



Giving voice to gender equality

# IPS MDG3 Project Editorial Handbook

An IPS Project  
Communicating for Change:  
Getting Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality



April 2009

Prepared by  
Mercedes Sayagues  
[mercedes.sayagues@gmail.com](mailto:mercedes.sayagues@gmail.com)

This handbook was written by Mercedes Sayagues in the first instance to brief IPS editors and journalists starting to contribute to the new IPS project “Communicating for Change: Getting Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality”. It is the first step in developing a more formal and elaborated set of training tools, and draws on the IPS style book and other existing gender and the media resources.

Mercedes Sayagues ([mercedes.sayagues@gmail.com](mailto:mercedes.sayagues@gmail.com)) is a Uruguayan journalist and gender consultant based in South Africa.

“Communicating for Change” is a project, 2009-2011, financed through the Dutch Ministry’s MDG3 Fund: Investing in Equality. Through this initiative IPS will produce and disseminate stories, op-ed columns, newsletters and websites about gender equality. With NGO partners working for women’s empowerment, IPS will develop communication plans and co-host national or regional media and civil society seminars.

For more information or to join the mailing list of the project, write to [mdg3@ips.org](mailto:mdg3@ips.org)

IPS is a pioneering communication institution with a global news agency at its core, [www.ipsnews.net](http://www.ipsnews.net). Our focus is on producing independent news and content, dissemination and networking, and capacity building in the media and NGO sectors. IPS has a longstanding commitment to gender equality within the organisation and gender mainstreaming in all our products.



<http://www.ipsnews.net>



<http://www.ips.org/mdg3/>

**MDG3Fund**

<http://www.mdg3.nl/index/html>

# millennium development goals (mdg)

Put simply, the MDGs are a framework for national development. MDGs are a useful planning and action tool for governments because they have clear, time-bound targets, data collection, indicators that are measured, monitored, compared and reviewed periodically, and national and international investment in these eight key areas.

The MDGs cover the most crucial areas of people's welfare, from health to the environment.

## Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

This goal, however, cannot be achieved without the others, while the others cannot be achieved without women's empowerment. Gender concerns are not restricted to Goal 3, they infuse all the others. For example, the feminization of poverty (Goal 1) and HIV/AIDS (Goal 5) are rooted in gender inequality.

This explains the overlap between Goal 3 and others. Girls' education overlaps with Goal 2, HIV/AIDS is Goal 6, maternal mortality is Goal 5, and so forth. Some activists argue that, instead of restricting gender concerns to Goal 3, it would have been better to build-in gender perspectives into all goals, leading to gender-responsive policies and resource allocation and collection of sex-disaggregated data under each Goal.

Halfway through the MDG window, a Task Force identified **seven strategic priorities** to achieve Goal 3. These priorities are the themes for IPS coverage in this project, with four of them being key themes for IPS.

### 7 Strategic Priorities (key themes for IPS coverage in bold)

- Assure post-primary education for girls;
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Reduce women's and girls' time burdens;
- **Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights;**
- **Eliminate gender inequality in employment and offer equal opportunities on the labour market;**
- **Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies;**
- **Combat violence against girls and women.**

This seemingly disparate set of strategic priorities for Goal 3 is grouped in three interlinked domains. Empowerment requires change in all three domains.

- a. The **capabilities domain** refers to the basic abilities in the field of education and health (schooling, reproductive health), which are the key to unlock other forms of empowerment.
- b. The **opportunities domain** refers to equality in the use of capabilities through access to resources (land, property, time, income and jobs) and political process (parliament and local government)
- c. The **security domain** refers to women's vulnerability to violence and conflict, understanding that gender-based violence perpetuates women's subordination. Fear of violence prevents women from exercising the full use of their capabilities and opportunities.

# goal 3 and IPS coverage

The themes encompass a rich variety of angles and beats: law, health, education, the economy, politics, trade unions, religion, sex, agriculture, land, HIV and AIDS – a basket brimming with goodies.

## Formats

- Straight news stories with a newspeg
- Features with a longer shelf life
- Investigative-type stories
- Academic and research-based pieces
- Profiles
- Q&A
- Narrative slideshows

Some stories will have gender relations as a central focus: widow dispossession, provision of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to rape survivors, quotas for women in political parties.

Some stories will be about women with gender relations in the background: migration of nurses from poor countries to rich countries, the profile of a female parliamentarian.

Not every story with women as its subject is a gender story and there is room in this project for both. However – gender relations determine women's needs and positions in life, so gender is always lurking in the background.

## Proactive commissioning

These stories need proactive commissioning by editors and thorough research by journalists. Equip journalists with a **gender lens** in their toolkit by first sending a clear brief. Tell journalists to:

- Bring personal stories and the texture of daily life.
- Ask for concrete examples of how women are affected differently than men (by dark streets, by loss of exports and jobs in sectors where most workers are women, etc.).
- Ask experts for sex-disaggregated data.
- Find women and girls to quote and get their full names, according to local custom and to the IPS stylebook. Some journalists do not ask poor women their full name. If a woman does not wish to be identified, say so.
- Look at women as economic agents.

And then tell them again and again.

## An IPS MDG3 story will:

- Report on and analyse the priority objectives
- Contextualize the information in terms of the gendered experience of women
- Illuminate some aspect of gender relations
- Probe the gender issues that underlie in stories
- Quote women in a variety of capacities

- Back claims with recent data
- Avoid presenting women only as passive victims
- Look at women as economic agents (unpaid housework and childcare are work with an economic value)
- Include the perspective of race, ethnicity, class, age and disability.
- Avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes
- Challenge gender stereotypes

**Mentioning MDG3 is not mandatory.** In some stories it will make sense to mention MDG3 but not in others, to avoid cookie cutter stories. These are examples of MDG3 stories that might not mention MDGs: percentage of women in Parliament, secondary education among indigenous girls, inheritance laws in Muslim communities, land rights in Africa, early pregnancy among black teenagers, lack of AIDS prevention among women with disabilities.

