



**REGIONAL UNION OF FARMING ORGANISATIONS  
IN**

**LITORAL- ECUADOR**

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER ISSUES FOR SMALL  
PRODUCERS IN ECUADOR**



Praga, 16th October 2012

# WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ECUADOR

- According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC), Ecuador has 14,204,900 inhabitants, more than 50% of whom are women.
- During the 1990's women's rights movements made important advances in legislation, including:
  - **The Violence against Women and Families Act(1995)**. This established a governmental organization, which included the creation, organisation and running of police stations for women and families in towns in each of the 21 regions in Ecuador. However, domestic violence and famicide are not classed as criminal acts in Ecuador's penal code.
  - **Employment Protection Act** of 6th February 1997, which encourages employers to hire a minimum percentage of female workers.
  - **The New Constitutional framework (2008)** contains significant progress on women's rights and reproductive rights. One substantial change was that Ecuador was established as a state that respects the rights of its people and guarantees the implementation of the “Buen Vivir Plan”. The Buen Vivir” Plan aims to improve economic, social and living standards in Latin America, including Ecuador.
  - **Progress towards gender equality and the implementation of the Quota Law** between 2002 and 2007, during which the number of **women in authority increased by almost 9 times, from 183 to 1, 634.**
  - Other laws such as the: Popular Economic Act of Solidarity Law, Citizen Participation Law and the Law of Food Security and Sovereignty.

- **Equal Opportunities Plan 2005-2009, declared a public policy by the Ecuadorian state (Presidential decree March 2006).**
- **The National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan** joined the line of action on violence (specifically sexual violence) against women in 2007.
- **The National Plan for the Elimination of Domestic and Gender Violence towards Children, Young Adults and Women (PNEVG)** considers violence as a violation of human rights.

# The National 2009-2013 “Buen Vivir” Plan and the Equal Opportunities Plan

The National 2009-2013 “Buen Vivir” Plan is the result of a focus on constitutional rights. Its 3<sup>rd</sup> objective, “Improving Quality of Life”, includes a national policy promoting sexual and reproductive rights, stronger actions and services in order to guarantee the rights and improve performance levels and the quality of health services.

The plan includes some targets for the year 2013:

- Lower the maternal mortality rate by 35%
- Reduce teenage pregnancy by 25%
- Reduce the mortality rate from AIDS by 25%
- Reduce premature infant mortality rate by 35%
- **Policy 3.4** Provide comprehensive care for women and priority care groups, focussing in gender, generation, family, community and intercultural issues.
- **Objective 9** Refers to the administration of an effective, timely, fair, and adequate independent judiciary system (Senplades 2010).
- The Social Development Coordinator Ministry's Social Agenda highlights the poverty of women and their economic exclusion. It does not, however, recognise them as full citizens or as equals in the law, whereby the state has the unshirkable responsibility of ensuring the rights of man and womankind. The initiative to incorporate female interests in public sector budgets under the “Gender Budgeting” logic should be highlighted.

In November 2010, the National Female and Gender Equality Organisation (**Gender Equality Council**) was created and the compliance to constitutional mandates was guaranteed.

- Female integration in Ministry departments and State department roles has improved and 42.1% (2009-2010) of roles in these sectors are being occupied by women as opposed to 38.2% in 2008.
- 57.1% of advisors at the National Council of Citizen Participation and Civil Control are women.
- The percentage of female workers in the National Court of Justice barely reaches 4.8% whilst female workers at the National Electoral Council account for 40% of employees.

