Some Review Notes On

Integrated Rural Development & Urban-Rural Linkages

By

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1- Women Development In Rural Areas:

1.1- Full & Equitable Participation of Women is a Cornerstone in Integrated Rural Development Policy & Programs:

- It is an established fact that rural women are producers, operators and economic agents in their own right within the production system. Yet decision-making processes and mechanisms underlying development choices do not yet or fully incorporate gender related issues.

- The full integration of rural women and development issues into a country's general and sectorial planning induces a positive impact on the process of change and fosters harmonious and sustainable development.

- The preparation and implementation of a development policy benefiting rural women is a multidisciplinary approach that is closely linked to a whole series of political, economic, social and environmental factors.

- The general aim of a development policy for rural women is to explicitly guarantee that they are taken into account and included in all development programs and projects as productive agents in the agricultural and rural sector in their own right, and as agents of social continuity.

- Acknowledgment of the identity and linking both men and women groups together in a single operational approach will ensure an appropriate and satisfactory response to integrated development of rural women, rural society, and of the whole country.

1.2- Essential Elements of Rural Development PoliciesBenefiting Women:

- Rural women to be incorporated into the context of integrated policies at the rural, regional and national levels;
• Rural women to be integrated into the country's mainstream planning as well as into that of the agricultural and rural sector;

• Effective integration, promotion and participation of women in all development programs and projects for the rural sector;

• Promoting the recognition of rural women, in all their productive and reproductive aspects, in legislative and regulatory measures;

• Designing and implementing strategies and actions that take women into consideration for institutional capacity building, skill development, training, effective access to resources, production factors, human resource enhancement services, equipment and technology;

• Establishing mechanisms to ensure the coordination, collaboration and participation of all parties -including men and women- in decisions-making, activities and appraisals;

• Establishing, within the framework of the overall objectives of the agricultural and rural sector, clearly defined objectives related to women's role in agricultural production & processing;

• Establishing a communication and information system, which allows networking of rural areas with various entities (governmental, NGOs, national & international);

1.3- Factors Involved in the Preparation of a Development Policy Benefiting Rural Women:

• Conceiving a policy to benefit rural women that is consistent with the national policy as a whole;

• Defining a strategy to implement the policy benefiting rural women;

• Formulating a plan of priority actions benefiting rural women;

1.4- Main activities in the Preparation of a Development Policy Benefiting Rural Women:

• Analysis of women's situation:
  o In the agricultural and rural sectors,
  o Current mechanisms and prospects,
  o Relations between sectors, and
  o How does the policy fit in with national development guidelines;

• Improvement of the relevant institutional capacities to analyze, determine, plan and implement a policy for rural women;

• Selection of the goals and priority objectives of a policy benefiting rural women (problems, constraints and potential);

• Preparation and adoption of a strategy consistent with rural and agricultural development policy;
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- Confirmation of support for national development policies and;
- Acquisition of the necessary resources.

II- Focus on Community Development Projects in Rural Areas:

Community based Rehabilitation
Community Development
Community Health and Development
Primary Health Care
Children's Nutritional Rehabilitation
Non-Formal Primary Education
Children's Basic Education
Teacher training
Youth Development & Training
Consulting Services
Vocational Training
Capacity Building
Development Education & Advocacy
Development Program Funding
Women and Girl's Education
Women at Risk Rehabilitation
Women's Community Banking
Women's Development Program
Women's Empowerment
Women's Rehabilitation
Young Women's Development Program
Microfinance
Income Generation Activities
Seed Bank
Integrated Rural Development
Rural Community Health & Development
Rural Community Health Management
Rural Development
Adult Literacy
Reforestation & Training

Integrated Urban Development
Urban Community Development
Urban Community Health
Urban Community Health & Development

Water Resources & Sanitation
Arsenic Program

Drug Rehabilitation
HIV/AIDS Training

Legal Awareness Training

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Disabilities Advocacy

III- Urban – Rural Linkages:

3.1- Urban And Rural Areas Are Linked

Urban and rural areas are increasingly linked and interdependent. The links include movements of:

▼ People between rural and urban areas (commuting, using services and facilities or long-term migration);

▼ Goods and services such as agricultural products, from rural areas to urban for sale, processing or export;

▼ Environmental resources such as water and energy;

▼ Manufactured and imported goods from urban centers to rural settlements;

▼ Information on markets, employment opportunities, ideas and social changes;

▼ Money sent home by migrants, transfers such as pensions, and investments and credit from urban-based institutions;

▼ Wastes that are usually generated more in urban areas but disposed of in rural and urban areas.

These links exist between virtually all urban and rural areas but their size, nature and strength vary according to wider economic, social and cultural factors. These factors affect how urban and rural links contribute to reducing poverty – or not.

“Development efforts in most countries neglect the rural sector, even though it contains three quarters of the world’s 1.2 billion poor people … even by 2020, 60% of the world’s poor will still be living and working in rural areas.” (IFAD, 2001 (??))

“It is estimated that 858 million people of the world’s 2.8 billion urban inhabitants are living in poverty.” (UN-Habitat, 2003)

But:

“The rigid divide between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ on the part of sectoral strategies actually makes life more difficult for low-income groups”

3.2- The Challenge of Urban And Rural Change:

There is An Urgent Need To Take A More Integrated Approach To Rural And Urban Development
The idea of ‘urban bias’ has long influenced the development debate
The idea of urban bias has been very influential in donor policies on urban and rural development. The idea of urban bias suggests that governments deliberately favor urban areas in terms of disproportionate investment, for example in infrastructure, and through other policies. Initially a major focus of criticism was on regulated food prices that favored urban consumers at the expense of rural producers, but most of these were removed during structural adjustment. It is still often argued that urban bias continues in other ways, for example capital cities receiving the most resources and investment.