#### Useful websites

- UNDP Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- World Bank Health, Nutrition and Population Index
- End Poverty 2015 Millennium Development Goals
- MDG Monitor

\*\*\* CHECK THE 12 POINT CHECKLIST ON PAGE 8 \*\*\*

## Men and women in the stories

Some stories will have women as central. However, there is room for stories about men changing their attitudes. Social change requires everyone to change. These stories chronicle shifts in gender relations:

- Men who become champions against gender-based violence;
- Male agricultural extension workers who broaden their pitch to include illiterate women farmers;
- Village chiefs who promote substituting the ritual sexual cleansing of widows for a ritual ceremony with no sex to avoid HIV transmission.
- A story on mass male circumcision programs that interrogates whether it actually increases women's risk of infection is an MGD3 story. One that looks at male circumcision only from the point of view of men is a good story but **not** MDG3.
- A story on the minimal interface of men with health systems or the invisibility of male reproductive sexual health in public health structures and in school curricula is **not** an MDG3 story. But a story about antenatal clinics that try to get husbands to test for HIV when their pregnant wives test, so both get counselling and share the responsibility, is.
- A story on why AIDS activists prefer to talk about parental transmission of HIV to babies, instead of mother-to-child transmission that blames women is an MDG3 story.

**Lesbian women:** Stories about the lesbian struggle for equal rights and respect or about homophobic violence are MDG3 because they describe empowering women.

**Transgendered men** who become women (male-to-female transsexuals) can be an MDG3 story. For example, the HIV/AIDS Alliance has studied the high rates of HIV infection (up to 35 percent) among male-to-female transsexuals in Argentina, Peru, India and Thailand.

# stories about gender

To find and write good gender stories, journalists must ask different questions that move beyond the Four W's – who, what, when and where – to WHY? And, even more importantly, **WHY NOT?**

Why are there so few women in Parliament? Why doesn't the government produce sex-disaggregated data? Why isn't genital cutting banned? Why do so many girls quit high school? Why doesn't your economic recovery plan include women?

Asking the right questions is the distinguishing factor between a mediocre story, a good story and a great story, stories that make an impact, stories that illustrate how gender equality is constructed, brick by brick, law after law, election after election. (adapted from the IPS Handbook for Women Politicians and the Media).

**To get the gender angle, our reporting and editing brain must be imprinted with a simple question – how does this relate to women?**

## Do you wear a gender lens?

*Newsrooms have a tendency to pigeonhole certain kinds of stories. Gender stories are categorised as “worthy but dull”. There is a tendency to assume that a story – any story – which has a woman as its subject, is automatically a gender story. This approach misses the point that gender is about power relations between men and women, as well as the dynamic nature of these relationships as they change from time to time and place to place.*

*Good gender reporting does not dwell only on events and issues but examines how these differently affect men and women. This is called “wearing a gender lens”.*

Gender in Media Training, Gender Links, South Africa.

## key concepts

**Sex** is what we are born with and has a biological basis (gonads and genitalia, pregnancy, beards, etc.).

**Gender** is the social and cultural construct of identity, of feeling or acting like a man or woman. It is dynamic and shaped through a history of social relations.

Sometimes gender is used mistakenly where sex would be the right term and vice versa, for example, in airport immigration forms.

**Transgendered** people are those whose sexual identity (gender) differs from the one given at birth (sex).

Transgendered people become **transsexuals** through an operation to change their born-with sex or unclear born-with sex (hermaphrodites, underdeveloped sexual organs). This transition blends gender and sex, the socially constructed identity (I feel I am a woman) and the biological sex (I am having a sex change operation to remove testes and penis and taking hormones to grow breasts, or removing vagina and taking hormones to grow facial hair, etc.). The process is called sex or gender realignment.

In the 1970s, **gender studies** were overwhelmingly about women's issues. Today the field has expanded to include men's issues, because gender relations involve both men and women. Women's studies are a category within gender studies.

**Gender analysis** uses sex-disaggregated data to understand and document the differences between women and men's gender roles and the different impact of policies and interventions (ICRW)

**Gender interests** are those that women have because they are women: healthy pregnancy and childbirth, clean and nearby water, safe streets.

**Gender equality interests** derive from an analysis of gender-determined inequality. They aim to transform gender relations in the pursuit of equality.

**Women's interests** are those that women have as any social group. They may include or not gender interests.

**Practical gender needs** are those that women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Like gender interests, they are mostly practical, about inadequacies in living conditions, such as sanitation, health care and jobs. They do not challenge gender relations.

**Strategical gender needs** relate to the gender division of labour, power and control. Like gender equality interests, they challenge women's subordinate position and help women achieve equality. They include legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies.

**Gender blind policies** (or stories) assume that men and male norms are the norm for all human beings and do not look at the specificity of women's needs, situation and rights.

**Gender aware policies** (or stories) recognize that women have different needs, priorities and interests, that sometimes coincide or conflict with men's. that gender relations determine women' position in society, usually marked by subordination and inequality.

**Gender budgeting** is the allocation of funds to redress gender inequalities. For example, rape crisis centers, shelters for battered women, training magistrates and judges about gender-based violence.

# pocket size checklist

## A dozen pointers for MDG3 stories.

### **Does your story:**

1. Illuminate some aspect of gender relations?
2. Have fresh data to back it up?
3. Quote a diversity of voices?
4. Try hard to talk to women who are invisible in the media?
5. Present people in gender-stereotyped roles?
6. Recognize race, ethnicity, class and age differences?
7. Contain sexist language or assumptions?
8. Over-use development jargon?
9. Have context, analysis and an attractive lead?
10. Avoid armchair journalism?
11. Use a gender lens throughout?
12. Ask why?

### **Bonus question: Ask why not?**

Read the full text of project themes guidelines for detailed explanations, background, story ideas and newspegs.

# MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

**Strategic Opportunity 1:** Strengthening opportunities for post-primary education for girls while meeting commitments for universal primary education.

**IPS Project Theme:** Girls' Post-Primary Education.

**Indicator:** ratio of girls to boys at all educational levels

According to the Unifem Progress Report 2008, gender parity in primary and secondary school is achievable by 2015 in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, but not in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, although the pace of girls' enrolment in these two regions is picking up.

Secondary school enrolment is low for boys and even lower for girls in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In 2005, only 28 percent of boys and 23 percent of girls attended secondary school in Sub Saharan Africa and 40 percent of boys and 35 percent of girls in South Asia (Unesco).

Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries, achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary school in 2005. On the other side, the Arab world lags in education of girls at secondary level. Both are worth a WHY? story.

A critique of the indicators to measure this Goal is that enrolment does not factor in drop-outs, where death of parents due to AIDS, domestic burden, early marriage and other factors militate against girls' education. Completion of a school cycle would be a more accurate measurement.

Reasons for the **gender gap in education**:

- Gender bias in the family
- Poverty and high cost of schooling
- Stereotypes about women's roles
- Burden of domestic work
- Location of school
- Conditions in school, including safety
- Classroom environment, including bullying
- Early marriage and pregnancy
- Budget cuts on public spending on education
- Social exclusion of certain groups

**Tertiary education** presents a complex picture. More women than men enrol in university in Latin America, the Caribbean and in the developed regions, while in sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, more men than women go to university.

