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THE ROLE OF RURAL WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

POSTAVENIE VIDIECKYCH ŽIEN V POĽNOHOSPODÁRSKOM SEKTORE A V ROZVOJI VIDIEKA V EURÓPE A V STREDNEJ ÁZII

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The gender related issues are very complex. The paper deals with the role of rural women in agriculture and rural development in Europe. Sustainable agriculture, rural development and food security cannot be achieved without the full and equal participation of both women and men in rural areas. Europe and Central Asia are the only regions in the world where agriculture is not the main employer of the rural women as well as the men. The disappearance of the centrally planned economy, continuing social and economic transition, European Union enlargement, Common Agricultural Policy and aligned reforms, globalization, and impact of climate change, have affected rural populations and in particular rural women. The policies and programs to improve women's access to land and assets remain still important.

Key words: rural development, sustainable agriculture, rural women, gender income gaps, access to resources

A number of publications address gender issues within the framework and context of impact of climate change and sustainable rural development, including energy resources and gender equity in agriculture in the light of economic globalization. Women and men play different but crucial roles in agriculture and rural development, and both contribute towards agriculture and food production. In Eastern Europe, state programs of agrarian reform, resettlement and mass privatization of state farms, collectives and cooperative farms during the 1990's largely led to male household heads gaining access to land resources. According to ILO (2008) and World Bank (2007) women's agricultural labor in Central and Southeast Europe is characterized by low rural productivity, labor legislation that is not enforced, 19.2 % of women work in agriculture and women are often excluded from agricultural productivity-enhancing programs (e.g. trainings).

Material and methods

Objective of this paper is to analyze the rural women situation in the times of the financial and economic crisis, as well as to take into consideration the adverse effects of the climate change and its impact on the agriculture. Upon the analyzed results, the possible solutions are proposed for the situation of rural women in the countryside of the Europe and Central Asia.

The data are obtained from the questionnaires prepared for the FAO ECA Working Party of Women and Families in Rural Development held in Rome 2009 and the ECA Session held in Innsbruck 2008. Other research was made in connection of the Joint UNDP, FAO, ILO, UNHCR Conference organized in Almaty, 2009, dealing with impact of the financial and global economic crisis on agriculture including the rural women situation.

The other downloaded data are from the sources of the FAO Division on the Gender Equity and Rural Development and World Bank's World Development Report 2007.

The presentations of the author from the international events have been taken into consideration as well.

Results and discussion

As it is shown in the Table 1, Europe and Central Asia are the only regions in the world where agriculture is not the main employer. Non-agricultural activities, particularly wage employment, are the main source of employment for both men and women. The high percentage of non-active women in Europe and Central Asia highlights the fact that women are engaged in productive, reproductive/care and community activities. They work longer hours than men overall, even if the share that is considered "productive" employment is lower.

Gender disparities in agriculture sector are not limited to agricultural employment, but also including agricultural land. The gender gap is the average difference between men's and women's hourly earnings within the economy as a whole. Across Europe women earn on average around 17% less than men and in some countries the gender pay gap is widening. The pay gap is linked to numerous legal, social and economic factors which go far beyond the single issue of equal pay for equal work.

As it is shown in Figure 1, women's access to land is far below men's in displayed regions.

The figures 1 show that there are fewer women holders of agricultural land than men in the displayed nine European countries – the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

In Europe, women are in the role of individual holders of agricultural land from 10 % in Germany to 32% in Italy. In Slovakia there are 19% woman holders of agricultural land. The situation in Europe is somewhat better than the figures in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but given the difference in economic growth, the disparities are still surprisingly high.