# GENDER ISSUES

- **1 in every 4 women suffers abuse during pregnancy** (Home Office, 2009)
- **62 women were killed by their husband or partner.** (Transition Commission, 2011).
- According to statistics from the Ombudsman (Cabrera 2001), 83,000 women per year suffer some form of physical, psychological or sexual violence in Ecuador. **7000 women are attacked per month and 230 per day.**
- The study on femicide published by the Transition Commission in January 2011, carried out with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID), is the first of its kind. It demonstrates that **Ecuador has a moderate rate of female homicide** in comparison with other countries in the Latin American Region. A growing trend between 2001-2008 show the male homicide rate going from 29 to 33 per 100,00 men whilst the female homicide rate has stayed at around 3 per 100,000 women.
- The **participation of women in main election posts** is worth noting: it reached 43% and conversely, for the already elected roles, female participation barely reached 23%.
- Figures from the National Electoral Council indicate that in these elections women make up 32.3% of the Assembly, 60% of people in Andean Parliament, 8.7% of prefectures, 6.3% of people in City Halls, 28.6% of people in Councils and 21.9% of people in Parish Boards.

- According to 2010 data from the National Plan to Eradicate Violence, propagated by the campaign “Reacciona Ecuador, el machismo es violencia” (React Ecuador, Machismo is violence), the main figures are:
  - 8 out of 10 Ecuadorian women have suffered from physical, psychological or sexual violence
  - 21% of children and adolescents in Ecuador have been sexually abused
  - 64% of female deaths published in newspapers in 2009 were for violence against women. Of these, only 300 cases were sentenced.
  - More than 250, 000 claims of domestic violence have been reported in the last 3 years.

- Violence against women in Ecuador is even more complex among women living in the northern border due to armed conflict, drug trafficking and murder rates (the problem is at its worst when dealing with refugee women, who are strongly discriminated against by stereotypes and social prejudices tied to being a regufee).
- Income poverty in **female-headed houses make up 33.6% of poverty** compared to 32.4% in male-headed households. (Senplades, based on the ENEMDU-210, in Perez, 2011).

## **Inequality in access to employment and income**

- 61% of employed people are men while 39% are women.
- According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) the average salary for men is \$250, whilst the average salary for a woman is \$230, a difference of 28.2% (December 2011).
- This inequality can be seen in each occupational category, both public and private.

# The situation of Female banana producers

## The problems faced by small producers in Ecuador:

- **73.17% of producers are small producers** (1-20 hectares), which equates to approximately 3,500 producers.
- For the past 10 years, the number of small producers has dropped (5000) and they have sold land to large landowners.
- They currently own 55, 600 which represents 24% of the total arable land and 76% of the land is owned by medium and large producers.
- **Instability of prices** in the international market, which mainly affects the small producers, means that, on low seasons, they are paid \$1.50-\$2.00 per box instead of \$5.50 which is the official price.
- **Informal relationships with the trading companies (contract)**
- **Low productivity levels:** From 12 to 20 cases per hectare ,lack of adequate infrastructure, irrigation, problems related to “blood disease” (mancha roja) and sigatoka and poor technical innovation.
- **High production and marketing costs:** Payments to 4 certifiers, small producer seals...
- **Undifferentiated public policy between small and large producers:** high taxes, responsibilities
- **Female producers are at a disadvantage (when it comes to participation in partnerships and tenure):** : land must be owned in a man's name. Legal registration as a banana producer is through a code and membership in an association.
- In Urcal, **14% of female banana producers are trade union members**, of which 7.5% are heads of households. In other unions, female participation is much lower.
- Hereditary gender roles: Male farmers inherit land of higher quality and quantity; women who are housewives inherit land or animals of lesser quality and quantity.

# Working as a Banana Producer



- In majority of the plantations, 90% of the work is carries out by men and 10% by women.
- In UROCAL's family plantation women preform agricultural tasks such as de-flowering, stripping the leaves, cleaning the plants and thinning.

