



# HOW TO... PROMOTE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES WITHIN RURAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

## A Paper Series for Rural Youth Employment

Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) aim at empowering young women by transforming current systems, shifting gender norms and addressing existing stereotypes. Incorporating GTA in rural youth employment programmes can improve employment opportunities for women and can be included in any project. This How-To-Paper illustrates piloted methods of incorporating GTA in rural employment strategies through the global project "Employment in Rural Areas with a Focus on Youth".

## THE CHALLENGE

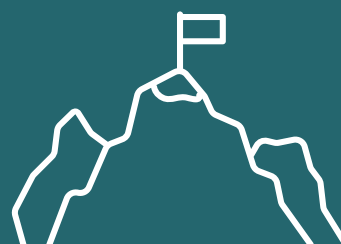
## HOW TO DO IT

## CONCRETE ACTIVITIES

## LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE CHALLENGE

In rural areas, **social and cultural norms** are often deeply embedded, having an effect on gender roles: Young women are expected to marry early, bear children and do domestic tasks, thereby **barring them from participating in education and employment opportunities**, to which their male peers in general have better access ([IFAD, 2012](#)). Young women are often **excluded from decision-making processes** and **depend on male relatives for access to resources** such as land or financial capital, information and networks. Furthermore, young women **lack role models and networks** to support them in setting up and/ or improving their own economic activities. This is especially alarming, as **women make up a small proportion of all farmholders but do a large majority of the work in developing countries** ([FAO, 2014](#)). In many regions, cultural norms (and limited mobility) also focus women's economic activities on specific elements of the value chain/ in the food system while restraining them from others. These disadvantages for women and their exclusion from gainful economic activities lead to a range of **negative effects of the economic growth of a household or a community, a region, or a country** as a whole. Being young, a woman and living in rural areas is a triple challenge that leads to multiple structural disadvantages in the labour market at the same time (intersectionality) ([IFAD, 2012](#)).

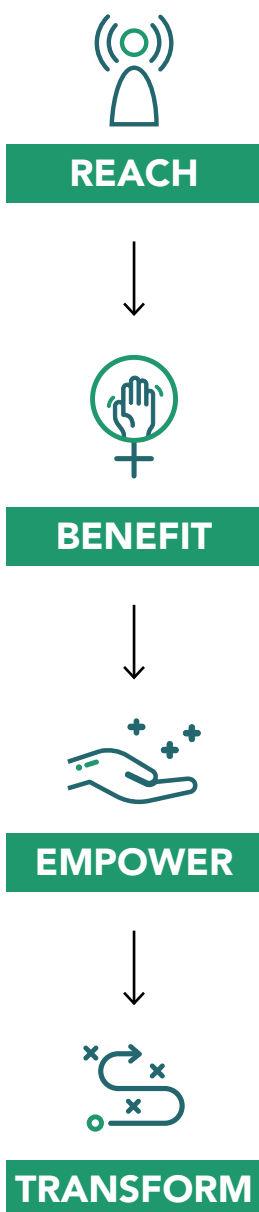




## HOW TO DO IT

Applying a **Gender Sensitive and Transformative Approach (GTA)** aims at **EMPOWERING** (young) women and **TRANSFORMING** existing systems by questioning established norms and gender stereotypes. If successfully implemented, a GTA can be a key to successfully **ensuring**

**employment and improved income opportunities for young women in rural areas.** However, there are several steps before that are pertinent to ensure the inclusion of young women (see graph below).



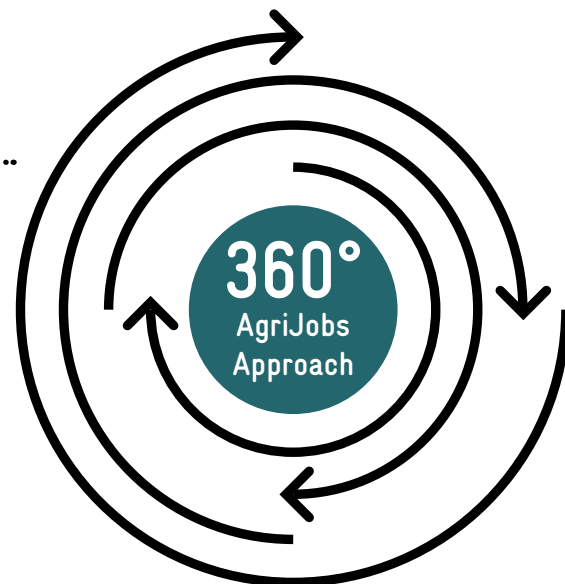
It starts with **REACHING** young women through targeted mobilisation campaigns, e.g. through partner organisations, training institutions, NGOs, public partners (i.e. extension services) or (social) media campaigns. It also means considering factors like timing, location, childcare, and menstrual hygiene support when planning training sessions; providing specialised training for women or ensuring gender-inclusive training, such as language adaptation for low-literacy or local language speakers; the inclusion of parents, husbands and the community to showcase the benefits of the training and raising awareness, e.g. during rural job fairs organised with ATVET centers.