Compounding the problem, women with university diplomas leave for greener pastures. Unifem's Progress Report 2008 says that women dominate the category of migrants with tertiary education, especially from Africa. The female brain drain makes it hard to build a national pool of women leaders in politics and the economy.

National figures mask disparities among urban and rural girls, indigenous and minority groups, and other cleavages along religion, caste and mother language, disability, migrant and street girls that can be explored in stories.

#### **Story idea**

*Especially for teenage girls, the lack of **clean, separate toilets** with privacy is a deterrent for school attendance. Lack of sanitary pads and of separate toilets is a monthly cause of school absence among teen girls. What is the situation in the poor schools of your country?*

#### **Story idea**

*Affirmative action pro-girls such as scholarships and food packages is creating in some countries a **reverse gender gap**, resulting in fewer boys in school. In Niger, food aid for nomadic families who send their girls to school resulted in a drop in boys' education. In Argentina, El Salvador, Tunisia and Moldavia, among others, fewer boys than girls enrol in secondary school due to a combination of socio-economic context, early paid employment and constructions of masculinity.*

#### **Story idea**

*It is not enough to have schools. They must have teachers, books and equipment. If they require uniforms, these should not be expensive. And they must be safe. Sexual harassment and abuse from teachers and students, bullying, gender biases in class and textbooks are issues to look into. So is pregnancy among schoolgirls: its extent and consequences for the girl and the father, if any.*

#### **Useful websites**

- <http://unesdoc.org/images/0017/001776/177609e.pdf>
- [www.efareport.unesco.org](http://www.efareport.unesco.org)
- <http://www.mdg-gateway.org/MDG-Insights/Feb/Issue02.pdf>
- <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/mdg-factsheets/educationfactsheet.pdf>
- <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/education/girls-education-full-final.pdf>
- <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/goals/universal-education>

## Strategic Priority 2: Guarantee sexual and reproductive rights.

### IPS Project Theme: Sexual and Reproductive Rights

This is one of the most controversial aspects of Goal 3, where conservative and liberal, religious and secular views of women's rights clash over sensitive issues.

In the last decade, family planning (also known as birth spacing or family choices) took a back seat to HIV and AIDS. Now it is making a comeback. About 200 million women worldwide have an unmet need for effective methods of contraception.

In fact, one indicator suggested to measure progress in this area is the proportion of contraceptive demands that are satisfied and adolescent fertility rates – these are good topics for stories.

More than one in four women does not have a final say in decision concerning her own health, including reproductive choices. South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa have the lowest ratio of female autonomy in making health decisions (Unifem 2008).

*Illegal unsafe abortion continues to maim and kill (mostly poor) women - five million are hospitalised every year worldwide and unsafe abortion accounts for 13 per cent of all maternal deaths. However, in developed regions, 92 per cent of induced abortions are safe, whereas in developing countries, 55 per cent are unsafe.*

#### Story idea

*Illegal unsafe abortion and abortion laws in your country or region.*

#### Story idea

*Cervical cancer is curable if detected early but it continues to be one of the biggest killers of women worldwide. Does your country provide free pap smears and the new HPV vaccine against cervical cancer and other sexually transmitted diseases through the public health system?*

Maternal mortality (overlapping Goal 5) is the most off-track of all MDG goals. While the aim is to reduce the 1990 figures by two-thirds by 2015, gains have been limited worldwide and virtually zero in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the roughly half a million women die every year from pregnancy and childbirth, half live in sub-Saharan Africa and one-third in South Asia.

Why is maternal mortality so intractable? Because it reflects some deep cleavages and inequalities in society:

- The weaknesses of public health services
- The urban/rural divide and neglect of rural areas
- The subordination of women

Because maternal mortality straddles these faultlines, stories have drama, social analysis, research, action, colour, medical and cultural issues, human touch, vox pops, personal stories – and, of course, gender issues.

**Newspeg:** Mother's Day can anchor a number of stories per region that unpack the real risks of mothers.

**Global series:** IPS could run a global series, with a first piece (composite and analytical) explaining why this MDG goal is off track. Other stories in the series could look at a poor country with really bad maternal mortality like Sierra Leone, a poor country like Sri Lanka that has improved, and a middle-income country like Peru where maternal mortality remains high for the region and with sharp inequality between urban and rural (twice higher among rural women).

### ***Some issues and story ideas around maternal mortality***

**Midwives** are vital to reduce maternal mortality. In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, less than half of births are attended by skilled health personnel. Stories could explore:

- Distance to clinics, bad roads, cost of transport.
- Deficit of health personnel in rural areas.
- Efforts to impart skills to traditional birth attendants.

**Brain drain** of health personnel to capitals and to foreign countries – from Paraguay to Italy, from South Africa to the UK, from Guinea Bissau to Portugal. The flow is not only South-North: Botswana, South Africa, and Dubai are big poachers of African health staff. In Africa, just under 30 per cent of women with a university degree migrate, among them, nurses, health technicians, doctors and pharmacists (Unifem).

**Creative thinking:** community-based education around maternal mortality in rural Pakistan, rural midwife training in Afghanistan, government and private hospital partnerships to ensure safe and free delivery for poor caste and tribal women in Gujarat state in India, are some creative approaches. Anything in your country?

**Malaria** is a serious threat to pregnant women in most of Africa. A new therapy pioneered in Senegal is to treat all pregnant women in malarial areas with a prophylactic course of antimalarial drugs. Distribution of impregnated nets and community efforts to eliminate stagnant water and rubbish also help. For **Malaria Day**, stories could look at anti-malarial efforts around pregnant women.

**Teen pregnancy** in Latin America and Caribbean. In Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Brazil, about 20 per cent of all births are to teen mothers. Stories could look at why, who, trends, impact on girls, availability of family planning, economic, sociocultural and religious factors, campaigns to reduce teen pregnancy, services to ensure young mothers a safe pregnancy, delivery and healthy baby.

**Resource curse.** All the oil producing countries of Africa have disastrous maternal mortality. In Angola, more than half of pregnant women never go to an antenatal clinic or give birth with trained personnel. One in every nine of world maternal deaths happens in Nigeria, that is about 60,000 a year. This could yield a series where maternal mortality happens against a background of petrodollars.

### **Useful websites**

- [http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_IAW.html](http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/fb_IAW.html)
- [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)
- [www.unicef.org/sow09/docs](http://www.unicef.org/sow09/docs): State of the World's Children 2009, dedicated to maternal mortality, has lots of background information, stats, and story ideas.

