**UNDP TURKEY POLICY SHEET 2**

**Empowerment of Rural Women**

**Global Trends**

The CEDAW Committee Recommendations of 2016 underline the **need to strengthen the national machinery** for the advancement of women, giving it an adequate mandate to ensure gender equality and allocating commensurate human, technical and financial resources to it, and ensure that it focuses on the rights of all women. The Committee further points to the need to **accelerate substantive equality of women and men in all areas** in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including **education, labour market, and political and public life**.

An important concern relates to the persistence of **deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes** concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society, overemphasizing the traditional role of women as mothers and wives, thereby undermining women’s social status, autonomy, educational opportunities and professional careers, as well as constituting an important cause of GBV. In this respect, particular emphasis is made on the ongoing practice of giving girls as brides to settle blood feuds and payment of ‘bride prices’, as well as the significant number of child marriages in rural and remote areas.

Further areas of concern include the low participation of women at all levels of decision-making, both national and local, as well as among the judiciary and civil service, and lack of measures to address the underlying causes, including social and cultural attitudes. In this respect, a recommendation is made to raise public awareness on the **participation of women**, including those belonging to disadvantaged or marginalized groups, in decision-making, and provide **training programmes** on leadership and negotiation skills for women.

Education is another area where concrete measures are lacking, particularly in relation to technical, vocational and tertiary education, and the need to develop a policy aimed at intensifying girls’ access to higher education and **technical and vocational training for women** in traditionally male-dominated fields is underlined by the Committee. It also acknowledges the disadvantages faced by refugee girls in education, as exemplified by their high drop-out rates, as well as by women and girls in rural areas, in terms of regional disparities in access to education.

As regards employment, the Committee highlights particularly **low levels of women’s employment** rate and their disproportionate involvement in housework. It also underlines concerns about higher rates of unemployment among women, especially young women; persistent gender wage gap; as well as over-representation of women in low-paid jobs in the informal sector in precarious conditions, and without access to health insurance or social security. In this respect, measures to promote equal opportunities for women in the formal sector, to develop gender-sensitive job evaluation systems, and to introduce statutory minimum wages in order to raise salaries in female-dominated sectors are assigned priority.

The CEDAW Committee particularly underlines **rural women** as a source of concern, due to their precarious conditions, **high levels of poverty**, as well as **limited access** to education, employment, social security and health care. In this respect, it is underlined that women in rural areas are exposed to particularly discriminatory stereotypes about the traditional roles of women, which prevent them from participating in key domestic decisions. In this respect, it recommends the development and implementation of measures, including temporary special measures, **to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality for rural women** in all areas in which they are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including political and public life, education, health and employment. It further highlights the need to develop programmes to create income-generating opportunities for rural women in their localities.

GREVIO Report on Turkey underlines that inequalities in terms of accessing education, employment, social services and health care particularly affect rural women. This also exposes them to violence and multiplies its effects. Accordingly, data show higher rates of lifetime exposure to physical and/or sexual violence by husbands and intimate partners in rural areas, compared to urban settings. Moreover, women in rural areas are subject to particularly discriminatory stereotypes about traditional gender roles, which also constitutes an obstacle towards reporting violence.

The impact of COVID-19 on rural women is a more recent area of concern. A FAO Brief on the Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 (FAO 2020) stresses that rural women face greater challenges than men in accessing productive resources, services, technologies, financial assets and local institutions, increasing their vulnerability to the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 as well as measures to contain the pandemic. It stipulates that rural women are more vulnerable than men because they have access to fewer productive inputs, markets, services such as finance, extension and information. The Brief underlines that the pandemic disproportionately affects rural women’s productive, reproductive and income-generating capacities as it reduces their economic opportunities, increases their workloads, and escalates GBV. It stipulates that policies developed in this context should involve measures to support rural women’s engagement in agri-food value chains, as well as gender-sensitive social protection measures, such as cash transfers and public work programmes, to ensure that they can equally benefit from such interventions. As stated in the Policy Sheet on Legal Aid, increase in the GBV cases during the pandemic is a matter of serious concern, and FAO also states that it is crucial to identify the most vulnerable women and girls and develop measures to reduce their exposure to risks and facilitate their access to support services. Finally, the Brief underlines the importance of involving women in the design and implementation of COVID-19 response strategies in order to ensure their perspective and needs are adequately considered; as well as of supporting gender analysis and sex and age-disaggregated data in order to monitor gender-related impacts of the pandemic and to inform response measures that adequately consider the differentiated needs and priorities of rural women and men.

