of life.

An ILO study, to be published shortly, provides an overview of the factors affecting women's participation in management and decision-making. Using the most recent avail-

able data desagregated by sex, it examines the progress of women into management jobs and the obstacles they face to break through the glass ceiling to reach top positions. Topics covered include:

- current gender inequalities confronting women in the labour market and in political and social life, with a focus on women's participation in the workforce, occupational segregation, pay differentials and gender time division;
- progress made by women in professional and managerial jobs, with recent statistics on women at the top in the public service, in finance and banking, and in politics;
- male and female participation in education and training, and strategies to help women qualify for careers in management;
- obstacles in the workplace that hinder women's career development, how and why men's and women's career paths differ, and strategies to overcome barriers to women at higher organizational levels;
- policies, programmes and initiatives taken at the national level to promote women in management;
- international action, in particular on the part of the ILO, that has been taken to promote equal employment opportunities.

Gender inequalities in the labour market and in society

"Glass ceiling" is a term coined in the 1970s in the United States to describe the invisible artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions. Whether this glass ceiling occurs in the workplace or in politics it is essentially a reflection of social and economic gender inequality. With the achievement of educational parity and changes in social attitudes towards men's and women's roles, it had been somehow assumed that women would quickly move up the career ladder. This has proved hard to achieve and no more so than at the top, where the prevalence of male executives tends to perpetuate the glass ceiling and where women often find themselves without the right mix of corporate experience required for senior executive positions.

A major source of discrimination stems from strongly held attitudes towards women's

and men's social roles and behaviour. If one compares the effective roles played by women and men rather than looking at women as an isolated group, it becomes apparent that each has different access to resources, work opportunities and status. The consequences of gender inequalities include women being "crowded" into a narrow range of occupations where there is less responsibility and/or lower pay, or having to work part time, where there are fewer opportunities for advancement. While this situation can be explained to some extent by men's and women's perceptions of their respective social roles, these roles have in fact been undergoing substantial changes in recent decades. Labour force participation patterns of men and women, and social attitudes, have been gradually evolving to reflect these.

Since the advent of the women's movement, changes in social acceptance of gender equality have been primarily due to changing perceptions among women and men themselves. The promulgation and enforcement of equal opportunity laws have not only lessened institutional discrimination; they have also had a considerable impact on the awareness of populations. In recent years, women's working lives have become characterized by more continuous labour force participation. Women have entered many of the professions previously reserved for men, and their earnings have become an essential part of household income.

These changes have led to shifts in societal views about the role of women in the economy. A survey in the United States revealed a growth in awareness between 1978 and 1995 of the existence of discrimination against working women in that country. A large percentage of those surveyed thought women have to perform better than men to get ahead. On the other hand, the proportion of those who believed women received their positions because they were women decreased from 46 per cent in 1978 to 25 per cent in 1995. A survey in Japan in the early 1990s showed increasing disagreement by both men and women with the traditional belief that men should hold jobs and women should stay at home and do housework.³ In 1987, 50 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women thought that women should stay at home. By 1990, these figures were 36 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

Women's increasing participation in the labour force

Labour force feminization continues unabated. At the global level in 1990, 67 per cent of all women aged 20-54 were economically active. By the year 2010, this figure is expected to reach almost 70 per cent. However, data by country and by region vary considerably. Regional figures produced by the ILO⁴ revealed that in 2000, nearly 58 per cent of women were economically active in Africa, 64 per cent in Asia, 46 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 69 per cent in Europe and 73 per cent in North America. For the year 2010, these proportions are expected to remain the same for Asia, rise by 1 per cent for Africa, Europe and North America while in Latin America and the Caribbean women's participation rates will increase by 4 per cent to 50 per cent.

Higher educational levels attained by women coupled with falling fertility rates, particularly in industrialized countries, are contributing to such increases in women's economic activity rates. Another marked trend is that of women spending more of their productive years in the workforce. Periods away from the labour force to give birth and care for children are becoming shorter. In the United States, for example, the proportion of working mothers with children under the age of 3 grew from 34 per cent in 1975 to 57 per cent in 1994,⁵ while the percentage of working mothers with children less than a year old was 53.6 in 1998.⁶

Women's share of the labour force is also increasing worldwide, but at a slower pace than their participation rates. By the year 2010, their share will be just over 41 per cent, up from 38 per cent in 1970. In some regions, the increase should be more significant (figure 1). By the year 2010 in Latin America, women are expected to account for almost 37 per cent of the labour force compared with 24 per cent in 1970. Over the same period, women's share of the job market in North America will grow from 36 per cent to 47 per cent, while in Oceania it is estimated to increase from 33 per cent to almost 45 per cent. In other regions increases should be less striking.⁷

Women's jobs in flexible labour markets

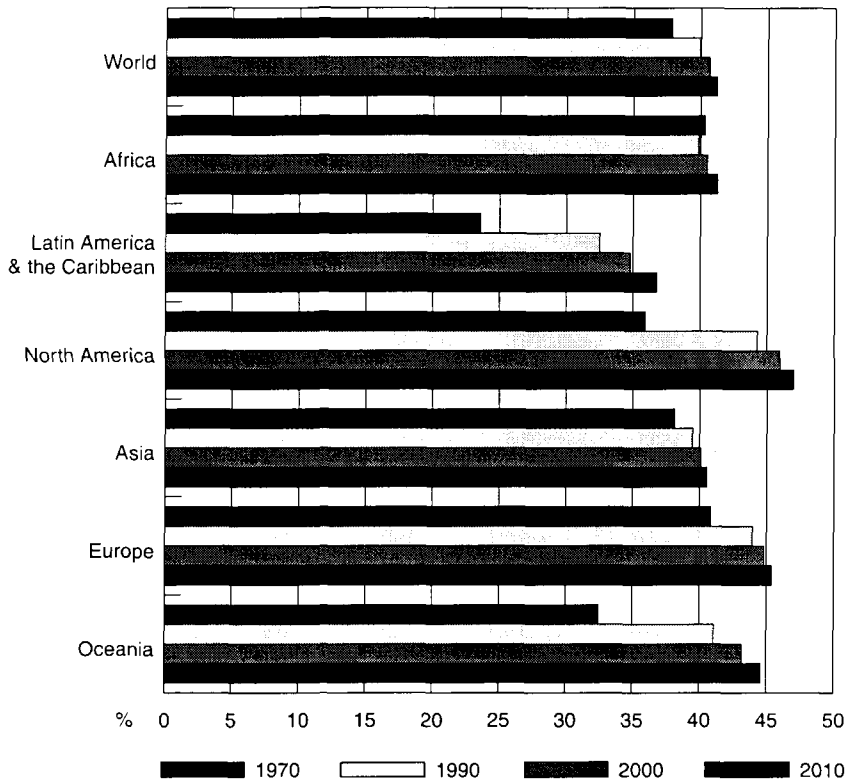
While the quantitative nature of women's participation in paid employment is ever-increasing, manifest gender inequalities exist in employment status and the quality of jobs held by men and women. Women often have part-time and temporary jobs, while men hold more of the well-paid and secure ones. Women make up the majority of part-time workers (between 60 and 90 per cent), and a large proportion of women who work do so on a part-time basis. In developing countries, significant proportions of these women work in the informal sector or at home.