## Strategic Priority 3: Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens.

### IPS Project Theme: Reduce Women's and Girls' Time Burdens.

All over the world, women and girls perform most of the domestic and family tasks. Their work - invisible, unpaid, and unrecognised - detracts from their ability to study, participate in community activities, in politics, and in sports and leisure.

The burden of women and girls stems from the **sexual division of labour**: the division between production (paid work or economic activity) and reproduction (childbearing and care, maintenance of the family, and home management), rooted in women's reproductive role.

An offshoot of the sexual division of labour within the family and the household is the **unpaid community care work** provided by women. The AIDS epidemic multiplied this burden and brought it to the forefront, as **home-based care** for patients in NGO, church and government schemes. As the state cuts its social and health spending, and demands grow because of AIDS, more tasks are shifted to community members.

#### Story idea

*How are home-based carers trained, assisted and remunerated in your country?*

IPS regularly covers many of the topics of this theme: the time, distances and effort spent by girls and women fetching water and firewood; the long distances to health posts and markets; bad roads that isolate farmers and their produce; and so forth.

The challenge is to find new angles to refresh coverage of the sexual division of labour.

One tool that dramatically shows the disproportionate burden of family and domestic tasks on women is time use surveys.

**Time use surveys** are detailed questionnaires that note what men, women and youth do – the hours spent in cleaning, cooking, washing, caring for children, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and pets, shopping, waiting for transport, fetching water and firewood, at church, doing sports, and hundreds of other activities. The result is an accurate picture of women and girls' burden of unpaid domestic and family work, useful for policy-makers, and for journalists.

For example: In Ecuador, the average weekly workload of a woman is 22 hours longer than a man's. For a rural indigenous woman, it is 29 hours longer. In Uruguay, a woman devotes an average of 28,6 hours every week to unpaid domestic work, while a man spends 12.5. Caring for children and the elderly requires an additional weekly 17.8 hours of her, and 10.1 of him. And when men look after the kids - it's mostly play and outings.

#### Story idea

*In 2007, the Summit of Ibero-American Heads of State, in Santiago de Chile agreed to include time-use questions in household surveys and set up a regional Observatory of Gender Equality that will, among other things, assist national statistical institutes with time-use surveys. Other regions also use time use surveys: mine them for interesting data and story ideas.*

## Clean Water

The lack of clean water has a cradle-to-grave impact with a strong gender dimension. At household and community level, women are the water managers - for cooking, cleaning, laundry, bathing, personal hygiene, livestock care and farming.

Poor water management leads to cholera, malaria and dengue, childhood diseases and maternal morbidity, increasing women's burden. Water used in agriculture is often contaminated with pesticides.

### Gender Lens for Water Issues

Water quality, supply and management currently reinforce gender inequality and exacerbate women's problems. The simple fact is that with greater gender sensitivity these issues can be effectively addressed. Constructing bathrooms, placing taps in closer proximity and bringing women into water-management issues can result in sustainable and fairer development. Until the issue of water is seen through a gender lens, the inequalities will persist, with the most serious impact experienced by women in the poorest countries in the world.

*Prof. Bridget Welsh*

<http://www.sais-jhu.edu/pressroom/publications/saisphere/2008/welsh.htm>

### Story idea

*How does privatisation of water services affect women? What is the impact on social and physical distances, gender bias, access, prices, supply, inequality?*

# the next best resource to reduce women's burden

Besides providing boreholes, roads, solar cookers and wheelbarros - why not use a resource commonly available in villages and cities?

## MEN !!!

Sharing domestic and family responsibilities with boys and men is the best way of reducing the burden of girls and women.

### Where do men come in?

- Gender roles are changing. Men are taking more responsibility and pleasure in caring for children and home. School curricula, soap operas, ads, role models, movies and a new generation of parents and teachers are bringing this paradigm shift.

#### Story idea

*The domestic burden is increasing in Latin America, mirroring the rise in female-headed households, single mothers, working mothers, migration of a spouse, and distant fathers. This is bringing a cultural shift, with young men and low-income men sharing more domestic tasks, whether out of belief or necessity. What is happening in your country?*

#### Story idea

**Fathers in childbirth.** *Studies show that the door to sharing of childcare among parents opens with the presence of fathers during childbirth, and recommend that hospitals should support this. Brazil's national policy allows women one person of their choice but hospitals are uncooperative and less than 10% of women use the provision. And your country?*

#### Story idea

**Paternity leave is a** *policy to promote shared childcare and break the cycle of gender stereotypes. In Latin America, eight countries offer it. The Philippines gives seven days for married fathers. Even with the policy in place, fathers don't take advantage. Sweden had to make it "use it or lose it" to increase uptake. Father's Day is a good newspeg for this story.*

#### Useful websites

- [www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)
- [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)
- [www.promundo.org.br](http://www.promundo.org.br)
- [www.gemsa.org.za](http://www.gemsa.org.za)

# MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

## Strategic Opportunity 4: Combat violence against women and girls.

### IPS Project Theme: Ending Violence against Women and Girls.

Gender-based violence is rooted in cultural patterns and norms of masculinity and femininity. Changing these patterns requires social change in both men and women.

Some forms of gender-based violence are sexual abuse of children – rape – domestic violence – sexual assault and harassment – trafficking – harmful traditional practices like genital cutting, breast pressing and others – femicide – homophobic violence against lesbians – honour killings – dowry murders, burnings and disfigurement with acid.

IPS regularly covers many forms of gender violence: domestic violence, rape, honour killings, machismo, female genital mutilation. The chart below shows different forms of violence at different stages of women's lives – all potential story ideas.

### Gender discrimination throughout a woman's life

Phase	Type
Prenatal	Prenatal sex selection, battering during pregnancy, coerced pregnancy (rape during war)
Infancy	Female infanticide, emotional and physical abuse, differential access to food and medical care
Childhood	Genital cutting; incest and sexual abuse; differential access to food, medical care, and education; child prostitution
Adolescence	Dating and courtship violence, economically coerced sex, sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution
Reproductive	Abuse of women by intimate partners, marital rape, dowry abuse and murders, partner homicide, psychological abuse, sexual abuse in the workplace, sexual harassment, rape, abuse of women with disabilities
Old Age	Abuse of widows, elder abuse (which affects mostly women)

Source: Heise, L. 1994. *Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden*. World Bank Discussion Paper. Washington, D.C. The World Bank

#### Useful websites

- <http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm>
- [http://www.unifem.org/gender\\_issues/violence\\_against\\_women/](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/)
- <http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaign/stop-violence-against-women>
- <http://www.hrw.org/en/category/topic/women%E2%80%99s-rights>

### Story idea

*Turning the tide: What is being done in your country to reduce gender-based violence? Well-lit streets, more public transport at night? Specialized police stations and officers to deal with battered and raped women? Gender training of uniformed forces, from police to paramedics and peacekeepers? Incorporating the issue in school curricula?*

### Story idea

**An early start in gender violence.** *Is there bullying or improper sexual touching of girls at school by male pupils? Sexual abuse by male teachers? Exchange of sexual favours or money to pass? What is being done about it?*

### Story idea

**Child sexual tourism and child prostitution** occur in countries as varied as Kenya, Madagascar, Lithuania, Cambodia and the Philippines. French airlines show in-flight videos to outbound passengers warning against sexual tourism. In Kenya, hotels post information against sexual tourism in lobbies and rooms and tour operators are trained to detect predators. Anything like this in your country?