**Experience in Turkey**

The National Action Plan (NAP) on the Empowerment of Rural Women for 2012-2016 stipulates that women in rural areas constitute half of the employment in the agricultural sector, while facing significant challenges in all aspects of social life. The NAP highlights the necessity to develop a concentrated and integrated effort to provide effective solutions to rural women’s problems in a wide range of areas including poverty, education, health, agricultural production, entrepreneurship, marketing, organization and social security. It aims to promote a rights-based and empowering approach while addressing the problems faced by rural women.

Acknowledging that the most crucial element in women’s poverty is gender inequality, the NAP underlines that the most significant gender inequalities in rural areas include issues of head of household, land ownership, property management, as well as business establishment and operations.

The NAP highlights the importance of structural, long-term policies and strategies addressing gender inequalities, as well as the interlinkages and interdependence across a wide variety of areas, the most significant of which is education. Education is an essential element affecting women’s participation in employment, entrepreneurship, as well as her social status in rural settings, while important challenges prevail in terms of women’s participation to, and prospects of continuing, education. The NAP thus assigns priority to promote collaboration among all relevant institutions, CSOs and the media in order to combat traditional patriarchal attitudes and practices preventing women’s education.

The Plan underlines that the most important role played by women in rural areas concerns agricultural production, half of which is realized by women, who at the same time constitute half of all female employment in Turkey. It however points to the fact that the majority of women employed in agriculture concentrate in marginal jobs and work as unpaid family labourers. Moreover, with increasing rural-urban migration and mechanization in agriculture, high-status, capital-intensive, technology-intensive jobs are fulfilled by men, while women primarily remain in low-status, labour-intensive jobs.

The NAP points to a variety of challenges faced by rural women, including patriarchal and traditional attitudes, working patterns and conditions, income earning possibilities, entrepreneurship prospects, organization patterns, and social security coverage. On this basis, it primarily aims to: (1) provide training for women to enable their entrepreneurship and productive role in agriculture; (2) equip them with skills to use new technologies; (3) promote women’s entrepreneurship in agriculture through applicable projects; and (4) enable rural women to participate in decisions across all the stages of production. It places particular emphasis on rural women’s personal development, training, access to resources, active participation in the development process, as well as the need to tackle gender inequalities in rural areas.

The 11th Development Plan states its main objective as the prevention of all kinds of discrimination against women, and their empowerment to benefit from equal opportunities in all aspects of social life. It stipulates that, starting from the local level, women’s active participation to all levels of economic, social and cultural life, and decision-making mechanisms will be encouraged. Support mechanisms will particularly be promoted to increase women’s entrepreneurship in rural areas.

The Plan includes specific measures to provide training on technology use, decreasing production costs, and production of quality and healthy products, as well as certified courses aiming to develop agricultural skills, particularly targeting women and young farmers. It also aims to enact a Cooperatives Support System and develop financial support mechanisms for cooperatives operating in priority sectors, primarily targeting women’s cooperatives. The Plan aims to promote women’s and girls’ access to education, participation in social and economic life, facilitation of their access to resources, and awareness-raising to improve women’s status in society.

The National Employment Strategy (2014-2023) sets the target of 41% women’s labour force participation to be achieved by 2023, and assigns priority to develop policies to promote equal opportunities for vulnerable people, such as women, persons with disabilities, the poor, youth and the population living in rural areas. The Strategy highlights that a significant feature of agricultural employment is the high rate of women’s participation in the labour force. When Turkey average is considered, 42,4 percent, 42,2 percent and 39,3 percent of the women were employed in agriculture in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. 75,9 percent of women employed in agriculture were unpaid family workers in 2010, and the figures were 76,9 percent and 75,1 percent for 2011 and 2012. These figures demonstrate that women are mostly employed as unpaid family workers in agriculture. In this respect, the Strategy includes the specific objective to support women’s entrepreneurship in agriculture.

The Strategy also underlines the challenges regarding employment in the tourism sector, due to the dual labour force structure and quality, whereby a few big companies give priority to qualified labour force and occupational competency, while unqualified young labour force is usually employed in the sector. Therefore, despite the potential for the sector to provide considerable employment opportunities for women, high rate of unregistered employment, seasonal employment, high labour turnover and overworking imply significant challenges for qualified women employment. The Strategy thus identifies tourism as a key sector to create employment opportunities for women, due to its competitive advantage in terms of attracting new investments and high job creation potential at local and regional levels.