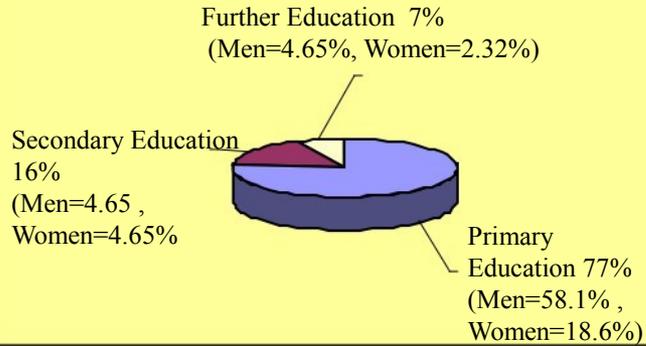
# A higher level of female labour in processing and packaging the fruit



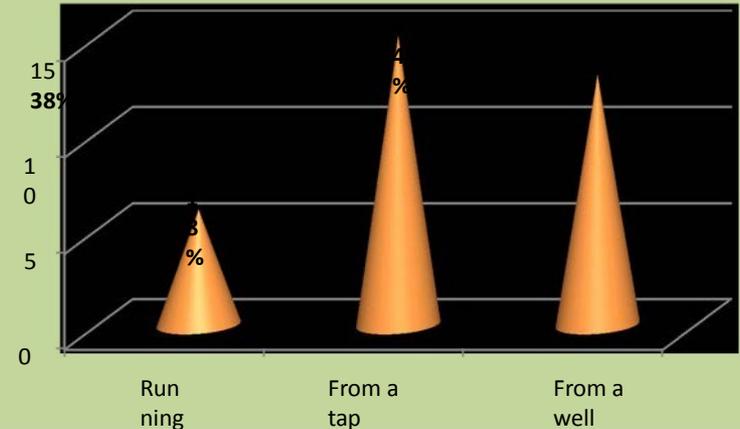
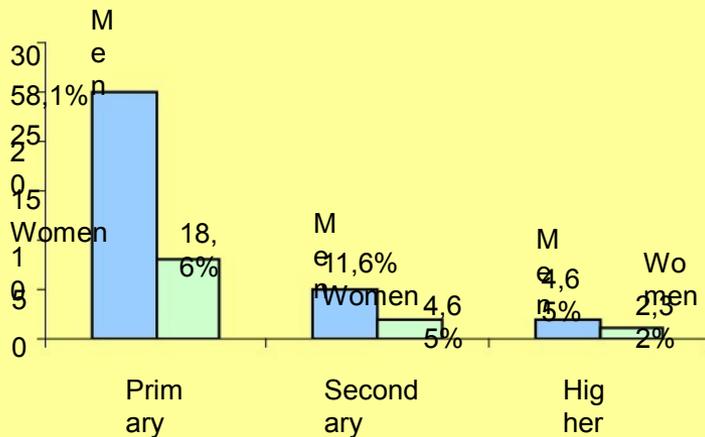
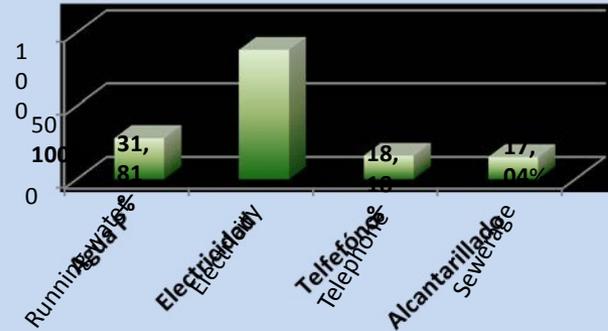
- Currently 18% of UROCAL's work is carried out by casual female labourers (8% by contracted women and 10% by female producers).
- These women carry out tasks such as trimming, washing, weighing, treating the head of the banana, stamping, cardboard glueing, and packaging.