Further, it means ensuring that women **BENEFIT** from the services offered, for example by growing their businesses, securing additional income, or employment opportunities. Here, women start-up and mentoring programmes, the promotion of women's groups in entrepreneurship and market access and activities especially for women, like women pitch nights, to ensure access to financing and grant schemes are needed.

Going a step further would be to **EMPOWER** women to take their own decisions by promoting women role models, e.g. in entrepreneurship through advocacy and awareness raising and advocacy campaigns, mentoring programmes, by strengthening women leadership in (youth) organisations, policy and decision-making processes.

The elements combined have the potential to **TRANSFORM** gender roles within a society in the long-term. This may lead to women's increased access to income, land and other resources, more independence, a stronger presence in the public/ professional space and an uptake of professional/ economic opportunities beyond traditional house and farm work. This again may have a positive impact on families and communities as a whole, improving perspectives for future generations of girls and women growing-up in rural societies.

The global project “Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth” implements an adapted integrated approach to employment promotion – the so called **360° AgriJobs Approach** ..... in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Mozambique ([Link](#)). The approach allows to analyse and address labour market constraints in rural areas in a holistic way. It combines the **three main pillars of demand for labour** (job creation), **supply of labour** (improving employability) and **matching** (of demand and supply) with interventions to create favourable **framework conditions** and strengthening systemic **foundations**, services, which are an important element when working in rural areas.



Integrating different gender sensitive and transformative measures within the **360° AgriJobs Approach** can help to reach employment goals. The measures aim at enabling young women to participate equally in the project activities and to bring them into productive employment. This in return seeks to positively change the image of young women in the agri-food sector and to address structural and social disadvantages and power imbalances.

Equality of gender, being a cross-sectional topic, can only be reached when gender transformative approaches are combined with and embedded in other activities. Besides a **systematic consideration of gender sensitive and transformative measures** throughout the project planning, implementation and evaluation process ([GTA Checklist of GIZ](#)), **specific measures in all three pillars, roof and foundation of the 360° AgriJobs Approach** help to strengthen gender equality and women empowerment within a project framework. Applying gender transformative measures can further help to reach the objectives of the RYE programmes by helping women attain gainful employment opportunities and better income. **Gender sensitive and transformative measures can be found in all spheres of the 360° AgriJobs Approach (see the graph below).**



# GTA in the 360° AgriJobs Approach

## FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

Strengthening of governments' policy and action frameworks for equitable rural youth employment promotion; advocacy work for better, gender-sensitive policy

frameworks, better education, employment and income-generating opportunities for (young) women, particularly in marginalised, rural areas. This can be

done through specific women support programmes or improved government regulations with regards to access to land or better heritage laws.

### DEMAND FOR LABOUR

Equitable access to finances, inputs, information, services and markets of agri-food sector e.g. seed funding for women entrepreneurs.

Start-up promotion and MSME business growth for employment, with a focus on women-led businesses and women-focused trainings (e.g. Gender makes Business Sense).

### MATCHING

Improvement of labour market coordination and matching mechanism.

Matching opportunities, career counseling, internships, access to markets, e.g. by providing child-care and inclusion of parents at opportunity fairs. Further through internship conditions and mobility, allowing more women to attend such events.

### SUPPLY OF LABOUR

Needs based training of rural youth with special support for women and young mothers, such as women-tailored financial literacy trainings and business models that are reachable and realistic for young women to take up, e.g. in processing.

Inclusion of hygiene trainings such as the menstrual cup initiative in Malawi (see examples below).

## FOUNDATIONS

Equitable access for women looking for access in family farms and land ownership.

Sensitisation and support of decision-makers and traditional leaders to see the added value of gender transformative measure and become champions of change.

Awareness Raising on gender-equity and women empowerment through advocacy campaigns and the promotion of women role models.