Differences in unemployment rates for men and women can also be an indicator of gender disparities in the labour market. Unemployment data for men and women point to a mixed pattern depending on the countries involved, and regional differences can be quite pronounced. There are significant gender differences in Africa and Latin America, with women having considerably higher unemployment rates than men. In Asia, unemployment rates tend to be higher for men or similar to those of women in those countries for which data were available. In Central and Eastern Europe, many of the countries have similar rates of unemployment for men and women, or women have lower rates than men.

Men's jobs, women's jobs: Occupational segregation

In addition to gender differences in working-time patterns, another factor that contributes to gender inequality is that men and women perform different jobs and so-called "women's jobs" are often assigned a lower value in terms of skill requirements and remuneration. Developments in job evaluation methodologies have often demonstrated that many jobs occupied by women in fact require levels of skills, responsibilities, task variation

Figure 1 Women's share in the labour force in 1970, 1990, 2000 and 2010 (world and by region)



¹ Share as a percentage of economically active population.

Source: ILO: *Economically Active Population, 1950-2010*, op. cit., pp. 1-5.

and complexity similar to the higher-paid jobs held by men.

A combination of social attitudes and gender inequality in education and training has largely contributed to occupational segregation, resulting in men and women being streamed into different trades, professions and jobs. This is often referred to as horizontal segregation.

Not only do men and women have different jobs, but there are also differences in the extent to which they are represented in the hierarchy of positions within jobs. Even in occupations dominated by women, men usually occupy the “more skilled”, “responsible” and better-paid positions. For example, in the teaching profession, the majority of teachers are often women but the top administrators are men. Similarly in the health field, doctors and hospital heads are very often men, while most of the nurses and support staff are women. This is commonly referred to as “vertical gender segregation”. The movement of women upward through occupational categories to take up

more responsible and managerial jobs is hampered by institutional barriers and social attitudes. The “glass ceiling” usually refers to this type of vertical segregation, where recognition of factors such as skill levels, responsibility, pay, status and power is crucial to accessing management positions.

Closing the pay gap between men and women

One outcome of occupational segregation is significant pay differences between men and women workers. Although the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), has one of the highest rates of ratification of any international labour standard (149 as of 31 December 2000) and the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value has been incorporated into the labour legislation of many countries, pay differentials continue to be one of the most persistent forms of gender inequality.

ity. The gap is slowly closing but is likely to remain while occupations are still highly segregated by sex.

Reconciling work and family

The gender division of time between work and family is probably the most significant gender issue of all and explains many of the differences between the work patterns and job types of men and women. Time use studies show that women work longer hours than men in nearly every country.

Labour market inequalities between men and women explain many of the difficulties women face in pushing against the glass ceiling. Wage disparities arising out of occupational segregation, which in turn are linked to the disproportionate gender division between paid employment and unpaid care work, perpetuate the image of women as “secondary” workers. Gradual movements towards diversification in occupations for women and the closing of the wage gap have been noted. However, to quicken the pace on the road to gender equality, diversification in occupations for men will be required. In addition, there will have to be a greater sharing of family responsibilities between women and men. To support such developments, the world community will need to find a greater balance between achieving economic and social objectives so that men and women everywhere can enjoy “human development” on an equal footing.

Women in professional and managerial jobs

Over the last few decades, women have attained educational levels comparable to those of men in many countries and have been increasingly hired in jobs previously reserved for men. They have responded to expanding opportunities and invested themselves particularly in business, administration and finance. Women today represent over 40 per cent of the global workforce and have been gradually moving up the hierarchical ladder of organizations. Yet typically, their share of management positions does not exceed 20 per cent, and the more senior the position involved, the more glaring is the gender gap. National surveys reveal that in the largest and most powerful companies worldwide, women’s share in top positions is limited to a mere 2-3 per cent.

The term “glass ceiling” illustrates well the point that when there is no objective reason for women not rising to the very top as men do,

there exists inherent discrimination in the structures and processes of both organizations and society in general. Qualified and competent women look up through the glass ceiling and can see what they are capable of achieving, but invisible barriers prevent them from breaking through. The glass ceiling may exist at different levels depending on the extent to which women progress in organizational structures, and this is commonly represented by a pyramidal shape as in figure 2. In some countries or companies, the glass ceiling may be closer to the corporate head, while in others it may be at junior management level or even lower.

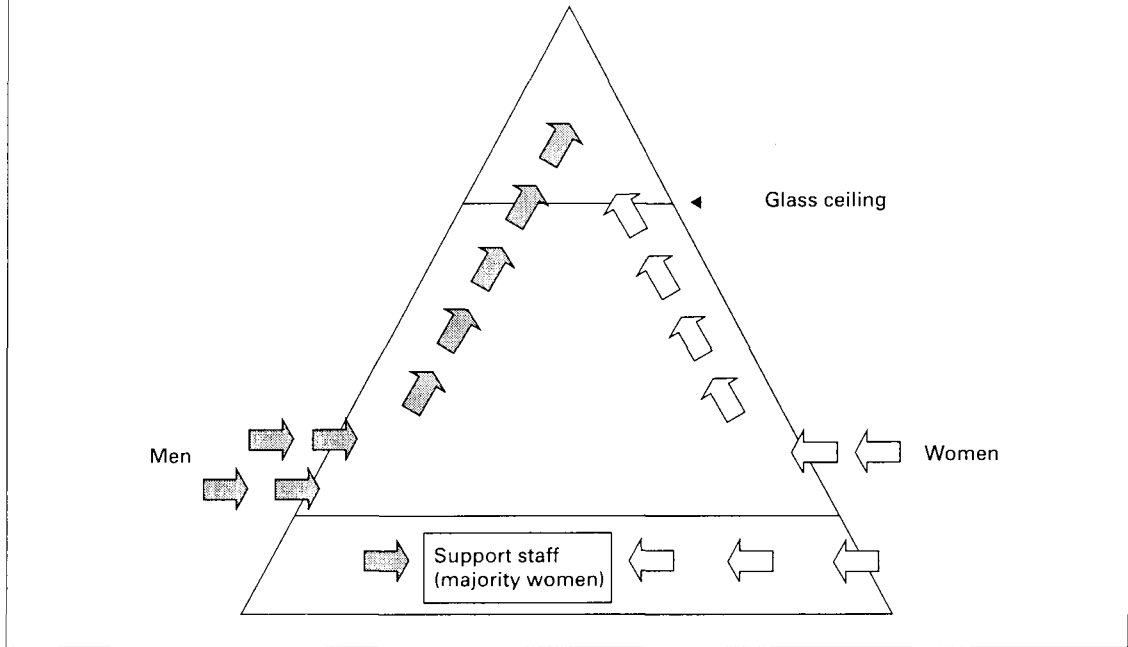
The nature of women’s career paths is a major factor blocking women from top positions. At junior management levels, women are usually placed in functions which are regarded as “non-strategic”, for example human resources and administration, rather than in line and management jobs that lead to the top. Often, this is compounded by women being cut off from both the formal and informal networks that are necessary for advancement within organizations. For women with family responsibilities, upward movement may be further hampered as they struggle to satisfy the needs of both career and family.