Urban and rural specialists need to approach development together

An examination of rural and urban links and change highlights the urgent need for a more integrated approach. Rural specialists need to become more aware of the potential of urban development to increase demand for rural produce, and to support other rural income-earning opportunities. Urban specialists need to understand that in many places rural demand for goods and services, and the potential to add value to rural produce, are the basis for prosperity in urban areas. Both need to question whether the patterns and processes of rural and urban development seen in richer countries are going to be repeated in low-income countries – or whether alternatives will emerge.

3.3- Key Policy Entry Points

This section outlines some entry points for tackling the challenges of urban and rural change in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs for poor people.

3.3.1- Understanding the Impacts on the Ground of Shifts in Policy

Labor markets

Urban and rural change is closely linked to developments in where and how people work. While there is knowledge about formal sector labor markets, there is less understanding of the movements of people and jobs in the informal sector, or of the movements of jobs and people between sectors and activities, types and patterns of remittances and the needs of migrant populations. An initial priority is to study changing labor markets and the way remittances and movements of people – in different locations and between generations – can reduce poverty. This will help identify policy options which will meet the livelihood needs of poor people and facilitate economic growth.

Social and Political Dimensions of Urban and Rural Change

Changes in where people live and how they earn a living have an impact on how they see themselves, how they relate with others and with governments. Processes of urban and rural change are accompanied by changes in household structures and gender roles, in people’s expectations and in people’s visibility to decision makers. These all contribute to changes in the nature and distribution of poverty and vulnerability. Some
important areas for policy analysis are:

▼ The extent to which these changes in social and political relations have affected women and men’s perceptions of security and insecurity;

▼ The impact of migration on people’s relations with government institutions; and

▼ The process by which urban and rural change becomes a political issue. For example, the visibility or non-visibility of migrants and their accompanying rights. And the process by which growing urban settlements are conferred appropriate status with corresponding powers, capacities and resources.

3.3.2- Some Policy Responses – At International, National, Regional and Local Levels

A better understanding of urban and rural change – of the specific needs of poor people living in different locations, of local and regional inequalities, and of the impacts of policies on the ground – will increase the effectiveness of efforts to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals.

Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals aims to ‘improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers’, addressing one highly visible sign of badly managed urban and rural change – the expansion of slums and the poor living conditions within them. But this is a vaguely worded target and a priority is to clarify our understanding of what ‘improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers’ means in a particular country or city context, and to raise the profile of this target.

National: government responses

To take a more holistic approach to rural and urban development, effective government is needed at all levels, with more dialogue between different ministries and institutions. The need for more effective and accountable government is particularly acute at regional, municipal, district and village level because this is where urban and rural links are most apparent and most appropriately addressed.

Regional: Improved Understanding of Regional Economic Inequalities

The patterns of urban and rural change are varied and include urbanization, de-industrialization in large cities, growth of secondary towns, and increases in off farm rural activity. The changes are complex and interrelated, and may lead to changes in regional growth patterns and growing regional inequality. It is vital for poverty reduction for policy makers and decision takers to understand the nature of regional patterns of change through the rural/urban continuum. It is also necessary to find tools to address regional economic inequalities. Previous approaches need to be reviewed and assessed in the light of new developments. Approaches worth a fresh look include:

- Regional planning,
- Poverty mapping and strengthening local level data, and
• New economic geography.

It is also important to assess the successes and failures of previous government actions to tackle regional economic equalities.

**Local: Using Local Area Data to Improve Service Delivery in Response to Where People Live and Work**

Poor people’s access to different services is affected by where they live on the rural-urban continuum and different service providers operate in different locations, but policy does not always reflect this. In the water sector, for example, many different organizations may be involved in water supply and sanitation – the international private sector, community based organizations, local governments and municipalities – and each works best in a different environment. For example, larger public private partnerships rarely operate outside large cities, and within larger cities are often unwilling to deliver to slums, which may be much more efficiently served through local communities.

When policymakers don’t take these differences into account, the achievements related to health, education and water and sanitation is likely to be undermined. One reason is lack of good information, particularly local area data, which can help policy makers to identify areas of need for different services and find ways to ensure that service providers do not neglect people living in these locations. Initial priorities for policy work are:

▼ Improving understanding of the implications of where poor people live on their access to services, taking a cross-sectoral approach; and

▼ Exploring how local area data can be used to improve service delivery to the poor in different locations.

**3.3.4- Future Scenarios**

For policy makers to understand and adapt to changes, they also need a methodology for longer term planning. This will enable them to identify critical longer-term issues to inform future policy and research agendas. One emerging methodology is scenario planning, which involves development of a range of likely scenarios – built on an understanding of current trends, possible changes and interdependencies, and potential shocks and stresses.

**Making the most of urban-rural links**

The majority of the population live in urban areas, but as in ‘rural bliss’, the links between rural and urban areas are strong. This means that those living in both rural and urban areas benefit from:

▼ Balanced investment in agriculture, manufacturing and services with associated employment opportunities;

▼ Improved access to services and economic opportunities though improved transport and communications;
Effective local governments

Capable government at all levels, including local governments with real authority and adequate resources, has resulted in:

▼ Improved services designed to reach both rural and urban areas,
▼ Security of tenure for slum dwellers,
▼ Equal rights for the poor in urban and rural areas, including recognition of their contribution to economic growth,
▼ Improved management of environmental resources in urban centers, reducing the resource use and minimizing flows of wastes,
▼ Fewer people living in slum conditions and declining numbers of urban poor.

Urban Opportunities Realized

Investment in basic environmental and financial services for residents and businesses in urban settlements has enabled manufacturing and services to develop, and helped urban centers to absorb migrants from rural areas.