Work with (women-led) youth organisations and networks to overcome structural challenges, promoting (young) women in leadership and decision-making positions within youth organisations.

More information on gender transformative tools can be found in the Toolbox for Rural Youth Employment Promotion.

**TOOLBOX for Rural Youth Employment Promotion**

Look for the #gender-hashtag!



# CONCRETE ACTIVITIES

The following section presents a selection of practical experiences and approaches that has been implemented within the Global Project Rural Employment with Focus on Youth.



## Inclusive Training thanks to rural Childcare Facilities

● Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi

In all country packages, the children (up to 5 years old) of the young mothers participating in ATVET training courses and business coaching/ start-up programs are looked after in associated childcare facilities. These temporary childcare facilities are available both as fixed facilities at the training centres and as mobile facilities to provide flexible childcare. They are also used at jobs and opportunity fairs

([How-to-Guide for Rural Opportunity Fairs](#)) and similar events. Lactation rooms for breast feeding mothers are made available. This enables young mothers to participate on an equal footing in the project activities that promote employment, improve their skills, start, or expand their businesses. This also increases their income and career prospects. The counselling of women led businesses in matters of child care has helped to find child care solutions for the women employed in the new women-led companies.

[How childcare facilities empower women to invest in their future – a brief interview](#)





## Women specific Start-up and Business Support



### ● Burkina Faso and Kenya

Women in rural areas are empowered to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations through **women incubation** programmes, characterised by a special focus on women-friendly business models (e.g. in processing or service provision) that are well compatible with women's needs and realities. Furthermore, the programmes involve **specialised women coaches** who understand the unique challenges that women face in the agri-food sector. These coaches provide tailored solutions such as training, coaching, networking opportunities and support.

Through **training in new technologies** (e.g. in agro-processing), **finance and management** as well as in marketing, the women acquire the necessary skills and self-confidence to set up or further develop their businesses. Women are also supported in groups (e.g. women cooperatives, women groups, joint start-ups). This reduces barriers, creates support networks, peer exchanges, confidence and bundles skills and competencies. They receive support in **accessing financial services** e.g. in women pitch nights

with the financial sector, that can help them to invest in their businesses, e.g. by buying equipment or through diversification. The project has set up grant schemes that benefit specifically young women in accessing seed funding.

A **mentoring programme** pairs the young women entrepreneurs with experienced business-women who provide advice on business-related issues, as well as on the role of independent women in family and society. This creates a network of women entrepreneurs who support each other. In addition, community leaders and family members, especially husbands and fathers, are involved and sensitised to break down social barriers for women.



### [Pecha Kucha](#)

### [Interview about Women-led Enterprise Support in Rural Areas](#)





## The Gender Challenge in Agri-food Companies

### ● Kenya

The Gender Challenge is a **competition, in which agri-food companies can apply to become in general more women friendly**. This includes reforms in their human resources policies, an improved gender-sensitive work environment, awareness-raising against discrimination at the workplace (amongst all employees) for equal pay and specific measures to employ more qualified women. This can be through the provision of childcare services or by making the work environment more friendly for breastfeeding mothers, increasing safety for (young) women in the workplace (e.g. against sexual harassment), as well as specific coaching for women employees.



## With sensitisation and advocacy to more land rights for women

### ● Kenya

In Kenya, the project uses an active sensitisation approach to make authorities (e.g. County governments), private sector, youth organisations and individuals aware of the **existence of new and women-friendly land lease guidelines**. These guidelines support and give practical orientation on equal land lease for women and men. For instance, through spousal consent as part of land lease agreements: The woman and man must agree to use the land while this is recorded in written form. A copy of the contract is stored with the local administrator so that he/she can mediate in the event of a conflict. The administrators were trained for this, as were young coordinators (female & male) in the youth organisations. Furthermore, group approaches are promoted to backstop the legal situation with an also culturally accepted option for (unmarried) women and youth to rent land.



## Small Cup, Big Impact

### ..... ● Malawi

Young women are educated about the importance of menstrual hygiene in workshops. They are given sets consisting of a menstrual cup and a set for sterilisation and explained how to use them. In separate groups, men are sensitised on the **topic of menstruation** and the resulting obstacles, needs and possibilities.

The menstrual cups give young women the opportunity to participate more in economic and social life. This significantly reduced the days missed in training or at work, and allows women to be more mobile, also during their period

to go to business meetings or markets and participate in coaching activities, etc. By raising awareness of the issue for men and women, feelings of shame are reduced and women's self-confidence is strengthened.