In the last two decades, improvements in the educational qualifications of women, and the fact that many women have increasingly been delaying marriage and childbearing, have created a pool of women worldwide both qualified and ready for professional and managerial jobs. At the same time, growth in the public sector and the services sector and the introduction of equality laws and policies in many countries have provided opportunities for qualified women to occupy lower- and middle-level management posts. These changes have paved the way for their taking up and aspiring to more senior management positions. While employment in the public sector has recently declined in many countries, this to some extent has been offset by growth in the services sector.

Women’s interest in professional and managerial work and the predicted shortages of highly qualified managers have not, however, resulted in women obtaining senior executive positions in significant numbers. The glass ceiling continues to limit women’s access to senior management and to management positions in those sectors and areas which involve more responsibilities and higher pay.

ILO data clearly show a pattern of women holding a smaller proportion of management positions compared with men in most countries. Figure 3 shows that in nearly half the 41 countries for which statistics were available,

Figure 2 The glass ceiling in the organizational pyramid



women typically held between 20 to 30 per cent of legislative, senior official and managerial positions. In 16 out of the 41 countries women held between 31 and 39 per cent of such jobs. It is notable that countries of Central and Eastern Europe feature prominently amongst those countries where women's share of the labour market and of managerial jobs is the highest. Statistics based on an earlier ILO classification system (ISCO-68) of administrative and managerial jobs show greater variation, ranging from under 10 per cent to over 40 per cent. These figures often contrast sharply with the high and increasing levels of labour force participation by women worldwide. That women's share of managerial work is universally considerably lower than their labour market share points to gender inequalities in the quality of women's jobs compared to men's.

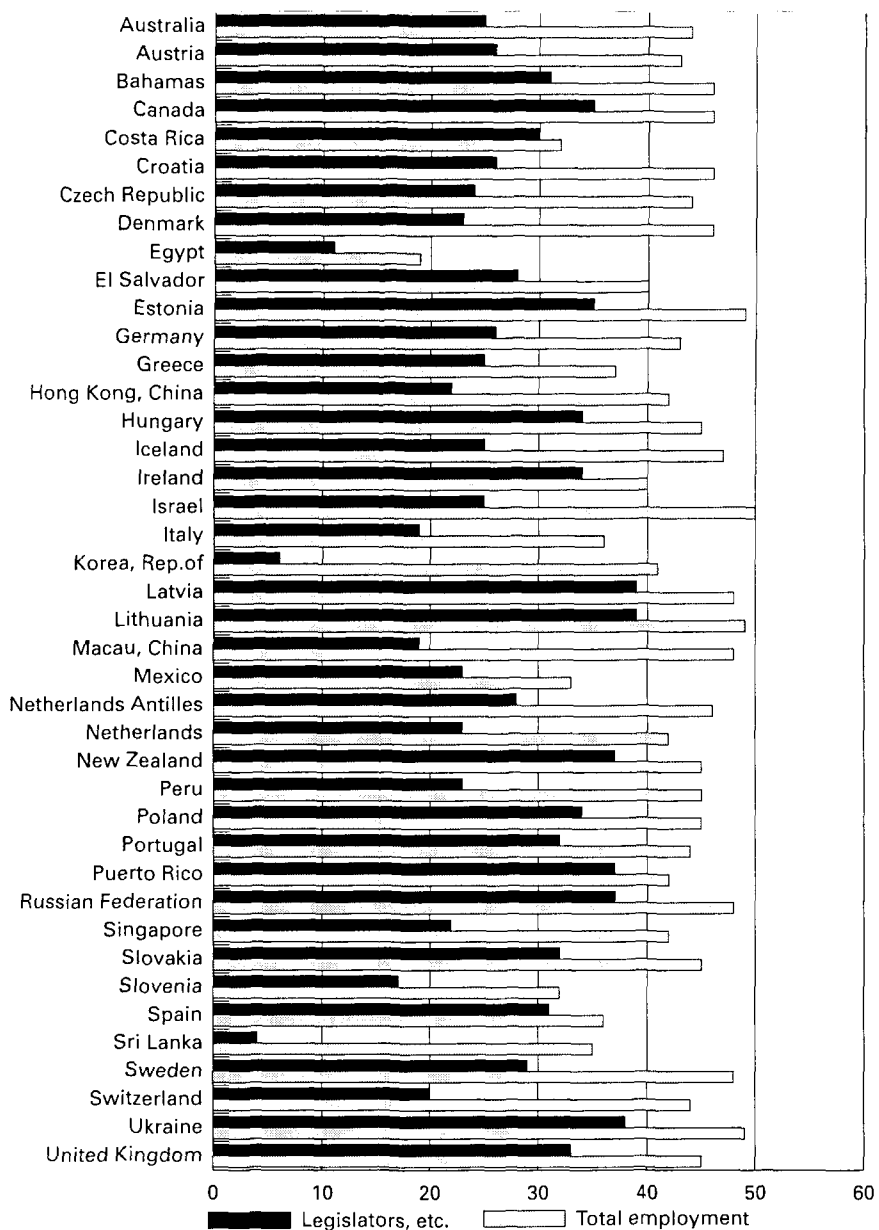
Surveys of businesses often report lower figures for women's share of management positions at around 10 per cent or less. According to a 1995 survey of over 300 companies in the United Kingdom,⁸ just over 10 per cent of managerial jobs were held by women, while a 1999 survey of 1,738 major companies in Argentina found that 9.7 per cent of executives were women.⁹ In 1998, the Swiss statistical office reported that 12.3 per cent of women employees held managerial positions compared with 24.5 per cent of men.¹⁰

Uneven and slow progress for women in management

Even though the figures just presented do not match women's overall share of the labour force, it has to be recognized that women worldwide are gradually increasing their share of managerial work. However, the pace of change is slow and progress has generally been uneven, as is illustrated in figure 4.

