

the National Training Institute (INA). Some 248 courses were undertaken, in 57 occupational areas and in 13 locations throughout the continent, and 3,400 individuals were trained directly, surpassing all goals. Moreover, 25 per cent of the participating women were trained in new or non-traditional areas. The theoretical framework, methodologies and materials produced and validated by the local and national Vocational Training Institutions became the joint, sustainable achievements that leave *FORMUJER* recognised as a technical reference point in training and gender policies.¹⁷

IV. Entrepreneurship for Decent Work

12. Technological “catching up” is also supporting the transition from the informal to the formal economy.¹⁸ In some countries, the growth in women-owned businesses is greater than for private firms as a whole.¹⁹ Women entrepreneurs are increasingly becoming the driving force of many economies particularly in Africa. Studies show that they account for 50 per cent of all businesses.²⁰ These businesses are often micro- and small- scale enterprises, in the informal economy and may not offer the same job security, social protection, access to training and career development as the formal economy. In fact, formal employment, with all its inherent advantages in terms of job quality and quantity, remains an illusive goal for many women.

13. Supporting women entrepreneurs to introduce new technologies in their enterprises enhances the potential to increase productivity, create employment, reduce poverty, and promote local development. Women go into business in a variety of forms, including self-employment, SMEs, social entrepreneurship, cooperatives and many more. For women to recognise their entrepreneurial potential, it is important to promote role models that coincide with their realities and aspirations. Women also need to overcome other barriers when deciding whether to start a business, such as limited access to credits or traditional patterns preventing women from taking part in income-generating activities or controlling financial resources.

14. To address these barriers, the ILO has adopted a twin-track approach of mainstreaming gender equality in entrepreneurship development, while at the same time providing targeted approaches to women’s starting, formalizing and growing their enterprises. This has been formulated into a comprehensive Strategy on Promoting Women’s Entrepreneurship Development (WED).²¹ In order to increase productivity, and diversify into higher value added activities, women entrepreneurs need to be empowered to access and adopt new

enterprise development, social dialogue and fundamental investments in basic education, health and physical infrastructure.

15. The WED approach is proving highly successful. For example, in October 2009 in Egypt, ILO and the African Development Bank (AfDB) co-organized a regional forum to discuss the challenges and opportunities to promote women-owned enterprises in response to the financial crisis. This first Pan-African forum was held in Cairo, Egypt, on 14-15 October 2009. The forum was organized by the ILO and the AfDB, with the support of the Egyptian Government. The forum was attended by representatives from 15 African countries, including Egypt, and was the first of its kind in the region. The forum was a success, as it provided a platform for women-owned enterprises to share their experiences and challenges, and to discuss ways to improve their performance and competitiveness. The forum also provided an opportunity for the ILO and the AfDB to discuss their joint efforts to support women-owned enterprises in Africa, and to identify areas for further collaboration. The forum was a significant milestone in the development of women-owned enterprises in Africa, and it is hoped that it will serve as a model for future forums in the region.

V. Training responses

18. Skills development is a core element of the ILO's *Global Employment Agenda* (GEA), which constitutes the policy framework for employment promotion within the Decent Work Agenda. The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) also provides valuable guidance for effective skills and employment policies that assist governments, employers and workers to put into effect education, training and lifelong learning policies and programmes for the 21st century, including the use of new information and communication technology in learning and training.

19. One practical example of the training response is the *Training for Rural Economic Empowerment Project (TREE)*. In Pakistan and the Philippines, it developed an alternative methodology for income generation for the most marginalized groups, including the rural poor (specifically women), disenfranchised young men and persons with disabilities. In Pakistan 56 per cent of those participating were women. The project also developed new ways of encouraging women to take part in skills training programmes. Training gave women new technology skills to generate income in areas such as tailoring, household appliance repair, welding, auto mechanics, building electrician, electronics and plumbing.

VI. Conclusion

20. The above-mentioned 2008 ILC *Conclusions on Skills* seek to engender a virtuous circle in which improving the quality and availability of education and training for women and girls fuels innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification and competitiveness. The 2009 ILC *Conclusions on Gender Equality* are equally clear on the critical nature of 'Learning for earning' and broader contributions of women to economic growth. ILO constituents - governments, employers' and workers' organisations - continue to give high attention to a continuum of gender equality which resonates with:

Basic education secondary and vocational training higher education life-long technical skills upgrading WED productive employment Decent Work. This EGM can play a major role in understanding these inter-faces.

Annex

Resources and documents on ILO's gender strategy and activities, including tools, publications and statistics on gender equality in employment, entrepreneurships and education

ILO Bureau for Gender Equality: www.ilo.org/gender

ILO Department of Statistics: www.ilo.org/stats

ILO's strategy on gender equality

- [ILC: Background Report IV, Gender equality at the heart of decent work, 2009](#)
- [ILC: Report and conclusions of the Committee on Gender Equality, June 2009](#)
- [GB: Matters arising out of the work of the 98th Session \(2009\) of the ILC: Follow-up to the adoption of the resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, November 2009 \(GB.302/3/2\)](#)
- [ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality 2010-15: Phase I Aligned with the Programme and Budget 2010-11](#)

Employment and entrepreneurship

- [Guidelines on Gender in Employment Policies: Information Resource Book, December 2009](#)
- [Skills and entrepreneurship: Bridging the technology and gender divide](#) [November 2008], one of the twelve themes of the ILO Campaign on gender equality at the heart of decent work 2008-09
- [Women, Gender and the Informal Economy: an assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward](#), ILO, 2008
- ILO WED (Women's Entrepreneurship Development) [programme](#) & [tools](#) and the *Voices of women entrepreneurs'* brochures (December 2008) - [in Uganda](#) ; [in Ethiopia](#) ; [in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia](#) ; [in Tanzania](#) ; [in Zambia](#)

Education

- International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) website: www.ilo.org/ipec
- Sector Activities Department website > [Sector: Education](#), including:
 - [An HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in Southern Africa](#), ILO and United Nations Education, Scientific Organization and Cultural Organization, 2006
 - [An HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean](#), ILO and United Nations Education, Scientific Organization and Cultural Organization, 2006

Gender and statistics

- ILO, [Conditions of work and employment laws](#)
- ILO, [Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\)](#)
- ILO, [LABORSTA](#): ILO's premier database on all aspects of labour statistics
- [Women in labour markets: Measuring progress and identifying challenges; ILO, 2010](#)
- [Global employment trends for women, ILO, 2009](#)
- [Global wage Report 2008/09 and 2009 Update, ILO](#)

ILO Library: [Resources on gender](#)