# Social Conditions for UROCAL's Producers

## The producers' Education Level



## Access to Basic Services



# ADVANTAGES OF FAIR TRADE

- The opportunity to enter the market
- Stable prices throughout the year
- Strategic partnership based on solidarity, trust and mutual respect
- More effective and transparent communication between business partners
- Development of competencies and organisational strength, environmental programs, preventative health care programmes and social benefit for workers and producers.
- Economic, social and environmental impact (revenues enhancement, provides access to education for children)

## Limitations:

- Exclusion of women from the banana trade union (legal land)
- Low participation in leadership roles, health and safety programmes, decision-making and programmes to improve revenue.
- A lack of committee especially for women made up of female producers and workers.
- Shortage of resources and support programs



Mònica Bueno, UROCAL  
producer and house hold  
manager



Health  
service



Student bonus for producers and  
workers

# What is UROCAL doing to improve inequalities?

- A gender study done in 2006 showed that 54% of households were found to have issues regarding violence and ignorance.
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- UROCAL designed and approved the institutional Gender Inequality Plan.



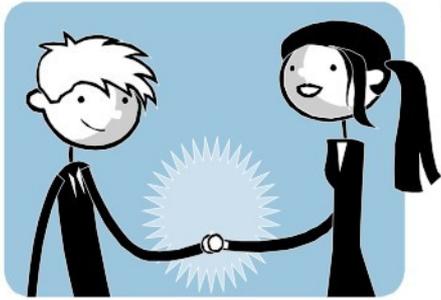
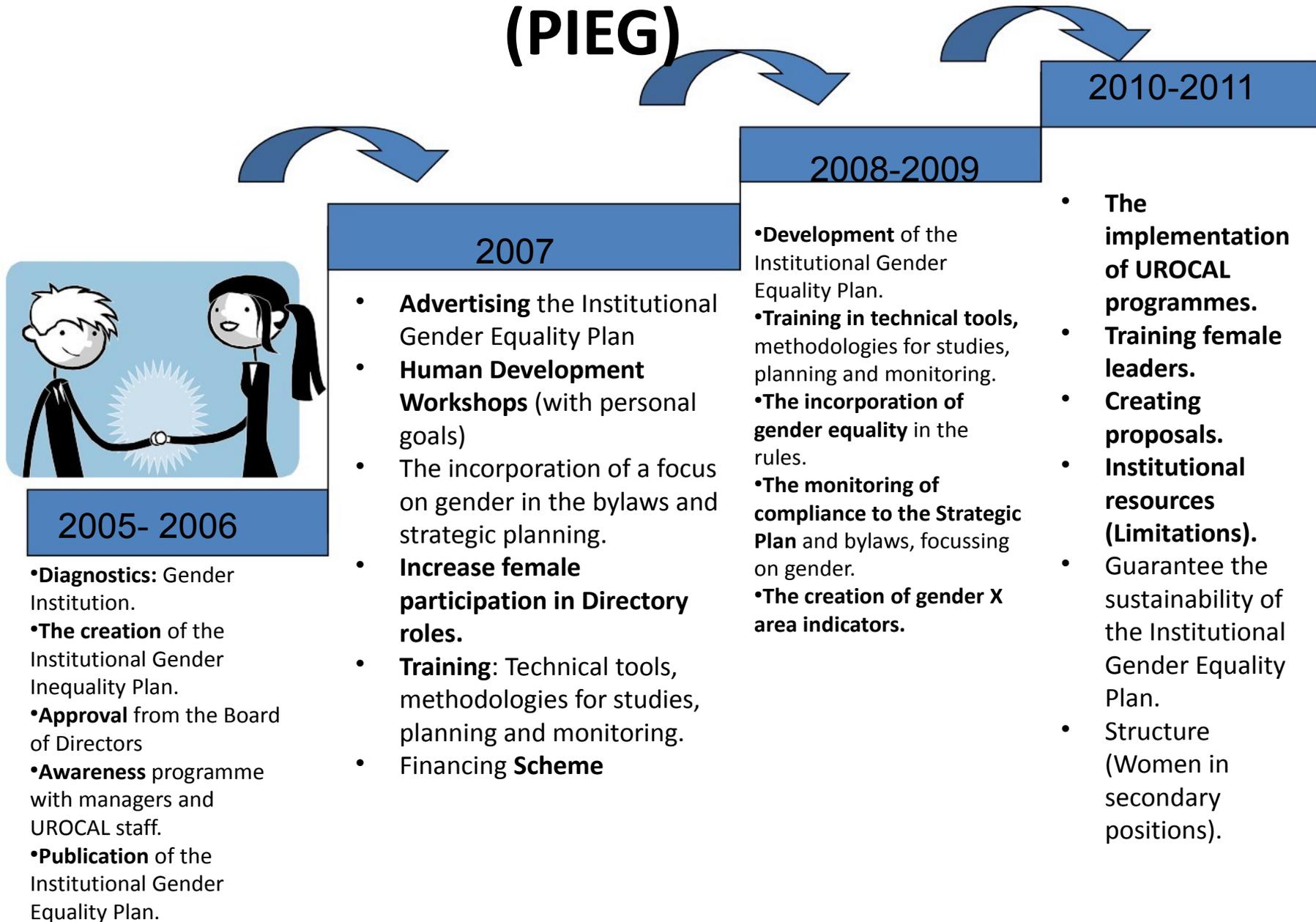
Gender Inequality workshop with banana producers