Over the past five years or so, there have been increases in the share of managerial positions held by women in 13 out of the 24 countries for which data were available. The percentage rise has mostly been only between 1 and 3 per cent, but in a few countries it has been more significant: in El Salvador, from 26 to 35 per cent; in Ireland, from 19 to 27 per cent; in New Zealand, from 31 to 37 per cent; in Slovakia, from 23 to 30 per cent. It is notable that in some countries, such as Denmark, Spain and the United Kingdom, there has been no change, while in others there has even been a decline (Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Republic of Korea, Poland, Romania and Slovenia). The evident lack of significant progress in women obtaining managerial positions reflects the complexity of issues to be addressed in order to overcome labour market discrimination and dismantle the glass ceiling. Social and cultural attitudes, coupled with dramatic economic changes that

Figure 3 Women's percentage share of legislators, senior officials and managers¹ and their share of total employment, 1998-1999



¹ International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 88), Major Group 1 – legislators, senior officials and managers.

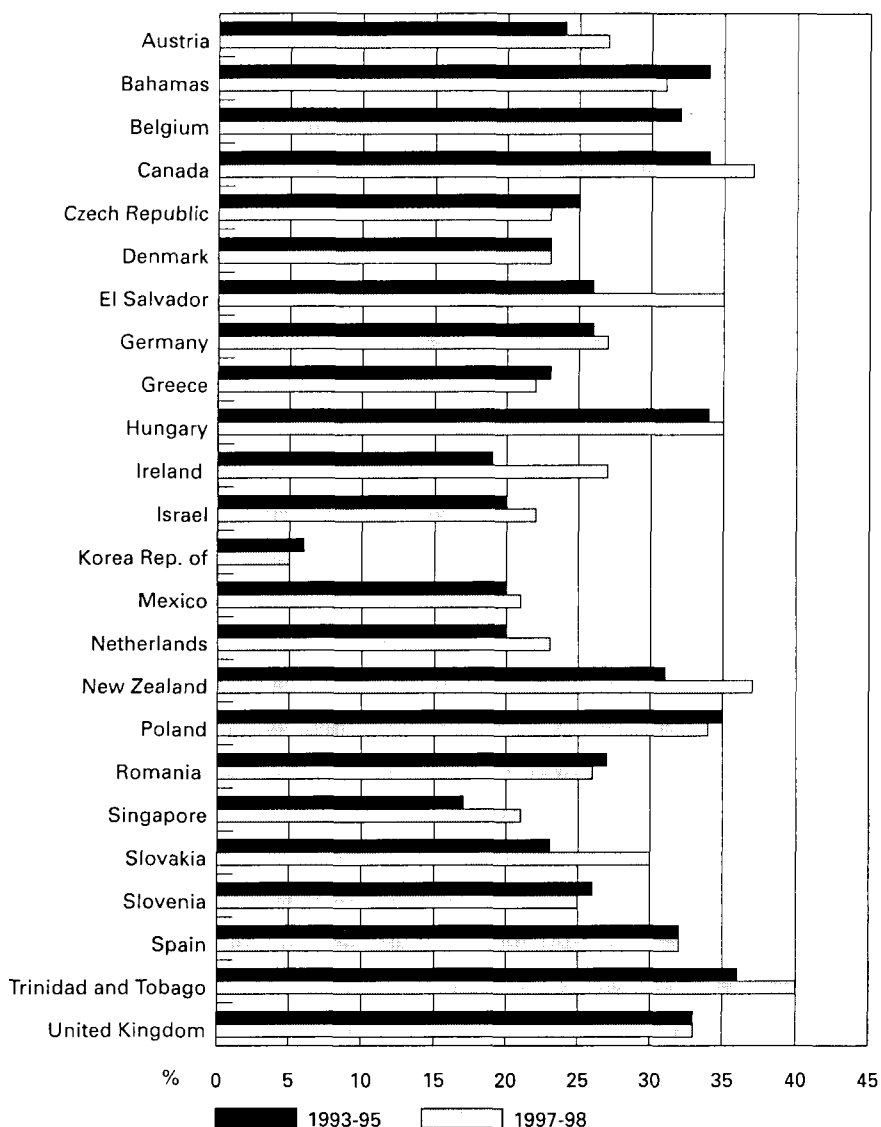
Source: *ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2000*, Table 2C, Total employment by occupation, p. 179-230 and Table 2A, employment general level, pp. 87-98. Data from 1999 for all countries except Denmark, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Iceland, Netherlands Antilles, Poland, Portugal and Sri Lanka for which the data is from 1998.

exist in transition countries or which emerged during the financial crisis that affected Asia, explain to some extent the problems women may face in competing for managerial positions.

In some countries, twofold or threefold increases in the number of administrative and managerial jobs seem to have given women

more opportunities. The number of these kinds of jobs doubled in Turkey between 1989 and 1998, and women's share increased from 6 per cent to 12 per cent during the same period. During the same period in Malaysia, a threefold increase in such jobs was accompanied by a near doubling of the share for women (from 11 per cent to 20 per cent).¹¹

Figure 4 Women's share of legislators, senior officials and managers,¹ 1993-95 and 1997-98 (selected countries)



Notes: 1993-98: Canada, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom; 1993-97: Bahamas, Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Republic of Korea; 1994-98: Denmark, Romania, Slovakia, Spain; 1995-98: Austria, Hungary, Netherlands, Israel, Poland; 1995-97: Belgium and El Salvador.

¹ See note 1 to figure 3.

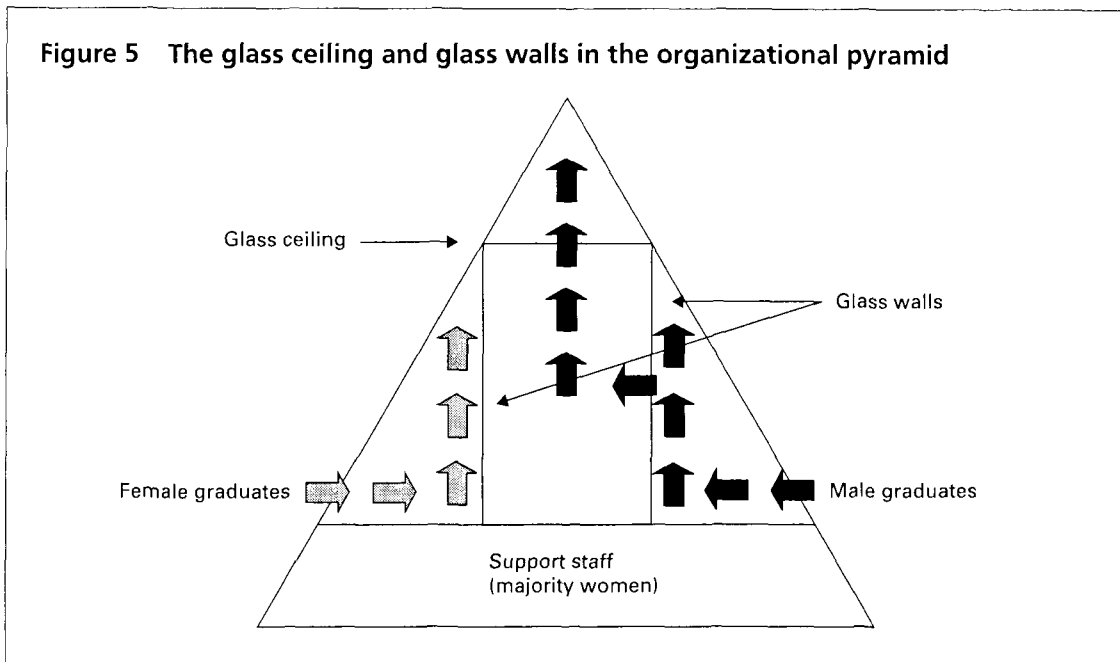
Source: ILO: *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1999*, op. cit., table 2c, pp. 187-240.