### Story idea

**Internet paedophilia and porn rings.** Any cases in your country or region? Does your country have laws about it? Do the telecoms authorities, internet providers and law-makers consider the problem?

### Story idea

**Child marriage** is common in countries ranging from Ethiopia to Nepal and Niger. Churches and NGOs provide safe homes for girls who escape from forced marriages. What are the girl's prospects for the future, health consequences (fistula, early pregnancy)? Reaction of their biological families – support or rejection?

### Story idea

**Shelters for abused women.** Do the law and the national budget in your country provide these? Are they run by the state churches or NGOs, are there enough? Pros and cons of shelters (in small towns, their address is known and retaliation from abusers can follow). Life stories.

# gender in war and disaster coverage

*“Disaster, however natural, is profoundly discriminatory. Wherever they hit, pre-existing structures and social conditions determine that such members of the community will be less affected while others will pay a higher price. Among the differences that determine how people are affected by such disasters is that of gender.”*

*Oxfam Briefing Note on the Tsunami’s Impact on Women, March 2005.*

## Death Toll

Disaster is not gender-blind. More women than men died during the 2004 tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, and the 1990 Bangladesh cyclone. In Bangladesh and Indonesia, where it is not considered appropriate for girls to swim and climb trees, women could not escape. The sari can become a mortal trap as it unfurls, tangling limbs, slowing flight. The Kashmir earthquake found more women at home; many perished under the rubble trying to gather their children. In earthquakes in Afghanistan, try running in a burka.

### Story idea

*After a natural disaster, look at death toll with a gender lens: did more women die than men and why?*

## Transit camps

Camps need to plan safe spaces for women, good lighting, strategic location of toilets and water points, systems to prevent violence, such as prohibiting weapons in camps, and to provide adequate healthcare and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Relief agencies should provide adequate, safe, well-lit and private toilets and bathing cubicles for women, underwear and sanitary napkins, maternal and obstetric care, female health workers in settings where it is culturally inappropriate for women to see male health staff and private spaces to wash sanitary clothes where cultural norms do not allow washing these in public.

**Women as first responders.** They restore normalcy to daily life after a disaster: cleaning, cooking, caring for children and the elderly, salvaging belongings, rebuilding. Does the relief effort help them with this task?

### Story idea

*Take a walk in a transit camp for disaster survivors or refugees with a camp planner or NGO worker who will explain gender considerations built, or not, into the camp design. Identify critical gaps and gender-aware decisions (for ex, well lit toilets on a well-lit path)*

## Relief effort

Women may become invisible to relief distribution, specially of money, loans and credit, because the men are considered household heads or breadwinners. Single women heads of household find it hard to get those benefits without an older son.

Oxfam noted that, during the 2004 tsunami, the loss of assets like boats and nets of male fishers took centre stage and they received help in the reconstruction phase. But the work of women in fishing villages, who don't own boats, nets, land or shops but contribute their labour and skills to the coastal economy (drying and selling fish, mending nets, picking mussels and shells, etc.), was overlooked and they missed out on loans, cash grants, and credit. In the post-tsunami planning, government agencies and rural institutions ignored women's collectives, such as self-help and savings clubs.

### Story idea

*Does the relief effort include women and how? As relief workers receiving equal pay? As economic agents? As mothers?*

## Gendered family impact

Widows may lose their home and land to male relatives through customary law, religious norms or plain abuse. Young girls may be married, or at a younger age, to men who lost wives or to find a protector.

### Story idea

*If new homes are built for survivors, are title deeds put in the name of both husband and wife? Are single mothers and widows considered for new shelter? Will the relief effort try to strengthen women's property rights?*

## The gendered impact of war

The latest **legal development** is the recognition by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in Tanzania, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, at The Hague, that mass rape, sexual assault, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced sterilization, forced abortion, and forced pregnancy may qualify as crimes of torture, crimes against humanity, and crimes of genocide. Perpetrators may be charged and brought to justice, ending the cycle of impunity. This area has become news in its own right.

Other gender angles in war include planting landmines and dropping clusters bombs around water points and rivers where women wash clothes and on crop fields.

Checkpoints and curfews prevent or delay ambulances from passing and health staff from attending emergencies, especially childbirth, with direct consequences on women.

Women whose husbands have disappeared during war remain in legal limbo, unable to buy or sell property, remarry or inherit. Losing IDs during war, fleeing or disaster is a problem. Family tracing and reunion yield a feel-good story. ICRC and Save the Children are good sources.

Sometimes women respond to a disaster by getting organized collectively to deal with relief authorities and, in the process, conquer more autonomy.

Women's experience of war and conflict is not only as victims, but also as members of the armed forces, the police, medical personnel, relief organisations, peacekeepers, activists and politicians.

## Useful websites

- [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)
- [http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section13/Section390\\_8282.htm](http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section13/Section390_8282.htm)
- <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/doc207?OpenForm&query=3&cat=Gender>

### Story ideas for Gaza strip as example of a war zone

**Dignity kits.** UNFPA distributed dignity kits for the war-affected women, containing hygienic supplies, diapers, clean wipes, shampoo and headscarves. From terrified older children who start bedwetting, to the lack of sanitary pads, women face specific problems during conflict.

**Post-traumatic stress syndrome among women.** Research shows that more women than men suffer from PTSS (although maybe men do not talk about it, leading to bottled-up stress). Any initiatives to help them? Is it a luxury to even think about psychological help?

**New mothers.** UNFPA says about 170 women give birth daily in Gaza. With hospitals and clinics destroyed, and maternity wards taken over for the wounded and for surgery - how is it be a mother in Gaza? Relief efforts to restore obstetrical and neonatal care.

