

RURAL WOMEN

& economic empowerment

Lead

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Contributors

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Structural barriers and negative trends

- Economic issues: land and property rights, where traditional law and gender stereotypes still prevail. Employment problems leading to labor migration. Women's social insecurity and vulnerability to violence in the informal sector. The workload of rural women in unpaid domestic work is very high. Low wages in budget areas. Inadequate access to productive resources, financial services, technology and innovation. The use of tax laws that discriminate against women and reduce taxes paid by power holders and the wealthy in the name of deficit reduction or tax competitiveness.
- Political issues: inadequate implementation of laws to promote gender equality in the field. Lack of gender budgeting. Women's poor access to decision-making processes and political participation.
- Social problems: an imperfect system of social protection, a decline in the quality of education, access to quality medical services, including family planning and reproductive health. Problems of safe public places, insufficient lighting of streets and stops. Strengthening religious influence and patriarchal principles that exacerbate existing in society, stereotypes regarding rural women and girls.
- Environmental issues: environmental pollution, outdated infrastructure, roads, public transport, access to clean drinking water and irrigation water. Rural women have health problems that are closely linked to limited access to clean drinking water, lack of adequate sanitation, and poor hygiene.
- The special needs of rural girls: access to quality and professional education, sanitary conditions in rural schools, early and forced marriages, access to youth-friendly reproductive and sexual health services and labor migration of parents.

- Across the region, it is possible to identify an absence of appropriate legislation to protect and empower rural women, and even when this legislation is in place, there is a lack of political will to ensure its full implementation. Article 14 of CEDAW outlines specific requirements which must be met for rural women, and no country in the region has fully satisfied with this. There continues to be a lack of gender budgeting, and representation of women in local, national, and regional legislatures remains below the targeted goals. Even when women are in power, rural women are consistently under-represented.



Progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

- Kindergartens and schools: low level of buildings, lack of funds for the repair and construction of new facilities. An acute shortage of places in kindergartens, and often a complete lack of kindergartens in the villages. Lack of safe toilets that meet standards of decent living in rural schools and inadequate water supply.
- Overloaded classes, lack of teaching staff, high-quality textbooks, low salaries for teachers. The relevance of the problem of vulnerability to violence of children whose parents are in labor migration.
- Issues of local budgets, local natural resources: non-transparency of the processes of budgeting and issuing licenses for quarrying.
- The situation of rural infrastructure: poor roads, lack of street lighting and equipped stops, which aggravates the security situation of women and girls. Lack of infrastructure to provide clean drinking water.
- The situation of women deputies of local councils: difficulties they have to face in the process of nomination, elections, and then in the process of work - pressure from male deputies, lack of support from family and local communities. Harassment and security threats when women deputies of local councils raise sensitive issues of unfair decisions.
- Problems associated with the state of health care in the villages, poor interaction both interdepartmental and with local communities. In rural areas, there are no shelters and crisis centers for women and girls affected by violence. Even primary care is not always available to rural women.
- Empowerment and responsibility of local councils for making appropriate decisions.
- Still existing restrictions based on gender and discriminatory laws on inheritance and land ownership.



Recommendations beyond Beijing+25

- Ensure the realization of the right to access public services in rural areas, the right to financial inclusion, to land, property, productive and natural resources, as well as access to markets and information technologies, by raising revenues adequate to securing gender equality in all aspects of life and spending those revenues in consistent stable longterm programs.
- Create laws that protect women's rights to inherit land and secure land tenure.
- Design financial services and tackle discriminatory policies in financial institutions.
- Ensure gender-balanced representation of rural women in local communities at, 30 percentages by adopting and implementing national laws about quotas in political representation in countries where they have not yet been adopted?.
- Ensure access to inclusive and quality education in rural schools that is gender sensitive, including also reproductive health.
- To carry out a gender analysis of the social protection system, taking into account the specific situation of rural women particularly older widows. Increase the number of kindergartens in rural areas so that women can continue or receive additional education, have more free time to improve their economic situation.
- Develop a national media campaign to eradicate gender stereotypes and stigmatization of rural women and girls.
- Public spaces remain under-serviced and, as such, unfit for safe living. Outdated infrastructure, rural transportation, lighting, and access to services like medical facilities and law enforcement, are all frequently highlighted as a significant concern by women across the region. Critically, girls outside of urban areas must have access to quality and professional education, safe and appropriate sanitary conditions in rural schools, protection from early and forced marriages, access to youth-friendly reproductive and sexual health services and labour migration of parents.
- It is well established that women are at the forefront of climate change's impact on our societies. There are many traditional practices which could help mitigate or reduce the impact of climate change but which are ignored because they come from rural women. Clean water and sanitation, access to appropriate and affordable social provisions such as schooling and educational opportunities beyond the most basic levels are also a significant concern.
- Young rural women are the future. They must be safe, educated, healthy, and have appropriate systems for life. This must include social investment and structural institutions, allow for entrepreneurship, and offer a quality of life in rural communities that stems the tide of migration to over-stretched urban areas.