

# RURAL GENDER EQUALITY

## KEY CHALLENGES FACING RURAL WOMEN

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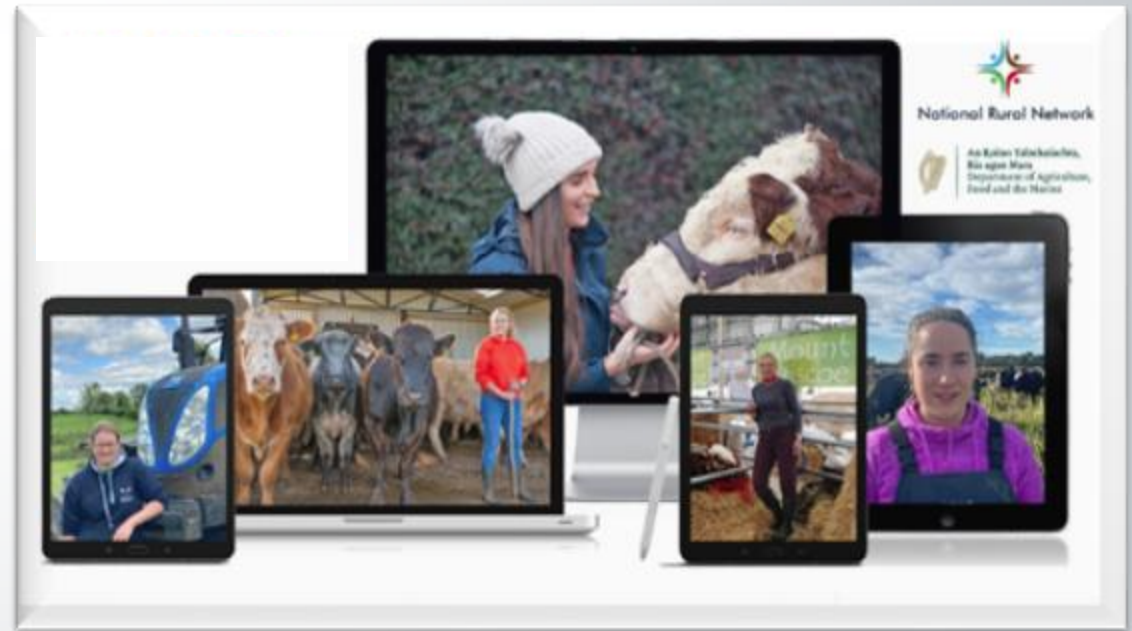
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**ENRD Workshop**  
**Andolsheim, France November 2022**

# OVERVIEW

- The Gender Issue: State of Play
- Employment
  - Agriculture
- Entrepreneurship
- Rural Services
- Gender Representation
- Challenges to Opportunities



# THE GENDER ISSUE: STATE OF PLAY

- **Key European challenges of our time...**

- Climate change, Pandemics, Security, Unemployment, Aging population, Social inequalities, Migration....

- **Overcoming challenges....**

- Requires input from all genders...including women....

- **Women in rural areas however face these challenges and more....**

- Even though...Empowerment of women is closely associated with economic and social development....



# EU RURAL WOMEN

Women make up slightly more than 50% of EU population

Represent slightly less than 50% of the total working age population in the rural areas of the EU

Across the EU, women are more likely to be concentrate in lower paid employment, and less senior jobs.

About 80% of all part-time jobs in the EU are occupied by women.

Despite investment in education, women are paid 16% less than men per hour. They are more likely to put their careers on hold to care for others. Consequently, the gender gap in pensions stands at 41.1%.

Lack of adequate public services for rural women, including childcare, health and social care.



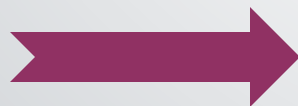
# EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

## In general:

- **Data:** Getting a clear rural/gender picture, difficult at rural level, but identified in the LTVRA.
- **Education:** 2020 - 10.7 million EU students **Bachelor's programmes:** more women than men.
- **EU Rural Employment:** Rural women in 'paid employment' increased dramatically during 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but still lower than in urban areas - 67% women and 80% men (2019) – gender employment gap 13% yet the urban gap = less than 10%.
- **Traditional Gender Identities:** persists in rural areas and limits female participation in the rural economy. However, alongside this, women themselves can prioritise care-giving responsibilities over economic opportunities.
- **Employment Concentrations:** women more likely concentrated in lower paid employment - less senior roles – poor quality jobs (not in line with qualification) and seasonal employment.



