



# Gender and “Shared Growth” in Sub-Saharan Africa

## I. Structural Roles of Men and Women in African Economies: *Toward Economic Inclusion*

A distinguishing characteristic of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) economies is that both men and women play substantial **economic** roles. In Africa, gender is an **economic** (macro, poverty) issue, and not just a social sector or equity issue.

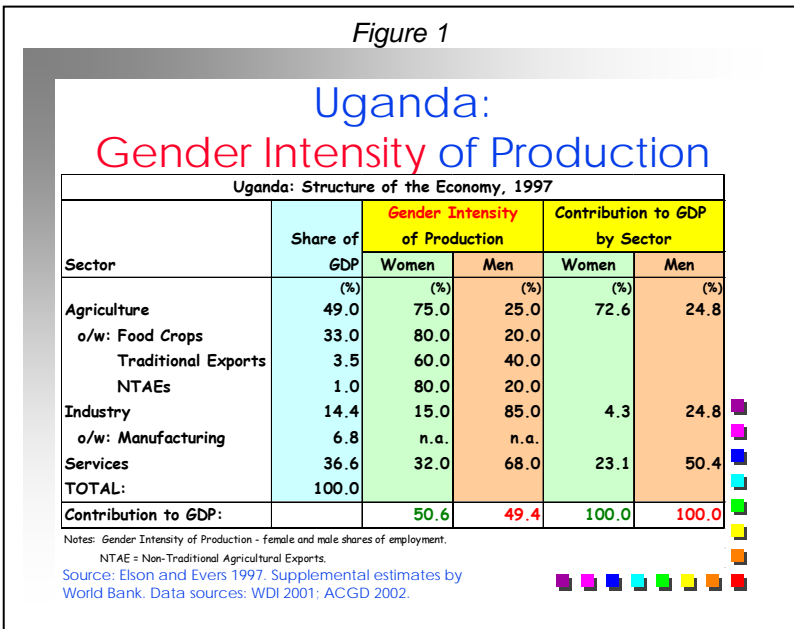
**Agriculture** is the primary source of employment for men and women, and women are generally **more active in agriculture** than men, despite sub-regional variations. In Uganda—broadly illustrative of SSA—men and women are not equally distributed across the productive economy: agriculture is a female-intensive sector while industry and services are male-intensive. Men and women each contribute about equally to GDP (*Figure 1*).

**Policy Relevance:** Different sectoral growth patterns make different demands on male and female labor time and have different implications for the gender division of income and labor. This is especially significant in the context of addressing **pro-poor, or shared, growth** and **trade expansion** in Africa, where many trade-oriented sectors (garments, horticulture) rely primarily on female labor. In Madagascar, 75% of the garment industry workforce is female; women’s involvement in this sector is associated with considerable job precarity and wage/earnings gaps (*Table*).

There are significant gender disparities in access to key productive assets: land, labor, financial services technology, and inputs, along with education and health care. These differences directly and indirectly limit **economic growth**, productivity, and welfare. Africa’s “missed potential” in agriculture is considerable, as evidenced in country studies:

- **Burkina Faso:** Shifting labor and fertilizer between men’s and women’s plots could increase output by 10 to 20 percent.
- **Kenya:** Giving women farmers the same inputs and education as men could increase yields by more than 20 percent.
- **Tanzania:** Reducing time burdens of women could increase cash incomes for smallholder coffee and banana growers by 10 percent.
- **Zambia:** If women enjoyed the same overall degree of capital investment in agricultural inputs, including land, as their male counterparts, output in Zambia could increase by up to 15 percent

**Macroeconomy:** Gender inequality in education and employment is estimated to have reduced SSA’s *per capita* growth during 1960-92 by **0.8 percentage points per year**, which accounts for up to one-fifth the difference in growth performance between SSA and East Asia over this period (*Figure 2*). While this is far from being the over-riding factor, it is an important constituent element in accounting for SSA’s poor economic performance. In Africa, capturing this difference would have doubled

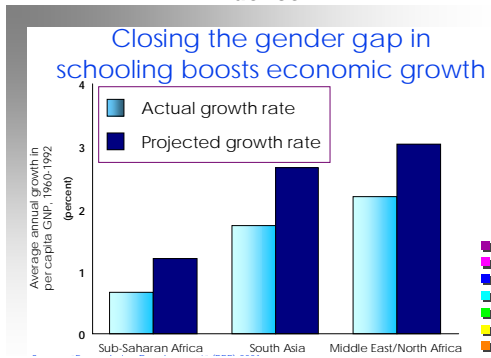


*Table: Characteristics of the Labor Force in the Madagascar Garment Sector*

Variable	M	F
Total Employment (in %)	24.8	75.2
Permanent Positions (in %)	78.9	57.1
Temporary Positions (in %)	2.4	16.6
Sub-Contracted Individuals (in %)	18.7	26.3
Mean Monthly Wage (in US\$)	49.9	33.9
Workers below poverty line (in %)	25.2	43.8
Average Increase in Income after 5 years (in %)	276	190
Monthly per-capita gains of household member (in US\$)	24.5	12.2
Annual change in earnings, 2-year period, skilled workers (in %)	34	23
Annual change in earnings, 2-year period, unskilled workers (in %)	11	0