Women at the top

Few women gain access to the highest positions as executive heads of organizations and, despite some improvements, many would claim that the pace of change is still far too slow given the large number of qualified women in the labour market today. Where figures are available, they show women holding from 1 per cent to 5 per cent of executive positions. In the United States, where women are as equally

qualified as men and constitute around 46 per cent of the workforce, they were shown by a 1996 survey (*Fortune 500*) to hold only 2.4 per cent of executive positions and form a mere 1.9 per cent of top earners among the largest companies. By 1999, these figures had improved, with 5.1 per cent of executive management positions being held by women, while only 3.3 per cent of the highest-paid officers and directors were women.¹² In contrast, a survey in Australia revealed no change over

Figure 5 The glass ceiling and glass walls in the organizational pyramid



recent years in the 1.3 per cent figure of executive directors who were women.¹³

While it must be acknowledged that time is still needed for women at junior and middle management levels (those in the “pipeline”, so to speak) to move into executive positions, the fact remains that women are not moving quickly enough nor in sufficient numbers into line or strategic positions. Yet this factor is crucial for enlarging the pool of women aspiring to senior positions and for building a critical mass of senior women for networking and providing role models for those down the line. Speeding up women’s movement towards the top requires that recruitment and promotion methods be objective and fair. Above all, there has to be awareness and commitment from directors of companies as to the benefits for their organizations from promoting women to high-level managerial positions.

“Glass walls”

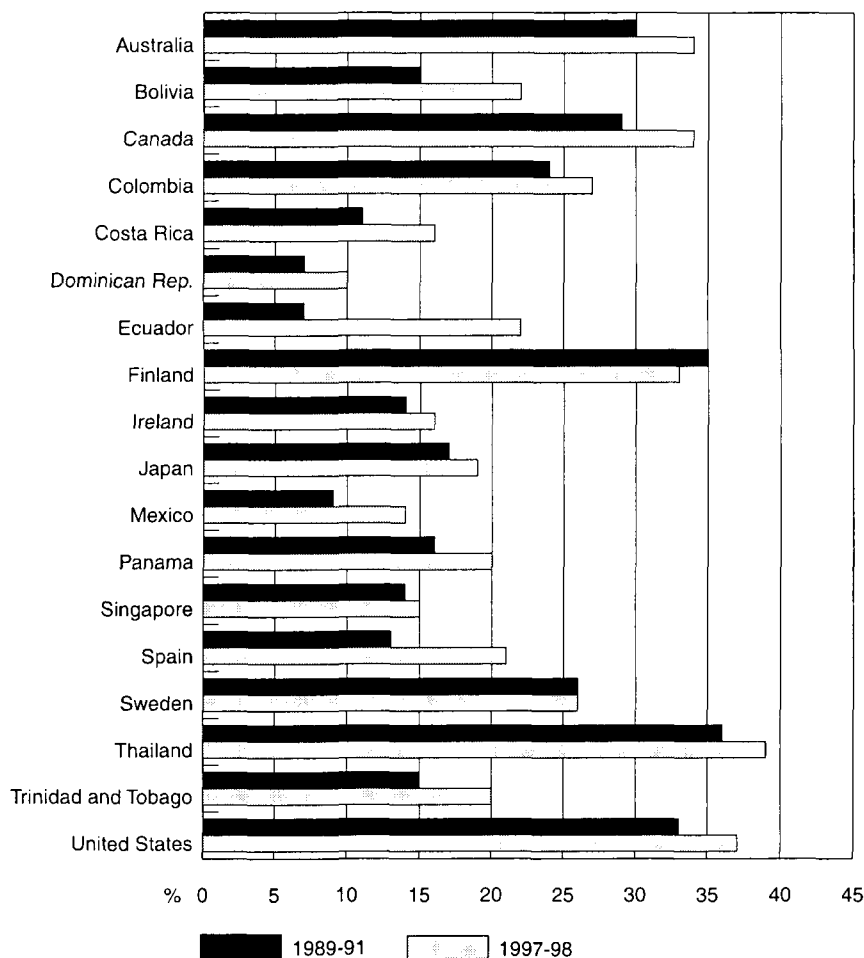
In what is a mirror of occupational segregation patterns, women managers tend to be concentrated in certain sectors. For example, most women managers in the United Kingdom are to be found in retail distribution, followed in descending order by the hotel and catering sectors, banking and finance, medicine and health services, and the food, drink and tobacco industries. But women are increasingly entering management in non-traditional sectors such as manufacturing, insurance and banking.¹⁴ In terms of functions, a 1998 survey in the United

Kingdom found that women constituted 50 per cent of all personnel managers, 44 per cent of actuarial, insurance and pensions managers and 37.6 per cent of marketing managers. At the other end of the scale, they constituted only 3.4 per cent of research and development managers and 3.5 per cent of manufacturing and production managers. At director level, 18 per cent of personnel directors and 13 per cent of marketing directors were women. However, despite the size of the sample of this survey, no female directors were identified in areas such as marketing and production, or purchasing and contracting.¹⁵

In those large organizations where women have managed to reach high-level managerial positions, they are often restricted to areas less central or strategic to the organization, such as human resources and administration. It is still extremely difficult for women to move laterally into strategic areas such as product development or finance, and then upwards through the central pathways to key executive positions in the pyramidal structure that is characteristic of large organizations. Sometimes these barriers are called “glass walls”; this concept is illustrated by figure 5.

There is a marked trend towards women starting up their own businesses. A recent survey in Ireland by a large multinational computer company showed that women clearly felt that the glass ceiling was still intact. As a consequence, many women have been starting their own companies, with between 35 and 40 per cent of all new businesses being owned by women. According to the survey, 64 per cent of

Figure 6 Percentage of women employers,¹ 1989-91 and 1997-98 (selected countries)



Note: Based on labour force sample surveys for all countries except for the Dominican Republic where it is based on official estimates.