Table 1 Rural Employment by Gender and Employment Status in 2007 (percentage of adult population)

Employment Status (1)	Sub-Sahara Africa (2)		South Asia (3)		East Asia and the Pacific (4)		Middle East and North Africa (5)		Europe and Central Asia (6)		Latin America and the Caribbean (7)	
	female (8)	male (9)	female (8)	male (9)	female (8)	male (9)	female (8)	male (9)	female (8)	male (9)	female (8)	male (9)
Agriculture (10)	54.9	60.6	24.1	54.9	44.1	56.2	39.6	34.0	12.3	18.6	25.1	59.3
Self-employed (11)	53.5	56.6	12.7	33.1	38.4	46.8	38.6	24.6	6.9	8.5	22.8	38.4
Wage earner (12)	1.4	4.0	11.4	21.8	5.7	9.4	1.0	9.4	5.4	10.1	2.3	20.9
Non-agriculture (13)	9.6	15.5	5.6	27.2	19.7	28.9	6.7	39.7	19.7	38.7	23.2	26.4
Self-employed (11)	6.8	6.9	2.9	11.8	11.3	11.5	2.8	8.8	1.6	7.4	11.7	9.2
Wage earner (12)	2.8	8.6	2.7	15.4	8.4	17.4	3.9	30.9	18.1	31.3	11.5	17.2
Non-active or not reported (14)	32.7	21.7	64.3	14.6	35.5	14.4	53.3	26.0	46.9	27.5	51.2	13.4
Total (15)	97.2	97.8	94.0	96.7	99.3	99.5	99.6	99.7	78.9	84.8	99.5	99.1
Residual (16)	2.8	2.2	6.0	3.3	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.3	21.1	15.2	10.5	0.9

Source: World Bank, 2007, World Development Report. Last two lines added by authors

Zdroj: World Bank, Správa o rozvoji sveta, posledné dva riadky pridané autormi

Tabuľka 1 Vidiecka zamestnanosť v členení podľa pohlavia a zamestnanenského statusu (percento z dospeléj populácie)

(1) zamestnanec/ status, (2) subsaharská Afrika, (3) Južná Ázia, (4) Východná Ázia a Oceánia, (5) Stredný Východ a Severná Afrika, (6) Európa a Stredná Ázia, (7) Latinská Amerika a Karibik, (8) ženy, (9) muži, (10) poľnohospodárstvo, (11) samozamestnávateľ, (12) pracovník, (13) nepoľnohospodárske činnosti, (14) neaktívny alebo bez údajov, (15) spolu, (16) zostatok

Table 2 The Gender Gap in Europe

Country (1)	Gender pay gap (percentage) (2)	Country (1)	Gender pay gap (percentage) (2)	Country (1)	Gender pay gap (percentage) (2)	Country (1)	Gender pay gap (percentage) (2)
Belgium (3)	9.1	Greece (10)	20.7	Luxembourg (17)	10.0	Romania (24)	12.7
Bulgaria (4)	12.7	Spain (11)	17.6	Hungary (18)	16.3	Slovenia (25)	8.3
the Czech Republic (5)	23.6	France (12)	15.6	Malta (19)	5.2	Slovakia (26)	23.6
Denmark (6)	17.7	Italy (13)	4.4	Netherlands (20)	23.3	Finland (27)	20.
Germany (7)	23.0	Cyprus (14)	23.1	Austria (21)	25.5	Sweden (28)	17.9
Estonia (8)	30.3	Latvia (15)	15.4	Poland (22)	7.5	the United Kingdom (29)	21.1
Ireland (9)	17.1	Lithuania (16)	20.0	Portugal (23)	8.3		

Source: FAO, Gender Equity and Rural Development Division, 2008

Zdroj: FAO, Gender Equity and Rural Development Division, 2008

Tabuľka 2 Príjmové rozdiely z hľadiska pohlavia v Európe

(1) štát, (2) príjmový rozdiel z hľadiska pohlavia (percento), (3) Belgicko, (4) Bulharsko, (5) Česká republika, (6) Dánsko, (7) Nemecko, (8) Estónsko, (9) Írsko, (10) Grécko, (11) Španielsko, (12) Francúzsko, (13) Taliansko, (14) Cyprus, (15) Lotyšsko, (16) Litva, (17) Luxembursko, (18) Maďarsko, (19) Malta, (20) Holandsko, (21) Rakúsko, (22) Poľsko, (23) Portugalsko, (24) Rumunsko, (25) Slovinsko, (26) Slovensko, (27) Fínsko, (28) Švédsko, (29) Spojené kráľovstvo