Source: Nicita and Razzaz, 2002

**Figure 2: Gender and Growth: Macro Evidence**



annual *per capita* growth over this period. This point has been reaffirmed in the 2001 study “Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” (Box), and in the Policy Research Report on *Engendering Development* (2001). At the country level, it has been estimated that as much as 30 percent of the difference between Botswana’s annual per capita GDP growth rates between 1960 and 1992 (5.5 percent) and Ghana’s (about 0.3 percent) can be accounted for by differences in gender inequalities in education. Actions to address gender-based obstacles to economic growth in SSA deserve high priority in the policy agenda.

Box : “Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?”

Women are one of Africa’s hidden growth reserves, providing most of the Region’s labor, but their productivity is hampered by widespread inequality in education and access. Thus, gender equality can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction.

Source: *Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?*, Joint Report, AfDB, AERC, ECA, GCA, World Bank. 2000.

**Laws and Customs:** In many countries, laws and customs impede women to a greater extent than men in obtaining credit, productive inputs, education, information, and medical care needed to carry out their roles. The co-existence of dual or multiple legal systems in many countries leads to greater ambivalence and insecurity of women’s legal status, especially in the face of high levels of gender-based violence. This has in turn exacerbated women’s vulnerability in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

## II. Interdependence of Household and Market Economies: Trade-Offs & Externalities

**Double Workday:** African women work far longer hours than men, and their work is closely integrated with household production systems. The boundary between economic and household activity is less well drawn in Africa. African women carry out 90 percent of the work of processing food crops and providing household water and fuelwood, and 80 percent of the work of food storage and transport from farm to village. Time allocation data show that **children** are integrated into household production systems, and patterns that disadvantage female children begin early. Domestic chores—notably fetching fuel and water—limit girls’ access to school. The advent of HIV/AIDS exacerbates women’s time constraints across the two economies, and gives added urgency to addressing them as a matter of high priority in poverty reduction strategies.

## III. Tackling Gender and Growth Linkages in the Africa Region’s Work

The Region’s gender strategy focuses on implementing the MDGs, by addressing their cross-cutting and multi-sectoral gender dimensions explicitly in support to country-led PRSPs, in CASs, analysis, and operations. One of the four core entry points for operational work in the FY06-08 program focuses on gender and economic policy, and aims to address the relationship between gender inequality and growth in SSA and its implications for growth and poverty reduction strategies. It seeks to do this by articulating a clear conceptual framework for addressing gender/growth linkages, and through the following specific actions:

- **Gender-Responsive Budget Outreach and Learning Program**—implementation of a BNPP-funded program in 5 francophone West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal) to develop capacity of both Finance Ministries and Women’s machineries to address gender issues in planning and budgeting, in relation to implementing PRSP priorities.
- **Improving the understanding of men’s and women’s key economic roles in SSA**—pursuing work at both country and Regional levels to document men’s and women’s economic roles, including through refining and updating “gender intensity of production” data and estimates, and focusing on gender roles in private sector development (women’s entrepreneurship) and in the informal sector. This is being done in close conjunction with articulating the critical “care” (or non-market) roles of women that are not counted in GDP or national accounts data. This analysis will be incorporated into selected Country Economic Memoranda (CEMs).
- **Strengthening gender/growth linkages in economic analysis**—strengthening and refining the application of gender variables in growth regressions and the incorporation of gender variables into growth models.

Principal Data Sources and Resources on Gender and Growth: Klasen S., (2002) “*Low Schooling for Girls, Slower Growth for All? Cross-Country Evidence on the Effect of Gender Inequality in Education on Economic Development.*” World Bank Economic Review 16: 345-373. Klasen and Abu-Ghaida (2004), “The Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity,” IZA Discussion Papers 1031, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). Udry, Hoddinott, Alderman and Haddad (1995). “Gender Differentials in Farm Productivity: Implications for Household Efficiency and Agricultural Policy.” *Food Policy*, 20(5). Saito, Mekonnen, and Spurling (1994). “Raising the Productivity of Women Farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa.” World Bank Discussion Papers, Africa Technical Department Series, No. 230. Anna Tibajuka (1994) *The Cost of Differential Gender Roles in African Agriculture: A Case Study of Smallholder Coffee-Banana Farms in the Kagera Region, Tanzania*, Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 45 No. 1. World Bank (2001). *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. A World Bank Policy Research Report, Washington, D.C. Blackden, C. Mark and Chitra Bhanu (1999), *Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction*, Special Program of Assistance for Africa 1998 Status Report on Poverty, World Bank Technical Paper No. 428, Washington D.C. Blackden, Klasen, Canagarajah, and Lawson (2005). “Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence and Issues.” Draft Submitted to the World Bank Research Observer, September. Nicita and Razzaz (2002). “Who benefits and how much? How gender affects welfare distribution in a booming textile industry. World Bank, Washington DC (processed).