¹ International Classification of Status in Employment 1993 (ISCE-93), Group 2 (Employers). Canada and the United States includes Group 3 (own-account workers). The ILO defines *self-employment jobs* as those jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent on the profits from the goods and services produced. The incumbents make the operational decisions affecting the organization or delegate such decisions while retaining responsibility for the welfare of the organization. *Employers* are defined as those workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the type of job defined as a "self-employment job" and, in this capacity, on a continuous basis have engaged one or more people to work for them in their business as employees. *Own-account workers* are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the type of job defined as a "self-employment job" and have not engaged any employees on a continuous basis.

Source: ILO: *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1999*, op. cit., table 2D, pp. 241-264.

Irish women in business earn half or more of the family income and 24 per cent are sole providers for their families.¹⁶ Figure 6 shows increases over the last decade in the percentage of women employers in 18 countries for which data were available. In countries such as Australia, Canada, Finland, Thailand and the United States, over 30 per cent of all businesses are now owned or operated by women.

There is also a trend towards a growth in women-owned businesses in Africa, Asia and South America. In Western Asia, for example, the number of self-employed women rose from

22 per cent in 1970 to 30 per cent in 1990. The figures for Latin America over the same period are very similar (from 22 per cent to 34 per cent), while those for North Africa are lower (from 8 per cent to 21 per cent).¹⁷ According to the National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO) in the United States, firms owned by women around the world can account for between one-quarter and one-third of businesses in the formal sector and probably have an even stronger presence in the informal sector.¹⁸ In Brazil, for example, it is thought that women run over 30 per cent of small

businesses and micro-businesses.¹⁹ A United Nations study covering the Latin American region notes that micro-businesses and self-employment are a major source of employment and income for women and that between 30 to 60 per cent of all micro-businesses in the region are operated by women.²⁰

The fragility of women's advancement to management positions, however, is reflected in the fact that gains can be somewhat dampened by economic recession and restructuring, or by reductions in societal supports for women. For example, the recent bursting of the "economic bubble" in Japan resulted in companies hiring far more men than women. A survey of companies revealed that the proportion hiring male-only graduates increased from 50 per cent in 1992 to 62 per cent in 1996, while at the same time companies hiring both men and women graduates fell from 45 per cent to 37 per cent.²¹ In addition, policies such as affirmative or positive action²² are being strongly challenged through the courts in Europe and the United States.

Despite indications that women's labour is increasingly in demand, only a relatively small number of companies are investing in women's career development. Such companies believe that promoting women produces more talent and therefore more long-term profitability. As competent and qualified women become harder to attract and retain, companies promoting women today expect to gain advantages over the longer term. Moreover, making women visible at the top can provide a competitive edge in selling services and products to the growing number of female customers.

Indications that more such developments can be expected are to be found in a study from the United States, which examined the positive performance impact of women's presence on the boards of companies making initial public offerings (IPOs).²³ The study notes that when

such companies go public, the initial stock price is based on factors not related to their current financial performance. Instead, one of the criteria used to determine the initial value is the composition of the senior management team, and its gender balance in particular is becoming an increasingly significant element. In 1988, there were no women on the boards of 134 companies going public. In 1993, 27 per cent of 535 IPO companies surveyed had women in their senior management teams. Of companies that went public in 1996, 41 per cent had women on their boards. The study found that, "having women on the top management team results in higher earnings and greater shareholder wealth", and that it is the mix of women and men on the board that results in higher long-term performance. The study also points to the trend for women to leave large corporations for smaller entrepreneurial firms.

A principal constraint on the level and type of women's labour force participation is the responsibility they carry for raising children and performing household tasks. An important feature of professional and especially managerial work is the extended working hours that seem to be required to gain recognition and eventual promotion. It can be practically impossible to reconcile the long hours often required of management staff with the amount of time needed to care for a home and children, not to mention care of the elderly. Yet, the availability of part-time managerial work is rare. In this context, time is very much a gender issue. Women who desire both a family and a career often juggle heavy responsibilities in both domains. Those who opt for part-time work early in their careers may find their advancement hampered, even after a return to full-time employment, since their male counterparts will have invested heavily in career building during the same period.

Improving women's qualifications and opportunities: A key element in breaking through the glass ceiling

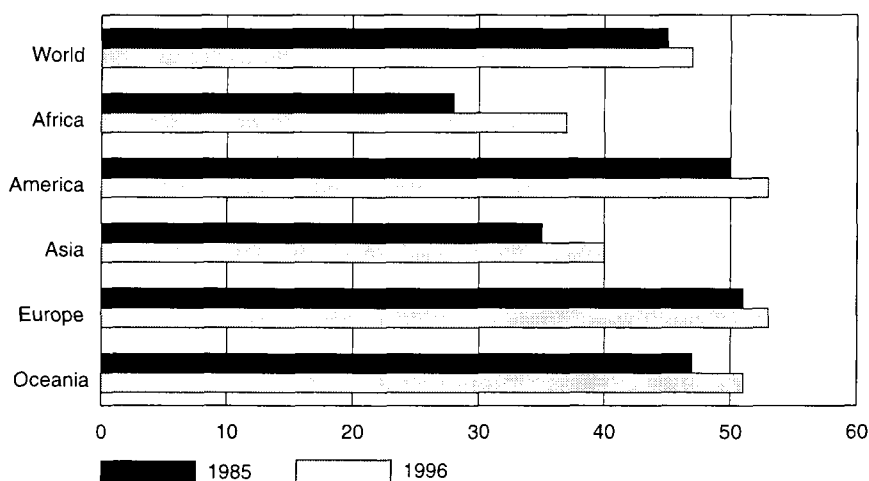
Just how well prepared are women for management jobs? Undoubtedly women's education, training and life experience are increasingly equipping them with the necessary qualifications and skills to aspire to and be selected for top positions. Despite persistent differences in educational levels, the gender gap is closing in many areas. Figure 7 shows that the overall enrolment figures worldwide indicate that the percentage of women reaching higher levels of education is approaching or even exceeding 50 per cent, and has been rising over time. This should theoretically allow women more access to management jobs in years to come.

The pursuit of universal education over the last decades has contributed to the rising educational levels of women worldwide. At the same time, increases in women's labour force participation have led to a higher value being placed on women's contribution to family income. Together with changing social attitudes, this has created a more enabling family and social environment for young women to achieve better education. Furthermore, the expansion of the service sector, in which there

has traditionally been a high concentration of women, has opened new horizons, motivating women to seek qualifications for the kind of jobs to which they have easier access. Job growth, generated by new information technologies such as the Internet, is creating new opportunities and women are increasingly taking advantage of such developments to create and run businesses.