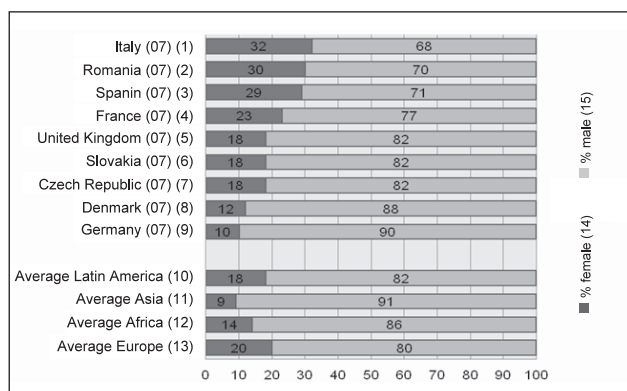


Figure 1 Individual Holders of Agricultural Land by Gender
Source: FAO, Gender Equity and Rural Development Division, 2008
Obrázok 1 Individuálni vlastníci pôdy v členení podľa pohlavnej štruktúry
Zdroj: FAO, Gender Equity and Rural Development Division, 2008
(1) Taliansko, (2) Rumunsko, (3) Španielsko, (4) Francúzsko, (5) Veľká Británia, (6) Slovensko, (7) Česká republika, (8) Dánsko, (9) Nemecko, (10) priemer za Latinskú Ameriku, (11) priemer za Áziu, (12) priemer za Afriku, (13) priemer za Európu, (14) ženy, (15) muži

Since the 1990s transition and market reforms, a significant improvement in the standard of living and quality of life in rural populations in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries have been recorded. Nevertheless, rural women and men continue to face numerous difficulties and constraints to economic development such as the need for improved infrastructure and better access to inputs and to markets for farm products and rural services as well as the challenge of upgrading social services in rural areas. The disappearance of the centrally planned economy, continuing social and economic transition, European enlargement, Common Agricultural Policy – aligned reforms, globalization, and impact of climate change have affected rural populations and in particular women. Since men and women continue to face different responsibilities and needs when it comes to ensuring food security and participating in income/earning activities, addressing gender issues in rural development remains an issue of outstanding importance.

The emerging trends of rural development and rural areas contain:

- Rural-urban migration.
- Ageing of rural population.
- Increase of rural population.
- Increased pressure on natural resources.
- Disaster related and complex emergencies.
- Disease.
- Information Technology.
- Climate change and bio-energy.

In the heterogeneous and diverse Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregions:

- The Working Party on Women and Family in Rural Development (WPW).
- The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW).

fill a gap with regard to the investigation of potential consequences of current developments in rural areas for rural people especially women. In this context:

- networking is a tool for raising awareness of the situation of rural women and for addressing the major constraints and challenges they face,
- experience and lessons learned, reported and discussed during the WPW Expert Meetings have provided an interesting and comprehensive account of the successful

outcome of implemented project but also underlined various types and intensity of constraint and difficulties rural people and particularly women still have to struggle with. The WPW also provides a forum for such experiences sharing and training multiple levels of stakeholders in rural development.

The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) effort is to promote the economic and social well-being of the rural poor, sustainable development and population issues; the Division assists FAO and its member governments in addressing gender, equity and rural employment issues.

The Impact of the Current Crisis on the Rural Women's Situation

In forthcoming period it seems to be unavoidable to deal with the current crisis and its serious impacts on women, however the gender dimensions of the recession can not be measured yet. One of the problems of rural areas is the rural migration. The main points of migration in Central and Eastern Europe are following:

• Scale directions and impacts of migrations.

In some countries the scale of out migrations decreased the national rural labor force/migration remains a household – level decision. The gendered nature of out migration from rural communities varies. Outflow of working age women and men is common to all countries facing rural out migration. The value of remittance in number of countries exceeds the size of foreign direct investments inflows and is equal to an important part of the GDP.

• Policy approaches to counteract migrations, alleviates their impacts and assists migrants.