**Recommendations for UNDP’s Role**

UNDP is the only Agency with an extensive mandate on rural development, and it has been carrying out numerous interventions on the issue with significant implications for rural women throughout the last CP and across almost all its Portfolios and Programmes. Various interventions have focused on developing inclusive business models for women; supporting local production infrastructures that are inclusive of women; promoting partnerships with private sector companies for valuating women’s work and enabling gender-responsive firm practices; increasing productivity of women-dominated work places in agriculture-based industry and tourism sectors; supporting economic diversification through value chain development and sustainable resource management with a particular focus on women; supporting women’s cooperatives; and more generally, supporting the socio-economic capacity of women across both refugee and host communities. Significant best practices have emerged out of these interventions, most particularly the development of the Argande brand as a unique production facility for women, establishment and enhancement of women’s cooperatives, as well as the differentiated analysis of the 24 hours of women and men in forest villages also raising awareness on the possibilities for women to take part in non-traditional areas of work.

Empowerment of rural women therefore appears as a significant area for UNDP intervention also in the upcoming period, this time in a more cross-cutting, inter-Portfolio perspective, and through a more integrated focus on the diversity of areas having significant implications for GEWE. Four main pillars of action can be outlined in this respect, the first three being more macro-level, namely, (1) to develop a strategic and integrated approach for the UNDP to empower rural women; (2) to inform macro-level policies on the issue; (3) to contribute to the development of effective gender-sensitive policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the rural setting; and (4) to further diversify and consolidate actions to promote rural women’s economic empowerment.

1. While most UNDP interventions have so far emphasized the economic productivity of rural women, going beyond this and adopting a broader and more strategic perspective integrating the issues of health, education, care, employment, social security and more general social participation issues would be crucial to obtain tangible gains towards the empowerment of rural women. This would also serve to enhance inter-Portfolio collaboration, bringing together the particular expertise, experience and knowhow of each Portfolio / Programme. The integration of the SRR Programme into this initiative is key to reach refugee women, who constitute one of the most vulnerable groups assigned priority by both the international and national strategies. This is all the more important as the time frame of the National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Rural Women (2012-2016) has expired and it has not so far been renewed, while there are many pressing issues and challenges around the issue, and the need for a systematic and integrated perspective to address the problems faced by rural women, by mobilizing all relevant stakeholders, is underlined in all recommendations and strategies. In addition to promoting rural women’s economic empowerment through support to entrepreneurship and promotion of agricultural skills, the 11th Development Plan clearly states the importance of promoting women’s and girls’ access to education, participation in social and economic life, facilitation of their access to resources, and awareness-raising to improve women’s status in society.

It is therefore crucial to take structured measures focusing on the empowerment of rural women in a more integrated and strategic perspective for the upcoming CP period, incorporated into the broader SDG perspective, building on the mutual learning and inter-connectedness across different Portfolios, and developing a more integrated and cross-cutting perspective focusing on economic, social, political, cultural and environmental dimensions of rural women’s empowerment, which would form the basis of UNDP work on rural development.

A significant starting point in this respect would be to conduct socio-economic analyses of rural women in different sectors, taking the example of the analysis conducted by the CCE Portfolio in forest villages, mapping out how women and men spend 24 hours of a day in order to explore the potential in respective sectors. This would enhance the strategic perspective outlined above, going beyond the contribution of women to agricultural production, and providing a broader needs-assessment of rural women. This would also constitute the basis of efforts to develop effective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing sex-disaggregated data and identifying the specific priorities of different groups of women in the rural setting.

1. Secondly, and building on this strategic perspective, UNDP should certainly benefit from its capacity to inform macro level-policies by taking a leading role in the re-vitalization of the National Action Plan for the Empowerment of Rural Women, implementing projects specifically focused on the formulation of action plans, strategies and policy suggestions in relation to the empowerment of rural women, expanding its previous experience, for example, in Total Factor Productivity. Consolidating efforts towards a renewed, concerted National Action Plan, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, most particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, outlining integrated policies and strategies and addressing the new challenges, needs and priorities in the current socio-economic context, should thus be a significant component of the interventions in this area.
2. An important concern emerges as the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on rural women, as it is mostly the disadvantaged groups, particularly those with low socio-economic and educational status, those living in remote rural areas, and those who have limited access to services and resources who are disproportionately affected. As stated by the UN Policy Brief (2020), the pandemic is likely to further increase women’s double burden because of the increased number of people staying at home and/or increased demands of caring for sick family members. UNDP can certainly be involved in developing support mechanisms to alleviate the negative impacts of the pandemic on economically active rural women, particularly in terms of facilitating their increased care load involving the care of children, elderly, disabled and sick members of their families; as well investigating their needs in terms of health, care load, spending time with children and elderly members of their families, etc. As outlined above, identifying rural women’s specific needs and priorities is also important in terms of engaging them in the formulation of effective policy responses to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic.