It has to be recognized, however, that significant gender differences continue to exist in the nature and quality of education and training. These can represent real obstacles for many women, both at the recruitment stage and later in their careers. Improving the quality of women's education largely depends on support from the family and community in encouraging young women and providing them with the same educational and training opportunities as young men. Indeed, young women have increasingly been encouraged to undertake further education to increase their chances of finding employment later, though the focus of this education tends to be at lower educational levels. In contrast, young men are often

Figure 7. Women's percentage share of enrolments at third-level educational institutions, 1985 and 1996 (worldwide and by region)



Note: Data cover ISCED levels 5, 6 and 7 provided at universities, teacher training colleges and higher professional schools.
Source: UNESCO: *Statistical Yearbook 1998* (Paris, 1998), pp. 2-14.

prompted to take on higher-level studies of longer duration. This situation is gradually changing in many countries, but the problem of gender choice remains: young women still tend to select particular fields of study and young men others. Thus, many women can end up lacking the right educational profile to enable them to enter and advance in certain professional and managerial careers.

On the positive side, there are continuing improvements in the academic achievement levels of young women, which reach or even surpass those of young men in certain areas. A slow but steady shift towards young women entering more scientific and technological subject areas is also notable. These changes are already affecting the type of professions chosen by women and will influence the gender composition of professional and managerial occupations in the future.

Equal access for young women and men to education, vocational training and on-the-job training is a prerequisite for women to obtain more highly skilled and better-paying jobs. Until a sufficient number of women have the qualifications and skills required for moving into "men's" jobs, they cannot constitute the critical mass in organizations needed to ensure that all women, not just the exceptional few, have the chance to advance. Yet gender-based study choices made by students, their families and employers will continue to be the norm unless special measures are taken to encourage different choices. Young women need to be encouraged to take up studies in non-traditional subjects and in areas of future job growth. Young men also need to be increasingly prepared for understanding changing gender roles and the implications for their own professional, social and family lives. This requires a multi-faceted, well-integrated approach that involves education curricula, teacher training, vocational training advisory services, the media, and the setting of targets and legal obligations for employers. Once in a job, women should have equal access to continuous technical and professional upgrading so that they can compete for higher-level jobs later on.

At the workplace: Career development in practice

The recruitment, full development and retention of qualified women are increasingly recognized as being essential to the economic success and competitiveness of firms. Accordingly, one of the main objectives of equal opportunity programmes is to remove the invis-

ible cloak that often shrouds women and their contributions.

Many women enter the workforce at the same level as men, only to see their careers progress more slowly. They are often more qualified than their male counterparts and must work harder and perform better to obtain top jobs. A Chilean study estimated that women earning the equivalent of men had an additional four years of formal education.²⁴ A German survey published in 1997 found that 34 per cent of female managers had masters' degrees compared with 25 per cent of male managers, and 46 per cent held doctoral degrees compared with 36 per cent of men.²⁵ A large-scale study of bank employees in Canada found that women equalled or surpassed male colleagues on all important human resources measurements such as education, length of service, dedication and job performance.²⁶ Therefore, "educational segregation" only partially explains the braking effect on women's careers. Even women with similar qualifications and experience to men encounter greater difficulty than men in reaching top jobs.

A detailed analysis of the various steps and requirements involved in the recruitment and promotion processes of organizations is necessary to identify and rectify the mechanisms contributing to differential treatment. For instance, perceptions of the social and occupational roles of men and women often overly influence appointment decisions. Selection criteria and procedures may also be insufficiently developed to ensure an objective and fair assessment of candidates. Above all, many decision-making structures are wholly or mostly composed of men, contributing to a general condition of gender blindness and an incapacity to recognize the presence of qualified women. However, women with family responsibilities can face very real constraints in meeting the seniority or mobility criteria often required for promotion.

Measures adopted by organizations to recruit, retain and promote women in professional and managerial jobs not only involve specific action to advance women's careers, but also increasingly imply creating workplaces that are more flexible, that value diversity and that are more people oriented and family friendly.

The persistent stereotype associating managers with being male is a key obstacle in introducing more gender equality into career paths.²⁷ Characteristics considered to be "masculine" rather than "feminine" are generally regarded as traits required for management. As a result, women often try to adapt themselves

to work environments and expectations created by men. However, management styles are evolving towards valuing a certain mix of so-called "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics. A study of women managers in the United Kingdom reported that the characteristics most highly valued by their organizations were being competitive, cooperative and decisive, while the least valued were being emotional, manipulative and forceful.²⁸

Gender-sensitive, human-resource strategies developed by enterprises in recent decades provide the best ways through the glass ceiling ñ including networking, career tracking, mentoring and succession planning that pay particular attention to the situation of women. Objec-

tive and unbiased recruitment and promotion procedures are vital in attracting and retaining skilled professional women. In the light of the increasing skill levels of women in the workforce, such strategies are necessary: women are increasingly a key resource in the race to create new products and services, and they are entrepreneurs as well. Competitive companies cannot afford to lose out on women's talent. Although policies are more advanced in industrialized countries, promoting women in management should not be viewed as a "luxury". Rather, in the era of globalization, it is indispensable to enable firms worldwide to use and develop women's talents and potential to the fullest.

National policies for promoting women in management

Empowering women to break through the glass ceiling requires action on many fronts. The right qualifications and training are central, as are policies and practices in the workplace to eradicate discrimination at all levels. Governments also play a fundamental role in regulating the social, political and economic environments and, ultimately, in making these receptive to gender equality and the guarantee of equal rights.

National policies and programmes promoting equality between men and women are usually broadly based and cover all walks of life. While these do not always directly address the issue of women in decision-making, they do provide an important framework and a basis for specific action in that area. Employers' and workers' organizations, together with a range of women's organizations, are also key actors in raising awareness, implementing national policies and developing innovative measures that enable women to attain and perform well in management positions.

Almost every country in the world has adopted legislation prohibiting discrimination or guaranteeing equal rights for men and women. The ILO's Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), are amongst the most highly ratified of all international labour Conventions, with 145 and 149 ratifications respectively as of December 2000. Equality clauses are also increasingly included in collective agreements. Nonetheless, efforts are still necessary to achieve gender equality in the labour market.

Women are undoubtedly making significant inroads into management. Changing social attitudes towards women's roles in the labour market and at home have been central to this process and anti-discrimination legislation has encouraged women to obtain qualifications and seek jobs in new fields. However, the job market remains highly segregated both horizontally (in terms of occupations) and vertically (in terms of hierarchical levels). Despite improvements, there is often frustration with the slow pace of change, especially considering how much women have caught up with men in terms of education.

Strategies to speed up the advancement of women have generally focused on the following areas:

- enacting equality laws and rendering complaint procedures more effective;
- providing family care assistance;
- revaluing "feminine" occupations;
- moving women into more scientific areas;
- insisting on objective criteria in recruitment and promotion;
- questioning organizational structures in terms of their efficiency and treatment of both men and women;
- building networks; and
- raising awareness and changing social attitudes.