National, regional and local programs reduce the scale of migrations through improved work opportunities and access to jobs for women and men at home. The LEADER program was given as an example of a bottom up approach to rural development community empowerment and mainstreaming gender, working through Local Action Groups. A number of EU Member states have built designated rural development agencies to program and disburse EU support to rural areas.

• Specific aspects and impacts of migrations on farm populations and rural areas.

Migration of working age men and women aggravates the situation of farms and is the main reason for increased number of subsistence farms, often managed by women and with little potential for investment of diversification. Rural development programs that assist women to find new jobs acquire marketable vocational skills and diversify opportunities for earning incomes, serve at the same time to empower women to improve their status.

• Specific gender aspects of migration phenomena recorded at source and addressed in migration populations and recommendations for policy makers.

The number of countries implements strong regional policies and rural development programs to prevent depopulation of rural areas as a result of out migration, investment in infrastructure but also in human capital contributes to slowing down out migration, as well as micro finance programs supporting local businesses. Policies and programs to improve women's access to land and assets remain important, for example shared ownership titles for women co-managing the farm, which are particularly important where male out migration increases de facto female household headship.

The Adverse Trends for Rural Women

Some of the significant adversities rural women in Europe face are:

- Attitudes – have seen a return to more traditional attitudes towards gender roles at some levels of society (also in association with transition).
- Employment:
 - high unemployment of women due to gender discrimination,
 - significant gender related pay gap, women earn half of men's salary,
 - lack of economic and social recognition of women's work and the double burden of earning an income and caretaking at home and looking after the household farm.
- Population:
 - limited for women entrepreneurs and farmers,
 - limited access for women to social networks.
- Bargain power – low level of women's bargaining power and negligible role in decision-making and political representation.

Conclusions

In the submitted paper, the recent situation of rural women in Europe and in Central Asia is summarized and the recommendations for responses to the current crisis in three areas are submitted:

Governments, donors should prioritize the most vulnerable groups, particularly small-scale farmers, and women, especially given their significant role in food security and agricultural production.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieve equitable and effective development and to foster a vibrant economy. Women in agriculture must be given additional support to overcome existing inequalities in access to land, technology (including know-how), inputs, credit and output markets.

There is a great need for a systematic gender analysis of the laws and policies related to land reform. For robust gender analysis to support sound and gender – aware macro economic policies in agriculture, additional data about women in agricultural production are essential.

Súhrn

Problematicy spojené s postavením a zastúpením pohlaví sú veľmi komplexné. Článok sa zaoberá postavením vidieckych žien v poľnohospodárskom sektore a ich pozíciou v rozvoji vidieka v Európe a Strednej Ázii. Témy ako udržateľné poľnohospodárstvo, rozvoj vidieka a potravinová bezpečnosť nemôžu byť dosiahnuté a naplnené bez zastúpenia oboch pohlaví žien aj

mužov vo vidieckych oblastiach. Rozdiely v pohlaviach nie sú obmedzené len zamestanosťou v poľnohospodárskom sektore, ale siahajú do širších súvislostí a zahŕňajú aj rozdiely vyplývajúce z prístupu k vlastníctvu pôdy. V prípade európskych krajín je menej vlastníkov pôdy ženského ako mužského pohlavia. Európa a Stredná Ázia patria medzi jediné regióny, v ktorých poľnohospodárstvo nepredstavuje prioritného zamestnávateľa v ekonomike. Zmena zriadenia ekonomiky z centrálne plánovanej na trhovú ekonomiku, trvalé sociálne a ekonomické zmeny, Spoločná poľnohospodárska politika a jej reformy, globalizácia a vplyv klimatických zmien, ako aj svetová finčná a globálna ekonomická kríza, toto všetko sú faktory, ktoré ovplyvňujú vidiecku populáciu a osobitne ženskú populáciu. Politiky a programy na zlepšenie prístupu žien k pôde a k majetku zohrávajú stále veľmi dôležitú úlohu pri ich plnohodnotnej realizácii v ekonomických aktivitách súvisiacich s rozvojom vidieka.

Kľúčové slová: rozvoj vidieka, udržateľné poľnohospodárstvo, vidiecke ženy, rozdiely v príjmoch žien voči mužom, prístup k zdrojom

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