Designing the Institutional Gender Inequality Plan

# The Institutional Gender Equality Plan

## (PIEG)



- **Awareness** programmes for UROCAL's officials and technical and administrative staff.
- **Promoting female organisations** in the food security and sovereignty/savings and credit fields.



Gender awareness workshop with UROCAL personnel



- **Awareness activities for men and women** (campaigns, discussions etc)



Awareness campaign with producers and workers

# Mobilisation and public discussions (8<sup>th</sup> March and 25<sup>th</sup> November)



Sexual and reproductive health training

Training 2 groups of female leaders  
(project with AECID-ALBERTA Spain)

# The Promotion of Agricultural for Home Consumption and the Local Market



Saving and credit accounts

Food processing training (yogurt, cocoa paste, marmalades and fruit liqueurs)



## Agricultural activities by gender in UROCAL's banana plantations

ACTIVITIES	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
<b>Sowing</b>	x	60%	x	40%
<b>Farming Activities</b>				
<b>Thinning</b>	x	50%	x	50%
Cleaning the shrub	x	50%	x	50%
Stripping the leaves	x	50%	x	50%
Irrigation	x	90%	x	10%
Leaf control	x	5%	x	95%
Packing and taping	x	60%	x	100%
De-budding	x	32%	x	16%
De-flowering		92.5%		7.5%
Propping-up	x	100%		
Shoring	x	100%		
Phytosanitary controls	x	100%		
<b>Harvesting:</b>				
Cutting clusters	x	100%		
Toning the clusters	x	100%		
Stowing	x	90%	X	10%
<b>Post-harvest:</b>				
Trimming	x	95%	X	5%
Chopping	x	50%	X	50%
Washing	x	50%	X	50%
Weighing	x	50%	X	50%
Fumigation	x	30%	X	70%
Vacuuming	x	97%	X	3%
Cardboard glueing	x	40%	X	60%
Drying & capping	x	97%	X	3%
Labelling	x	30%	X	70%
Coding	x	50%	X	50%

ACTIVITY	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
<b>Stewage and transport packaging</b>		100%		0
<b>Palletizing</b>	x	100%		0
<b>Merchandising</b>				
Payment	x	91%	X	9%
Desision maker for expenses	x	90%	X	10%
Farm Data inputting	x	64%	X	36%
<b>Farm Accounting</b>	x	68%	X	32%

## Domestic Activities

ACTIVITY	MEN	%	WOMEN	%
Food preparation	x	25%	x	75%
Cleaning the House	x	52%	x	100%
Looking after children			x	100%
Food Shopping		45%	x	90%
Clothes washing	x	24%	x	100%
Washing up	x	56%	x	90%
Help with School work	x	16	x	95%
Looking after the garden	x	5%	x	95%
Health care	x	60%	x	100%
Rest/Recreation	x	32%	x	16%
Head of household		92,5%		7.5%