UNDP can further be involved in the collection of sex-disaggregated data to assess the gendered impacts of measures taken in response to COVID-19, such as lockdowns and activity restrictions, in order to inform effective and differentiated policy responses. This would also be significant to assess whether women are able to benefit from response interventions such as cash transfers and emergency support services. As indicated above, gender analyses to map out the 24 hours of women and men in different sectors would also be crucial to identify the needs, responsibilities, limitations and opportunities of different groups of rural women and to mainstream gender in response interventions.

1. There are also smaller-scale initiatives that UNDP could further pursue, building on its vast experience in rural development and women’s economic empowerment in this setting. Since women constitute the majority of agricultural workforce, the empowerment of rural women is crucial to increase economic productivity. Rural women still constitute the most economically active group among all women in Turkey. However, as the emphasis placed on agriculture is gradually decreasing at the cost of industry and services sectors, the methods and means of production and ways of living are increasingly changing. This provides a context where the challenges faced by women working in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism is a significant field of innovative action for UNDP. Women, for instance, remain sidelined in new debates on industrial and organic agriculture, as well as innovative and value-added production targets. Also, the recent UNDP experience in the CCE Portfolio reveals the timeliness of actions to be developed in male-dominated sectors such as forestry and fisheries.

On the other hand, rural women have very limited access to resources, and they are usually not targeted by numerous initiatives in this field, including training programmes, technological and skills improvement efforts, as well as innovative production techniques. While women are actively engaged in economic life and provide significant contributions to rural communities, therefore, women remain largely invisible across most of the incentives. This is also related to problems concerning women’s civil rights, whereby women face challenges in terms of land or title ownership in order to benefit from most of the initiatives, like credits or grants, which are addressed to rural communities. Civil rights should therefore be considered as indispensable for economic empowerment, and ways to address or bypass the general patriarchal structures which make women dependent on their husbands or fathers should be discussed, in line with the strategic perspective outlined above. Focusing on efforts to transform this larger mechanism which makes women invisible, by promoting registered, decent agricultural production for rural women, stressing efforts to increase their organizational capabilities, finding ways to engage women in new technologies, and perhaps more importantly, strengthening rural women’s agency by addressing them as the main actors in agricultural production, appears therefore as a priority area for UNDP activity. The examples of couples training programmes, addressing both women and men and therefore enabling a process to ensure women’s participation, to identify women’s priorities, and to enhance their engagement in rural production and their familiarity with technological advances, constitute an important pathway also for the UNDP to explore in the upcoming CP. UNDP, as an organization recognized for its power to influence macro-level policies and institutions, can also work to break resistance among its partners and stakeholders by preparing short and concise reports, guides and notes on gender equality for all its interventions, with a view to changing the attitudes and mindsets of its government and other partners and to achieve transformative results.

Considering the importance attached to the tourism sector in government documents, particularly the Tourism Strategy 2023 emphasizing the need to spread tourism across four seasons, seasonal employment of women gain significance. UNDP can thus focus on providing incentive measures to support seasonal employment of women in the tourism sector. A very important element of this support is the promotion of childcare facilities for working women, thus contributing to alleviating their double burden. Following the examples of ‘a creche in each district’ initiative of the Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work (KEDV) and the EU-funded Project on ‘Support for Women’s Registered Employment through Incentives for Trained Child Care Staff’, which provides EUR 300 care support for working mothers, UNDP can promote an incentive system for this purpose, specifically focusing on increasing the employability of women in the tourism sector.

Another important line of action would be to enhance the support provided for women’s cooperatives, as they are crucial to promote women’s empowerment. Since there are many reported challenges in the actual functioning and benefits of women cooperatives, it would be important for UNDP to pioneer the development of a support mechanism in the form of a Platform of Women’s Cooperatives, as an umbrella organization, enabling women to share their experiences and triggering a mutual learning process. The Platform could serve as a mechanism for established cooperatives to support new ones, and could involve various incentives, including mentorship, guidance, hotline and grant possibilities.