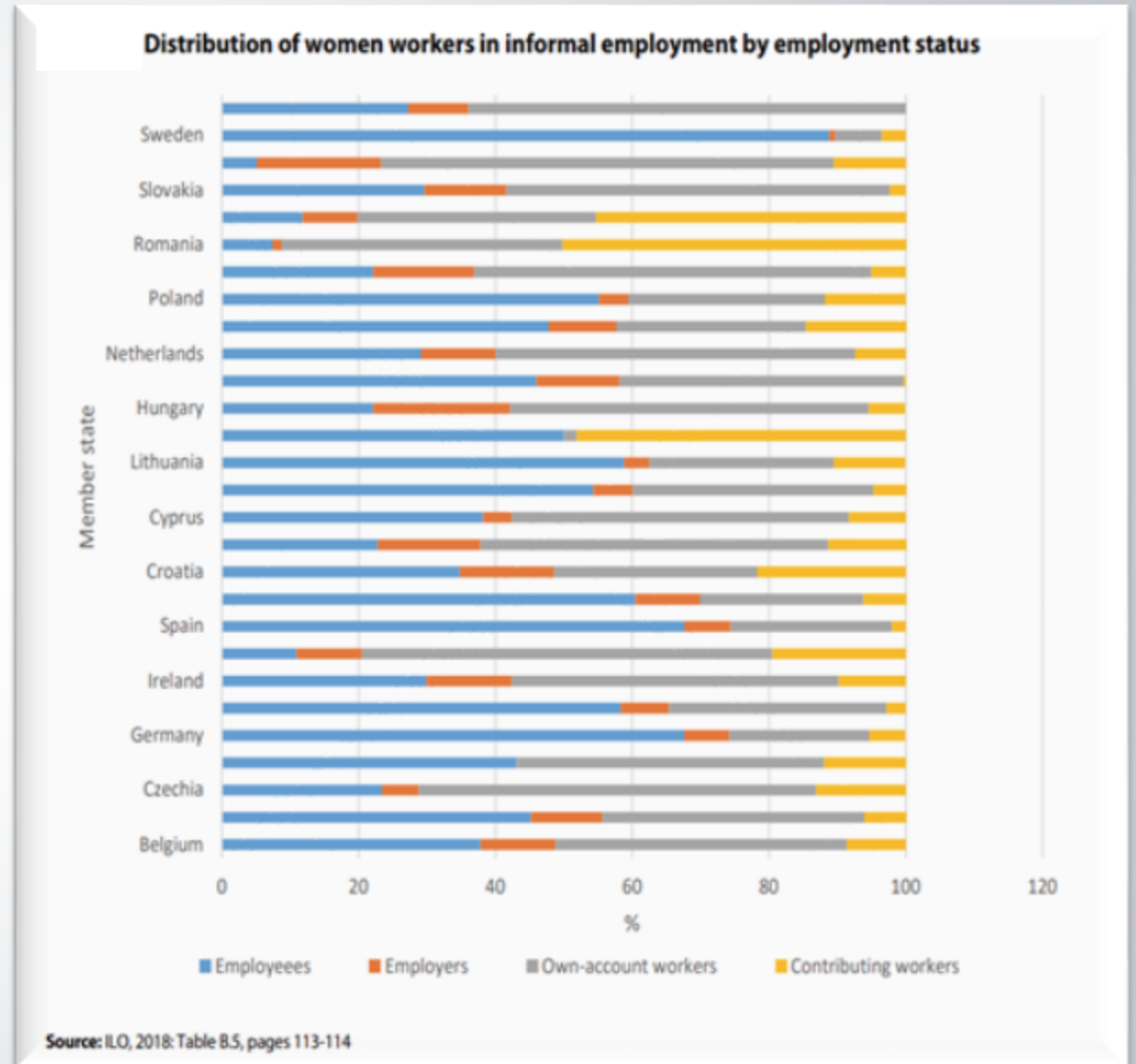
- **Roles for Rural Women**



Agriculture, Creative Industries, Crafts industry,  
Food, Tourism, Hospitality, Care Industry, Retail....

# INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

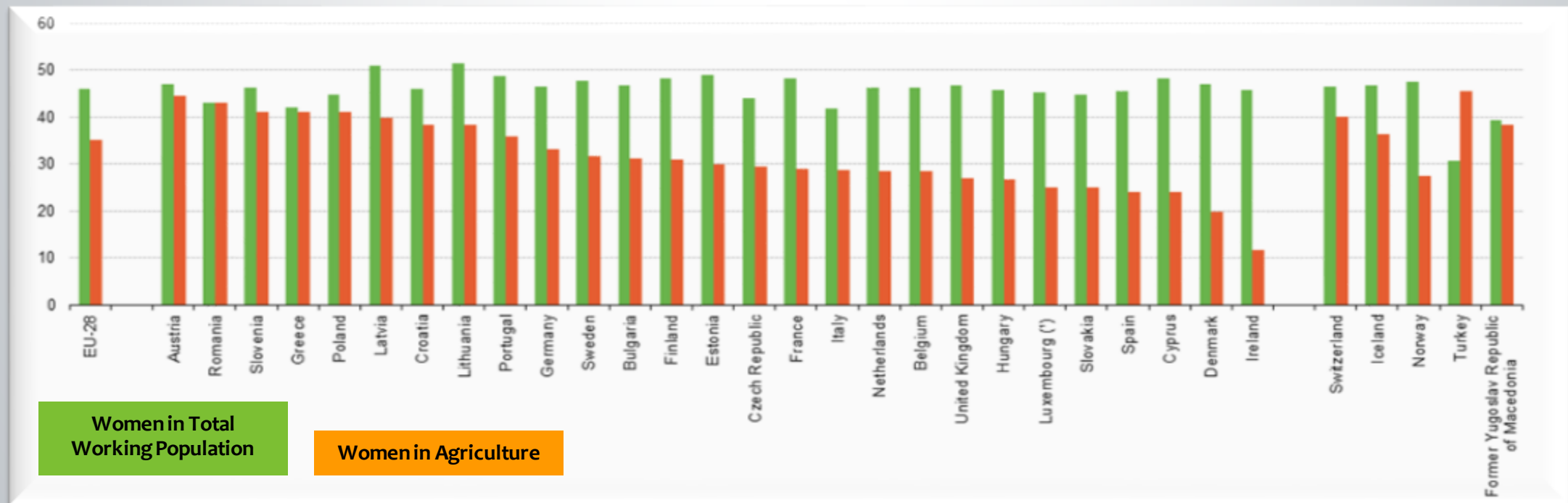
- Employment in the **informal economy** includes:
  - Both those workers who work in **informal sector enterprises** (enterprises that are not officially registered and do not maintain a complete set of accounts)
  - Those workers who **hold informal jobs** (jobs lacking basic social or legal protection and employment benefits).
- The **percentage of women** employed in the informal economy is **higher than the percentage of men** (Franić and Kovačiček, 2019).



# GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT

- **Political debate and operational action:** increased, yet, ‘over the last decade, the share of women’s employment in predominantly rural regions of the EU has **remained at around 45%**’ (Franić and Kovačićek, 2019).

Women in the Total Working Population and in Agriculture, 2016



# AGRICULTURE AND RURAL WOMEN

- **Traditional and idealistic rural roles:** not in agriculture (Dwyer, 2015, Farrell et al., 2017, Shortall, 2018)
- **Female employment:** Agriculture, forestry and fishing in the EU - 34% approx.
- **Yet,** full-time employment (less than 30%) in comparison to part-time jobs (around 52%) About 80% of all part-time jobs in the EU are occupied by women.
- **Key issues in agriculture for women:**
  - Roles not recognised,
  - Masculine industry,
  - Pension issues,
  - Access to land issues,
  - Succession and inheritance issues,
  - Off-farm work often used to support farm income,
  - Driving on-farm diversification

**“Men own 90% of all farmland in Ireland which shows a significant imbalance in property ownership between men and women - you wouldn’t see this imbalance in any other occupation but it exists in farming.”  
(Watson, 2014).**

**“In ladies sport a few years ago, we saw a campaign, “If she can’t see it, she can’t be it”. I think this is exactly what we need to see in the agricultural sector. More media coverage of women in such roles, more participation from women on committees and attendance at various agricultural events will all assist the continuing entrance of women into the sector.” (NRN, 2022).**



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Eurostat (2016): Over 30 million EU inhabitants (15 to 64) are **self-employed** = 14% of total employment.
- **Women in self-employment in rural areas:** 38% with highest share of self-employed women registered in Croatia, Cyprus and Greece.
- **Traditionally:** entrepreneurship considered masculine – particularly in rural areas (Ní Fhlatharta and Farrell, 2017).
- **Managerial Positions:** Shucksmith (2010, p.640) points to **imbalances at higher levels** despite the gender divisions, where women dominate jobs, but “men hold most of the **leadership and management jobs** with those sectors”.
- **Push Factors:** motivated by necessity and well-being (Ní Fhlatharta and Farrell, 2020).

## Barriers:

- Finance
- Access to Land
- Family Support
- Household Responsibilities
- Basic Services
  - Childcare – Part-Time
- Recognition – Invisible Roles



*‘I hear it all the time especially if I need to get something fixed... When I greet them they always ask the same thing; “I can speak to himself?”... It’s patronizing’ (Beth, East) (Ní Fhlatharta and Farrell, 2020).*

# RURAL SERVICES

- **Universal Public Services Investment: imperative** to ensure economic, social and cultural participation of women in rural communities.
- **Include:** Education, healthcare (remote and isolated community health, including maternity care), transport, accommodation, broadband, care services (childcare, elderly care, mental health care...), violence against women... etc.
- **Patch-Work:** women cannot continue to ‘**patch-up**’ universal social and health care in rural areas (**unpaid caregiving**).
- **Essential Rural Services:** can prevent out-migration of women, enhance quality employment opportunities, encourage entrepreneurship, ease rural poverty and much more.....
- **Diversity:** Lived experiences in rural areas can be **socially oppressive** to some women, namely the LGBTQ community, migrants, ethnic, minority backgrounds, disabled etc. Fails to allow people to **express, explore and form their identify - damaging** (Forstie, 2018).