**No free movement.** How does it affect women and girls, female students? In a statement in February 2009, CEDAW described the dramatic impact of the lack of free movement (curtailed for the last 18 months, impossible during bombings) on Gaza women.

**Finally, stories and photos about women and girls may be the most moving. Which was the iconic picture, footage and story of the Mozambican floods of 2000? A woman giving birth on the top of a tree. Truly gendered.**

# MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

**Strategic Opportunity 5:** Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local government bodies.

**IPS Project Theme:** Parity in Decision-Making Bodies.

**Indicator:** Women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies

Slowly, the representation of women in Parliaments worldwide grows every year, reaching a world average of 18.6 percent in March 2009. This figure stretches from 56 percent in Rwanda to nearly 26 percent in Vietnam, 20 percent in the Philippines, 8 percent in Colombia and Ukraine, and 1.8 percent in Egypt.

This Goal has no set target, only an indicator. Some say that without targets and quotas, few countries will reach a critical mass of 30 percent of women in parliament by 2015. A parity zone of over 40 percent will not be reached in the developing world for another 40 years, says Unifem.

## Story idea

*Composite regional story: look at one country with mandatory quotas of women in parties and parliament, one without. Seek a diversity of voices about pros and cons. Are quotas patronizing towards women? At what stage should this "affirmative discrimination" (quotas) be scrapped? A new trend is to establish "equality quotas" where no sex should have more than 60 percent of seats. Is this a good idea?*

## Women, politics and the media

In political news, women politicians are under-represented well below the share of elected seats they hold. The 2005 Global Media Monitoring Project found that, in 78 countries surveyed, women were only 14 per cent of sources on politics and government while men were 86 percent. Only eight percent of stories on politics and government had women as the central focus.

So how do we tell the story of women making inroads into government beyond percentages?

IPS has a handy tool: its **Handbook for Women Politicians and the Media** is a comprehensive guide to issues, sources, language, background and useful checklists for reporters and editors.

[http://www.ipsnews.net/new\\_focus/polls/womeninthenews\\_ips.pdf](http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/polls/womeninthenews_ips.pdf)

Stories on women, politics and governance do not present themselves as 'events'. They are stories hidden underneath the regular, conventional political news coverage of elections and governance, underneath the corruption scandals, ribbon cutting, workshop openings and speeches. They are stories about the process through which individuals, political parties and nations progressively accept and vote women into office. Or out of it.

A second layer of the story is whether having more women in politics delivers a healthier democracy, a fairer society and better services for women. Stories can ask:

*How are states and parties creating an enabling environment for women's political participation?*

*How are individual women participating in politics?*

*Are women and men in public office changing the political agenda to re-define public policy and deliver equality and services for women?*

**Bonus track:** this topic allows coverage of local government, municipal councils, mayors and district officials in provinces and towns, escaping from the usual fixation on capitals and congress.

This theme has room for colour stories, analysis, newsy stories during national and elections, Q&As, and colourful profiles of women politicians and elected officials. For a variety of story angles, check the IPS Africa From Polls to Polls series on women and elections at [http://www.ipsnews.net/new\\_focus/polls/index.asp](http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/polls/index.asp).

### Story idea

*Profile the oldest women MP and the youngest together. How are their lives and careers different? Is it easier to be a politician for the younger generation?*

### Useful websites:

- [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

This Inter Parliamentary Union website is a no-jargon, user-friendly place to find background and research to back up stories. Its PARLINE database has up to date sex-disaggregated data on parliamentary elections.

## Tips from the experience gained in IPS Africa From Polls to Polls.

### Journalists often forget to explain:

- Total number of MPs and percentage of women MPs in Parliament
- Whether country has a single house, a senate or upper house, and the numbers of MPs for each house.
- Total number of MPs per political party and percentage of women MPs per party.
- Type of electoral system: proportional representation or constituency.
- Are quotas for women in parties or in parliament mandatory, voluntary or reserved seats?
- During elections, where are women located in party lists, top or bottom?

### Tips for editors

- Does the story send the message that politics is not for women?
- Do stories ask the same questions of men and women: how do they balance public and private life, how do combine work and family responsibilities?
- Do stories cover women politicians only when they are involved in a scandal or fighting with each other?
- Do stories probe into the barriers women face when running for office?

The barriers are summarized in **the Four C's: confidence, culture, childcare, and cash**. Women's late entry into politics, the aggressive nature of politics and voters' and media hostility, conflicting domestic responsibilities, and little access to campaign or party funds.

In some countries, women's groups lead campaigns to encourage women to register, to vote and to run for office on a gender equality agenda. Some provide small cash amounts to help women candidates.

### Story idea

*During a political campaign, profile women candidates from ruling and opposition parties. Describe the problems they face: little access to party funds to campaign, intimidation, family resistance, long hours? Who and what helps: NGOs, party mentors, the women's movement, grassroots groups? Who benefits from public campaign financing? What do their parties' manifestos say about gender equality and what is the reality inside the party?*

Women parliamentarians continue to face difficulties in their work, perhaps none greater than operating in political structures and political parties dominated by men.

*Equality in Politics: a Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments, IPU 2008.*

## Handbags and safe streets

Research by IPU and Unifem has found that women in Parliament and local government are active on issues that directly affect women, such as rape, clean water, rural roads, maternity benefits, and safe streets. Women MPs are changing how politics is conducted - debates in parliaments are less aggressive and hours more reasonable, says the IPU. In Kenya, women MPs won the right to bring their handbags (considered a security risk) into the Assembly. Some Parliaments had to build toilets for women. These small changes make entertaining copy and point towards more substantial ones: **women are re-defining political priorities to include women's concerns.**

### Story idea

*Since elections in 2007, the parliaments of Vietnam, Timor Leste and the Philippines, have between 20 to 28 percent women. Bangladesh has had two strong women Prime Ministers. What difference have they made?*

### Story idea

*Women MPs may join across party lines to pass women-friendly legislation on violence, health, education, etc. Zimbabwe is a prime example, where Zanu-PF and MDC women MPs worked together in the Sexual Offences Act and other laws. Any examples in your region of collaboration on gender issues across party lines?*

As the IPS Handbook says: **Remember that one of the fundamental roles of the media is not to just report on what is seen, but on that which is hidden.**

Stories about women in public office range from celebrity presidents to obscure, service-delivering women mayors, from politically correct manifestos to intimidation within a party, from carrying handbags to the workplace to passing laws that increase jail sentences for rape.