Related to this, efforts to promote entrepreneurship among rural women can be concentrated on the development of an Entrepreneurship Academy for women, which would be important in providing information on existing grant and credit opportunities, as well as mentorship and guidance for rural women to access these opportunities. The Academy could be crucial to provide the necessary training for women to develop their entrepreneurship skills and guide them for their application to KOSGEB and other relevant bodies that provide grants and credits for this purpose. More importantly, however, it could be a useful platform to track and monitor participant women’s progress, including the commercialization of women’s work, support for e-commerce channels, incubation centers and larger incorporation of women in value chains.

As most of the national strategy documents as well as UNDP work concentrate on urban areas, it is equally important to establish links between urban and rural settings, i.e., by reflecting on the expansion of UNDP interventions concerning GEWE to rural areas. For example, the work on the development of inclusive business models, efforts to involve civil society partners in women’s empowerment, various training and skills-development incentives in innovative and non-traditional sectors, and promotion of innovative channels to valuate women’s work, such as e-commerce possibilities, could be re-considered in this respect. Partnership with private sector companies and vocational schools could be important to develop inclusive business models for rural women, particularly in the non-agricultural, male-dominated sectors. A strategy document could specify the ways to collaborate with companies for expanding inclusive business models to rural women, including the standards for physical working facilities, social security arrangements and types of work. Project and research activities aiming to identify the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural production are also important so as to trace its implications for women in both rural and urban settings.

**Best Practices**

FAO stresses the importance of adopting measures to protect and support women’s income-generating opportunities and labour market participation that prioritize informal, part-time and seasonal workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[1]](#footnote-1) Measures to be adopted in this respect include expansion of job categories in public works programmes to include community- or home-based care of children and sick household members in order to benefit rural women with care responsibilities; provision of temporary employment and/or cash transfers to enhance rural women’s capacity to manage risk; provision of public work programmes that require minimum quotas for women’s participation, provide transportation, childcare and separate toilet facilities and offer flexible working hours; as well as measures to support micro and small enterprises with high female participation rates to promote employment stability and transition from informal to formal arrangements. The Brief further recommends the development of programmatic responses to address GBV, including the collection of sex and age-disaggregated data and conduct of vulnerability assessments to identify the most vulnerable women and girls, as well as men and boys, with particular attention to persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees, in order to inform the design of differentiated protection and mitigation strategies; and awareness raising activities on risks and strengthening the capacity of local partners and affected populations to identify and address these. A further significant point raised by the Brief concerns the promotion of the engagement of international, national and local civil society and NGOs to ensure a strong focus on gender equality in the COVID-19 response. Activities for this aim can include ensuring the presence of cooperatives, producers’ organizations, farmers’ associations and rural women’s organizations to facilitate the delivery of key government responses to COVID-19, in the form of, for example, supporting the delivery of cash transfers to ensure that women are not left out of existing measures.

Based on its analysis on the global impact of COVID-19 on agricultural production and seasonal agricultural and migrant workers, the Development Workshop underlines that one of the first impacts of the pandemic was to increase dependency on key workers who had to continue their work despite lockdown and movement restriction measures, along with discussions to ensure the sustainability of agricultural production, food security and supply chains.[[2]](#footnote-2) This report constitutes a best practice of monitoring and detailed analysis of the needs, priorities and repertoire of national and international policy measures developed in response to COVID-19, specifically focusing on a key sector of agricultural production.

UN Women in Moldova, in collaboration with Swedish government, provided 28.000 units of protective equipment to social assistance staff throughout the country in the time of the pandemic.[[3]](#footnote-3) The equipment including masks and protective suits were purchased from local companies run by women, providing financial support to women’s businesses and women employees at the same time as helping frontline workers. The Agency also ensured the transportation of the equipment across the country through local companies in order to reach final beneficiaries.