Progress in these areas is, however, dependent on labour market trends and available economic opportunities. A negative employment outlook tends to dampen efforts to improve women's situation. Predicted labour shortages may benefit women if companies use the right strategies. Nonetheless, even when economic opportunities are poor because of recessions, economic downturns and the like, it is certain that women's presence in the labour force will continue to grow, both numerically and qualitatively. As the proportion of professional women reaches a critical mass, the contribution of qualified women will increasingly be perceived as a bottom-line requirement, and thus the position of women will be less subject to the vagaries of the market-place.

Increased competition and economic globalization, which are promoting new forms of flexible organization and new management styles, can further boost women's labour market position, as these new forms put more emphasis on organizations and attitudes that are flexible, non-hierarchical, cooperative and holistic. Such environments de-emphasize the old rigidities which have restricted women and allow a more positive appreciation of so-called "feminine" management qualities and styles: being less combative, being more consensus and solution oriented, being more practical and supportive of other staff, and so forth.

As women catch up with men in many areas, one key issue that emerges is the gap between the small proportion of women with

secure, well-paid jobs and the bulk of women remaining in low-skilled positions, often on a part-time, temporary or other precarious basis, not to mention the vast majority of the world's women who work in the informal economy. Thus, it should be kept in perspective that, for the majority of women to improve their occupational and employment status, broad-based measures have to be pursued in tandem with specific strategies to promote women in management. The latter could perhaps aspire to junior or middle management, if not the very top, and could indeed serve as role models for future generations.

International action to promote equal employment opportunities

We take a decisive step towards globalizing social progress each time we champion gender equality as a matter of human rights, social justice, economic efficiency and sustainable development.

(Message by the Director-General of the ILO to the President of the Beijing+5 Conference, 2000)

The coming together of countries within the United Nations and the pooling of their concerns, resources, strategies and activities have produced over the decades a formidable array of legal instruments and programmes to further the cause of gender equality and equality of opportunity. The number of clear mandates and commitments has been multiplying in an attempt to address the myriad forms of discrimination in social, political, cultural and economic life, which ultimately hamper women's employment and career prospects. International action is a powerful stimulus in promoting professional and managerial women, and is all the more necessary since increasing women's participation in decision-making remains one of the areas most resistant to change.

International labour standards on gender issues are key to attaining equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and enabling women to realize their potential in management and decision making. Moreover, ILO programmes and projects developed and implemented since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, approach gender equality in the world of work as a matter of human rights, but also as critical for sustainable development, the effective use of human resources, and family and child welfare. Both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of employment are addressed, as is

women's empowerment. Current targeted assistance focuses on employment creation and poverty alleviation, and covers the promotion of job equality and the provision of social protection to specific groups of women workers. Activities related to women workers' rights are given importance, as is the fight against the trafficking of women and children.

Increasingly, a gender perspective is being systematically incorporated or mainstreamed into all ILO programmes and projects, and many interventions take an integrated approach and relate simultaneously to the various critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Reflecting recent global initiatives, ILO activities on gender issues have been stepped up. The focus has been placed on various key issues for women's work and careers, including:

- the ratification and implementation of international labour standards of special relevance to women;
- gender-based policies and programmes for employers' organizations;
- gender equality in trade unions, including the increased incorporation of women workers' concerns in collective bargaining;
- women's presence in private-sector activities, including small businesses;
- women in management;
- increased equal opportunity for women in vocational training and technical education;
- greater harmony between work and family responsibilities; and
- social protection, especially for vulnerable groups of women.

These concerns are reflected in ILO programmes and projects. Some examples are:

- an interregional project, launched in nine countries, disseminating information and offering training in women workers' rights;
- "More and Better Jobs for Women", a global ILO programme to enhance national capacities and strengthen legal and institutional frameworks for improving the quality and quantity of women's employment;
- developing training materials for management development institutions to use in training women managers in Africa, to be adapted for other regions;
- improving the incomes, employment conditions and prospects of women engaged in small-scale enterprises, especially in least-developed countries;
- developing business knowledge and skills, setting up information exchanges, and

- promoting networking and a “voice” for women entrepreneurs;
- encouraging the participation of employers’ organizations in raising awareness of gender issues and promoting equality, including activities to integrate women into the mainstream of business;
 - providing training and advisory services to trade unions and strengthening women’s participation in workers’ organizations in Africa and Asia; and
 - launching a programme in the four MERCOSUR countries to promote and strengthen social dialogue on gender issues in the labour market, with tripartite committees playing an advocacy and advisory role.
- The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human

dignity. All those who work have rights at work. This applies not only to wage workers in registered companies, but also to self-employed and casual workers in the informal economy and to the hidden, predominately female workers of the “care” economy.

Decent work means meeting or exceeding core labour standards, in other words, setting a threshold for work and employment that embodies universal rights and that, for a given society, is consistent with its values and goals. Achieving decent work involves ensuring respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, promoting employment creation, providing social protection, and engaging in social dialogue. At the heart of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda are the issues of gender equality and development. Enhancing women’s role in decision making and management is key to successfully addressing inequalities in the labour market.

Notes

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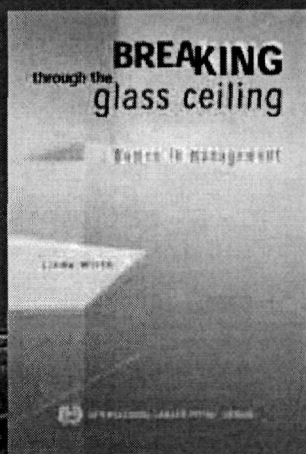
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Forthcoming book

Breaking through the glass ceiling *women in management*



Women around the world have achieved higher levels of education than ever before and today represent more than 40 per cent of the global workforce. Yet their share of management positions remains unacceptably low, with just a tiny proportion succeeding in breaking through the glass ceiling. This book will review the changing position of women in the labour market, in professional and managerial jobs, and in politics. It will examine obstacles to women's career development, and action taken to improve their opportunities and promote gender equality.

The book will discuss the earnings gap between men and women, and the occupational segregation that exists in management. It will examine the situation of women managers in the public service, as well as the financial, business and banking sectors, while providing valuable figures and statistical information.

In the same vein, the book will identify specific practices and strategies for improving women's qualifications, thereby helping them break through the glass ceiling. The pivotal roles of education and training will be covered in depth and the book will address the various hurdles women encounter in the recruitment and promotion processes. Useful career-building strategies will be offered, including mentoring, networking and career-tracking approaches.

This important study will provide a vivid photograph of national and international efforts to improve equal opportunities and promote gender equality in management. By exploring such issues as discrimination, equal remuneration and gender mainstreaming, it will present a concise overview of the glass ceiling and its effects on women around the world.



Further information on the book can be obtained from the ILO Bureau of Publications, International Labour Office
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