***‘I love rural Ireland and I’m not asking for much to stay here – a good job around my college education, a home of my own, good broadband and a decent cup of coffee – if I can get these, I’m happy to stay...’***  
(Dream Futures - RURALIZATION H2020 Project, 2020)

**I would like to continue living near where I am now but with much improved transport links and local services.**  
(Dream Futures, RURALIZATION H2020 Project)

# REPRESENTATION IN DECISION MAKING

- **Under-Representation of Women in Politics:** EU Parliament from 16.6% in 1979 to 38.9% in 2021 elections – above world average.
- **Huge Diversity:** amongst Member States - two ends of the spectrum....
- **Similar Levels of Diversity:** national, regional and local governance structures
- **Gender balance in Rural Areas:** - even less representation – local government - agricultural decision-making – rural development.
- **Why it Matters:**

## Policy Making.....

- Justice Argument:** 50% population – 50% voice
- Experience Argument:** Women's experiences matter – they are different
- Interest Argument:** Needs are different – so needs need to be articulated
- Critical Mass Argument:** Women can represent the interests of women
- Symbolic Argument:** equality enhances and strengthens democracy

(Shreeves and Prpic, 2019 – Briefing prepared for EU Parliament).

# DIVERSITY OF RURAL WOMEN

Diversity of rural women is not always acknowledged in policy or practice:

- Farmers, farm widows, farm spouses,
- LGBTQI women,
- Older women living on their own,
- Women who have spent their entire adult lives caring for their families or are currently doing so,
- Working class women
- Lone parents,
- Women seeking international protection,
- Migrant workers,
- Women from minority ethnic groups,
- Women operating small businesses,
- Women in full-time, part-time or seasonal employment,
- Traveller and Roma women
- Disabled women
- Young women (NWC, 2021).



# CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES

- Give rural **women a voice** in decision making... - gender quotas, gender proofing....
- **Rural services** can enhance the quality of life of women, thereby enhancing economic, social and cultural aspects of rural life....
- **Support women in agriculture** – policy directions, access to land, advisory services, - by changing the narrative we can meet climate and environmental goals faster....
- **Support women in business** – **make it easier** for females to embrace entrepreneurship..
- Consider **positive discrimination** until women are on a **level playing field**....



# FINAL WORD...RURAL WOMEN...



**"I found it very tough. Farming was so male dominated and I was not very confident. I was very nervous about advocating for our company or being the face of it." (Margaret, 2022)**

**"It would be so great if pursuing farming was more widely encouraged for girls. You always hear "She's so smart she should be a doctor or a lawyer" but wouldn't it be great if we heard "She's so smart she should be a farmer"?" Kylie, 2022)**

**"Innovation is so important to think about especially as women as we are more likely to bring innovations onto farms. They don't have to be things that will totally change your enterprise, they could be really small changes. I've never forgotten what a farmer once told me – if you're standing still you're going backwards because you need to be moving to keep your farm business viable." (Aisling, 2022)**

***"There were no girl roles and boy roles, everyone got stuck in if there was a job to be done. That was a strong influence in my life growing up, we were all equal." (Edna, 2022)***

**"I don't think it makes any difference whether you're male or female if you have the determination to get things done. Determination is that driving force that you need." (Breda, 2022)**

***"As a woman in agriculture it has definitely been a very positive experience. I've seen a lot more women coming back to the farm to do different things and coming up with some exciting new ideas". (Anne Marie, 2022)***

# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: FLIARA

**FLIARA Project Consortium**

The map shows 15 numbered pins across Europe, corresponding to the following consortium members:

Number	Country	Organization
1	Ireland	University of Galway
2	Netherlands	TU Delft
3	Ireland	Teagasc - the Agriculture and Food Development Authority
4	Italy	University of Calabria
5	Ireland	Longford Women's Link
6	Finland	University of Turku
7	Slovenia	University of Ljubljana
8	Spain	Consulta Europa
9	Germany	Eberswalde University
10	Belgium	ELARD
11	Finland	University of Oulu
12	Sweden	Jönköping University
13	Belgium	ECOLISE
14	Czech Republic	Mendel University in Brno
15	Sweden	Linnaeus University



*Thank You!*



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National Rural Network