UN Women’s Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) offers an example of a global grantmaking programme aiming to support national women-led CSOs in achieving women’s economic and political empowerment and advancing the SDGs. The Fund’s objective is to transform financing from donors into high-impact initiatives led by women. Between 2018 and 2019, the FGE provided training on organic agriculture and agricultural equipment to 1440 women in Haiti, and encouraged the establishment of women’s cooperatives. In Lebanon, a CSO called the Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Family Empowerment (LFPADE) was granted the fund to train rural women to produce, innovate, brand and market traditional Lebanese foods; and an agri-food line emerging from four newly founded cooperatives, NESWA, allows women to sell their products to national and regional markets under a competitive business model. It is stated that the project has helped 300 women transition from being small-scale, home-based producers to full-scale, market-competitive entrepreneurs. In India, the grant supported the organization of over 350.000 rural women into more than 21.000 self-help groups raising their voices against gender discrimination; resulting in women entering roles reserved for men in many villages and increased sharing of care work. Here, women’s collectives have also shaped alternative support systems, offering para-legal aid to survivors of GBV and advocating with local services for relief and justice. Again LFPADE in Lebanon and the Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO in Armenia were enabled to exchange insights on how to help rural women entrepreneurs improve their marketing skills, food safety techniques and quality production standards. The two organizations also attended joint trainings in marketing and branding, which shows the importance of promoting cross-national collaboration and mutual learning practices to empower rural women. [[4]](#footnote-4)

Aiming to provide guidance for lawmakers, policymakers, CSOs and other stakeholders to support the adoption and effective implementation of laws, policies and programmes to respect, protect and fulfil women’s rights to land and other productive resources, and OHCHR Report of 2013[[5]](#footnote-5) recommends that laws, policies and programmes should ensure the full participation of women based on their informed, active, meaningful and effective engagement in the formulation of laws and policies; provide for effective and equal representation of women’s rights groups and collectives in all decision-making structures relevant to land and agriculture; as well as ensure that women’s rights groups and collectives are able to benefit from capacity-building activities in this respect. The Report underlines that many women are almost completely dependent on their relationship with a man to access land, and it is especially important to ensure that laws, policies and programmes related to land and other productive resources are sensitive to these issues. Single women face particular challenges in this respect, and it is argued that single women in India, for example, have organized to establish the National Forum for Single Women’s Rights, which advocates for their land and property rights with respect to both their natal and marital homes. The Report also advocates for the joint titling / joint registration of land, housing and property between couples, as a way to acknowledge the joint contribution of the spouses to the household economy, to offer protection for women in the case of divorce, and to provide automatic continuity when one spouse dies. This practice is adopted, for example in India, where the Government issues joint title deeds in the names of both husband and wife, making women joint owners of land. In Ethiopia, land certification programme provides a joint certificate to spouses, conferring joint land ownership; and local land administration committees are required to have at least one female member. In Sri Lanka, a 2008 housing regulation gives preference to loan applications made jointly by husband and wife, a widow, or a divorced woman. In India, special credits are provided for vulnerable women in agriculture to purchase or lease land in order to strengthen women’s agricultural capacities.

Regarding support for rural women’s entrepreneurship, a Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) was established in 2018 in India to promote and support established and aspiring women entrepreneurs.[[6]](#footnote-6) It is a facilitation platform working in collaboration with public and private sector organizations to bring them under a single platform by listing their women-focused entrepreneurship schemes, initiatives and programmes on WEP website. It also enables sharing of best practices among women entrepreneurs and more than 30 partner organizations, and promotes evidence-based policies. The services offered by the platform includes incubation and acceleration, entrepreneurship skills training, marketing assistance, financial assistance and social entrepreneurship.

Another best practice is that of World Bank, which supports the Government of Bihar in India through the JEEViKA programme[[7]](#footnote-7) aiming at empowering women through self-help groups, commodity specific producer groups and higher federations. This initiative is scaled up nation-wide under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), which is driving growth and job creation in rural areas through women-owned enterprises. There are reportedly 45 million rural women in India that are mobilized into self-help groups under NRLM. The programme provides technical assistance and direct links with some of the biggest private sector companies to create more inclusive value chains. As an example, the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India has connected nearly 800 rural homes in partnership with AirBnB, generating an average of USD 500 a month for hundreds of women through a ‘service enterprise’ that is home-based. These AirBnB homes also brought numerous tourism operators, transportation services and culinary services, and women have invested in their home enterprises to attract clients, now 40% of whom are international. Mentorship and guidance is provided at district and block levels to enhance the success rates of these enterprises.

1. For details, see <http://www.fao.org/3/ca9198en/CA9198EN.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information, see <http://www.ka.org.tr/dosyalar/file/Yayinlar/Covid19%20Pandemi/Salgında%20Ötelenenler.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. More information can be found at <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/noutati-si-evenimente/noutati/2020/05/support-to-women-business> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For details, see <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/fund-for-gender-equality-fge-annual-report-2018-2019-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2202> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. More information is available at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RealizingWomensRightstoLand.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For details, see <https://niti.gov.in/women-entrepreneurship-platform-wep> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. More information available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/rural-women-entrepreneurs-what-does-it-take> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)