*From Polls to Polls, IPS Africa editor Terna Gyuse*

*I always have a nagging feeling that the Africa we write about is a shadow of the one we live in, that the journalistic chasing after facts and figures misses so much of the active forces and discourses that shape behaviour and attitudes. The perceptions of women politicians by men and women alike are very important -- this came out in the stories. Mentioning their domestic and personal lives is important; the absence of equivalent examinations of their male counterparts is a glaring omission. In the unequally-shared tasks of life on this continent, men's private choices are not subject to the same kinds of public pressure (media, religious, bar-room) as women's.*

## Women, elections, stories and style

I was surprised. In the second paragraph of the second story of the series, taboo words popped up: sanitary pads and periods, of the biological, not the grammatical kind. A male reporter was writing and he had no problems describing without euphemisms the effort of Thabitha Khumalo, a parliamentarian in Zimbabwe, to supply sanitary pads as a matter of dignity and hygiene.

The fourth story, also written by a man, starred another taboo word – menopause. A sociologist in Guinea explained that women, busy as homemakers at a younger age, enter politics later, around menopause, when the kids are grown up, the family less critical, and the husband more supportive. Older women as assets to society, menopause as a door to a career, that is unusual.

Ten years ago, few male reporters would have felt comfortable writing about these topics, in these words. All the media training on gender across the continent is paying off. Oprah Winfrey's ability to talk about any issue has made the personal, comfortable. Gender stereotyping is eroding. Women's issues gain legitimacy and visibility.

This came through clearly in a series of 32 stories on women and elections in Africa that I commissioned and edited for IPS between September and November 2008.

We did stories, profiles and slideshows. We ran portraits of veteran women politicians in Guinea and Sierra Leone, tough members of the opposition in Zimbabwe and Cameroon, and the first female mayors in Senegal, Madagascar and Mozambique.

Other stories described politics-as-a-men's-club in Swaziland, Ghana and Ethiopia, violence against women candidates in Kenya and Malawi, and the increase of women in Parliaments, to 35 per cent in Angola and 52 per cent in Rwanda.

## Balancing act

Some reporters were reluctant to ask personal questions from women politicians. I insisted: how many children and their ages, how they combine work and family life. Bring out the texture of their lives.

Gender reporting manuals advise not to ask women these questions, to keep it professional. I think we should interrogate men and women alike. Start asking male politicians how they share domestic and family responsibilities, if they cook, change nappies and watch school plays.

The interest goes beyond the anecdotal. Research by the Inter Parliamentary Union finds that the single most important deterrent for women to enter politics is their domestic responsibilities.

Early on, Africa editor Terna Gyuse and I had a spirited online editorial discussion about fashion. The profile of Sierra Leone's Zainab Bangura mentioned, in the lead, her spectacular wardrobe. Is it relevant to the story how a politician dresses? Against the IPS guidelines, which say no, I said yes.

If a woman dresses in a way that people notice, she wants them to notice: style and fashion as a personal and political statement. Just look at Michelle Obama.

I argued with Terna – who wears dreadlocks – that his choice of hairstyle is a political statement that should be included in his profile.

Most male politicians wear boring clothes, that is why no one notices. Just check out the annual African Union heads of state group photo. But some do use clothes as a branding tool: Jacob Zuma prancing around in leopard skin and assegai, Thabo Mbeki suited and buttoned up, Madiba in his loose, patterned shirts. Moammar Khadafi understands (and enjoys) dress power. So do West Africans.

Terna relented, the references to turbans, boubous and kohl-lined eyes stayed, and made the stories more colourful.

Very puzzling was the absence of HIV and AIDS in the stories, from high or low seroprevalence countries. Except as a background fact about Swaziland in one story, neither journalists nor politicians nor voters mentioned it.

Why? I asked around. Some reasons given:

- People are saturated of talking about AIDS.
- Working in a box: this is political reporting, not AIDS reporting.
- The response to AIDS belongs to NGOs, donors and activists; elected officials have little to do with it.
- An AIDS platform does not garner votes.
- Politicians said boring stuff about AIDS.

True, the opinion pollster AfroBarometer regularly reports that less than one-third of Africans put AIDS among their top three priorities.

I let it be. Mentioning AIDS is not mandatory. Editing means striking a balance between standardizing and keeping the writer's style, so we can hear the voices of these strong, resilient, courageous women, fired up about public service.

- *Mercedes Sayagues was the editor of this series between September and November 2008.*

# MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

**Strategic Opportunity 6:** Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights.

**IPS Project Theme:** Women's and Girls' Property and Inheritance Rights.

Discriminatory laws and policies, patriarchal customs, tradition, religion, and social attitudes block women's ownership, control and access to land, property, inheritance and natural resources. Women grow half of the world's food but own less than 15 percent of the world's land, says FAO.

In many societies, a woman's marital status and relationship with her male relatives, from sons to uncles, and to her husband's relatives, determine her relationship to property.

This is not a peripheral issue. Lack of property means that women don't have collateral for loans or credit. They may remain dependent on males, trapped in violent relationships, farming with primitive technology and tenuous food security, or pushed into urban migration into slums.

From Kerala, India, to Uganda, studies show that women who own property are less vulnerable to domestic violence.

Generally, Latin America has the most egalitarian laws, although implementation can be problematic. North Africa and the Middle East grapple with the tension between Sharia and national laws. Asia presents significant inequalities across the ethnic and religious cleavages; in many countries, land is inherited through the male family line. Africa has to navigate among residual colonial laws, statutory law and customary norms.

The constitution and written laws may give women equal rights to property but customary and religious law may not. The wording in formal legal rights is often vague about customary law, creating loopholes.

Legal reform is key, but not enough. Family and community dynamics are central to change, and so are grassroots women's efforts.

This tension between different sets of laws and customs makes for interesting stories that chronicle the ongoing and deep transformation in societies, from rural to urban, from religious to secular, from patriarchal to egalitarian.

## Story idea

*Look for creative grassroots efforts. These range from housing cooperatives in Harare and Montevideo to groups of slum women who fight eviction in Kathmandu, Luanda and Lima. "Barefoot paralegals" in Angola and India teach legal literacy to their neighbours, such as the importance of registering joint title deed and making a will.*

### Story idea

**Informal or traditional justice systems** (elder councils, village courts) that deal with land ownership and land-use rights using customary law may be biased against women. How responsive are the traditional justice systems in your country to women's needs and rights? Newspeg: Look for cases reported in the press that balance constitutional and international rights against customary practices.

### Story idea

**AIDS and inheritance.** The AIDS death toll of young adults has highlighted the weak inheritance rights of women and girl orphans, rooted in beliefs that girls do not need to inherit since they will marry, that families take care of widows, or that inheritance is a private matter ruled by the family. In Kenyan villages, watchdog groups mobilize when widows are dispossessed by relatives and get the chiefs and local government authorities to act. What mechanisms exist in your country?