The hygienic and free reusable cups mean that women no longer have to rely on unhygienic, unsafe solutions such as cotton rags or plastic bags and gain self-awareness and dignity. In case cups are culturally not accepted, other hygiene products such as reusable pads etc. are also an option and have been tested in other countries.

[Article about the menstrual health pilot](#)

[Video on the effects of the menstrual health pilot](#)

[Podcast on the menstrual health pilot](#)





# LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS...



Successful implementation of the GTA starts with a **sensitised project team** that understands and embraces the importance of the issue. This requires awareness-raising within the organisation and constant exchange and discussion. It is important to get the team on the same page, to get the men on board from the start through internal workshops and training and to support strong advocates within the teams. The next step is to bring the **partners on board through advocacy, training and ongoing awareness raising** as well.



Experiences from the global project of rural youth employment show that **gender indicators**, as well as a practice-oriented gender strategy can help to foster a GTA within a project. This enables a uniform and efficient approach in addressing gender inequalities. More ambitious gender indicators that require specific action and go beyond a (often comfortably low) percentage of (young) women participating in projects activities is helpful to ensure gender transformative measures are reflected and integrated in the project activities, for example the **Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEIA)**. Further, **effective monitoring and evaluation** of gender sensitive and transformative activities are important to track progress, assess the effectiveness of actions and adjust where necessary.



It is important to **budget for specific gender transformative activities**, such as awareness raising campaigns, technical assistance and evaluations. It is pertinent to plan enough funds to support women and balance out structural inequalities (e.g. childcare during training may increase the budget for training). A gender transformative approach requires a long-term perspective and continuous planning and commitment, including earmarked funding. It is thus important to share benefits of gender sensitive and transformative measures within donor communities with political partners and advocate for the topic.



The **inclusion of gender sensitive and transformative measures in regular project activities** proved to be very effective in bringing gender-related issues to the table and to find solutions for equal access of young women. This includes activities such as the setup of breastfeeding stations and childcare facilities in companies and training centres, or the inclusion of trainings on menstrual health in regular agripreneurship trainings.





The **selection of the right partners** is pertinent. A good example is the NGO Empow'Her, which promotes not only jobs and income, but also a modern, gender transformative role model through start-up and business promotion tailored to the interests and needs of women and women's groups in West-Africa.



The empowerment of young women as **role models** and future actors in the sustainable transformation of agricultural and food systems is a particularly good example of breaking down traditional role models and having a gender-transformative effect. These examples can be actively used in **advocacy and awareness campaigns**.



The **sensitisation** and support of **political decision-makers** at local, regional and national levels can help to promote and implement gender-sensitive policies and laws. Political partners and community leaders also have an influence on the perception of communities, parents and husbands and thus their support of young women's access to project activities.

# 360°

In all areas of the adapted integrated approach for rural youth employment promotion, (young) women face unique challenges. It is essential to recognize these challenges, raise awareness among partners and implementers and thoroughly evaluate and incorporate gender-specific considerations into all initiatives whenever feasible and meaningful. These may add an additional layer to already complex processes, need special attention, as well as earmarked time and finances.

The results of the global project show that gender sensitive and transformative measures work and women benefit as much as their male counterparts. For example in Burkina Faso two thirds of the participants in the 360° AgriJobs approach are women. In the first year after participation, some more women (78%) than men (73%) confirm that their employment prospects have improved. Also two thirds of the jobs created in the same time are filled by women.

**Implementation of the Gender Makes Business Sense Training show that the gender income gap has reduced. It further shows that women are more empowered, especially in household dynamics such as reduced gender based violence and in increased mobility.**



This **series of How to Papers** has been developed by the **Global Project Rural Employment with Focus on Youth** and aims to process and systematise the project's practical experiences. Each **How to Paper** has a thematic focus and provides a brief overview of innovative approaches and inspiration for practical implementation. The series targets implementing organisations and donor agencies working in the field of youth employment.

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## FURTHER RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

For more detailed information, please see the following links:

[Shaking up the Status quo,  
Shaping Gender-Transformative Change:  
SNRD-GTA-Narrative-Publication.pdf](#)

[An example of how to achieve Gender-  
Transformative Change in ATVET](#)

[Toolbox for Employment Promotion in Rural  
Areas with Focus on Youth](#)

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