### Story idea

**Land reform** programs and landless or housing movements in your region: do they factor in women's need for land, housing and title deed? Do they address the needs of female heads of household, widows and single mothers?

### Useful websites

- [http://www.icrw.org/html/projects\\_propertyrights.html](http://www.icrw.org/html/projects_propertyrights.html)
- <http://www.huairou.org/campaigns/land/index/html>
- Women's Land Link Africa: <http://www.wllaweb.org>
- Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions: <http://www.cohre.org>
- Women in Law and Development in Africa: <http://www.wildaf.org>
- Women living under Muslim Law: <http://www.mlumi.org>

## MDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women

**Strategic Opportunity 7:** Eliminating gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment and occupational segregation.

**IPS Project Theme:** Gender Inequality in Employment and Equal Opportunities on the Labour Market.

**Indicator:** Share of women in paid employment in the non-agricultural sector.

Paid employment outside agriculture benefits women's capacity to control income and decision-making – although some critics of this indicator point out that wage employment for women is often low-skilled and casual.

Female employment outside agriculture has increased slowly in the last decade, although women's jobs are still disproportionately concentrated in agriculture and services. The only region where males and females have similar patterns of employment in all sectors is East Asia and Pacific.

Some of the gains in women's employment will be reversed by the global financial crisis. ILO estimates that as many as 30 million people will lose their jobs worldwide and 200 million will be pushed into acute poverty.

### Story idea

*Who is being laid off first, how does retrenchment affect men and women in the financial sector, in electronics, in manufacturing, in the media, in outsourced services like call centres and data processing?*

*How does losing jobs affect men? Even in sectors of predominantly male employment, like mining, one can find a gender angle by looking at the impact on the family finances, emotional consequences of retrenchment on male self-esteem, alcohol abuse, and domestic violence.*

Women will be harder hit because they are poorer, have smaller pensions, savings and benefits, have jobs that pay less, are less educated, perform unpaid domestic and childcare work, and work more in the informal sector and in low-skilled casual jobs.

Single female-headed households (worldwide, more than one-third) will suffer more as there is only one income and they are already poorer to start with. And as governments in developing countries get less tax revenue and international financial aid, cuts in social services, cash transfers and welfare may follow.

## Useful websites

- [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)
- [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)
- [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)
- [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

**Newspeg:** the impact of global recession on women's employment. It may be too early to have sex-disaggregated data but sectors employing mostly women are vulnerable to world recession: tourism, exports of horticultural products, electronics, call centres. Ninety per cent of poultry workers in Brazil and 60 per cent of shrimp workers in Bangladesh are women. From Nicaragua to Cape Verde to Korea, the labour force in export processing zones is predominantly female. Women are 90 per cent of the fresh produce and clothing workers at the labour intensive stages of the supply chain. (Unifem 2008).

### Story idea

*Starbucks is selling fewer lattes and closing shops in the USA. How is that affecting its small-scale coffee suppliers? Domino pizza chain closed its franchise in Costa Rica. Look at the domino effect of global corporations and the global supply chains on the local scene, from franchises to tourism.*

The global supply chains spread across continents but are embedded in gender relations. Markets are shaped by social norms and gender inequalities that determine women's employment and wages.

*"Supply chains reflect women's lower status in the labour market...(they) illustrate why companies find it so attractive to rely on female labour in the global economy...and capture two important parallel trends in the labour market: feminisation and in formalisation."*

Unifem Progress Report of the World's Women 2008.

## Waged employment in export-oriented horticultural sector

Women comprise half or more of the labour force in high-value export-oriented agricultural industries: snow peas in Guatemala, artichokes in Peru, vanilla in Uganda, also in Chile, Tajikistan and Colombia. These jobs are low skilled, casual, non-permanent, with few benefits – and the first to go when demand for asparagus and roses contracts.

### Story idea

*Around Valentine's Day week, exports of roses from Ecuador to the USA were down by 23 percent. Look into other cut flower exporters countries (Colombia, Kenya, Zimbabwe.) .How did they do around Valentine's Day, how are they doing now? The majority of workers in the cut flower industry are women.*

**Remittances** from migrant workers are the second largest source of income for many countries. As host countries go into recession, jobs are lost and remittances dry up. This affects both women migrants and women who stay in home country and manage household and family. Mexico started noticing this trend last year.

### Story idea

*The gender remittances project of the Santo Domingo-based UN INSTRAW examines the flow and the use of remittances from women workers, for example, from Spain to the Dominican Republic; France to Senegal; Italy to Philippines, USA to Guatemala, South Africa to Lesotho.*

*Are Latin American and Africa migrants in Spain taking advantage of the repatriation grant offered by Spain? Find returning migrants and tell their stories against the background of female migration, remittances.*

**Migrant domestic workers.** Human Rights Watch has published a number of damning reports on migrant domestic workers in Saudi Arabia, and the Middle East.

**Women farmers.** Although the indicator for this MDG goal is the proportion of women in non-agricultural employment, women farmers should not vanish from our radar, quite the contrary.

*“Redoubled efforts on hunger must include the millions of peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists and indigenous people who produce food.”*

Franciso Sarmento, Head of Food Rights at ActionAid.

Faced with escalating food prices, food insecurity, protectionism among agricultural producers, and climate change, aid agencies, governments and think tanks are looking at ways to improve women farmers' productivity. They face many constraints (see below). Each point is a potential story idea.

## Gender-based differences in agriculture

- **Land title** and tenure tend to be vested in men, either by law or by sociocultural norms. Land reform and resettlement may reinforce this bias against tenure for women.
- **Extension.** Women farmers have less contact with extension services than men, especially where male-female contact is culturally restricted. Male extension agents privilege men farmers on the erroneous assumption that the message will trickle “across” to women.
- **Technology.** Women use lower levels of technology because of poor access, cultural restrictions on use, including on the use of animal traction, and low or regard for women's crops and livestock as research priorities.
- **Finance.** Women have less access to formal financial services because of high transaction costs, limited education and mobility, social and cultural barriers, and collateral requirements, such as land title.
- **Time.** Women may spend less time on farm work but work longer hours on both paid and unpaid work.
- **Mobility.** Women are less mobile than men, because of their childcare and household responsibilities and sociocultural norms.
- **Education and training.** Illiteracy and lack of education hamper women's ability to obtain technical information. Worldwide, women have less access to education and training in agriculture.

Source: World Bank 2008



