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**REGIONAL AFRICA
LEATHER AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY SCHEME**

US/RAF/92/200/11-10

REPORT*

on the

***Workshop on Gender Development in the
Leather Industry***

**Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
27 September 1994**

*based on the work of Ms. Hope Chigudu
Women-in-Development Expert*

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INTRODUCTION

The programme US/RAF/88/100, Regional Hides and Skins, Leather and Leather Products Improvement Scheme and US/RAF/92/100, Regional Africa Leather and Footwear Industry Footwear Scheme are under implementation in 10 associated country projects.

One of the objectives of the scheme is the enhancement of the status of women in the leather sector.

The Women-in-Development Expert was recruited in 1991, and was attached to the Africa programme. Her first task was to analyse women's employment patterns in the leather industry in the countries participating in the programmes. She then identified constraints to the employment of women in the leather industry and women's training needs.

The project has addressed women's needs by organising training courses for them and creating gender awareness in the leather industry.

It has been realised however, that women's problems are diverse and interrelated and the solutions need to be multifaceted. In view of this, the project decided to take an approach which combines different methodologies, instruments, means and attitudes in an attempt to bring about changes. This is important especially as most planners, industrialists and policy makers are not gender sensitive and are thus not able to incorporate gender into all their activities. The situation is exacerbated by cultural biases which in effect bar thinking and planning with a gender perspective. It can, therefore, never be the responsibility of a single agency to tackle the problems of inequality in the leather industry.

Country workshops are therefore, organised so as to engage across section of relevant development agencies in a dialogue with the aim of coming up with strategies for enhancing the situation of women in the leather industry.

The Tanzania workshop was held at the *Hotel Starlight* in Dar-es-Salaam city.

The National Expert, Mr. Massay, welcomed all participants to the workshop. He then introduced the UNIDO Country Director, Mr. A. Krassiakov, his colleagues Mr. Muyinga, UNIDO programme officer, Mr. Akim and Ms. Chigudu the Women-in-Development Expert.

Other participants introduced themselves after which Mr. Millinga of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry was chosen as the chairperson for the workshop.

The workshop participants did not make any alterations to the programme. (see annex 1)

The workshop was attended by 22 participants drawn from various organisations and government ministries. (see annex 4 for the list of participants.)

THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was officially opened by the UNIDO country Director, Mr. Krassiakov. In his opening remarks, Mr. Krassiakov said that the enhancement of the status of women in the leather sector is one of the objectives of the project and is in line with UNIDO's medium-term plan of 1994-98.

Mr. Krassiakov informed the participants that the workshop aimed at discussing strategies for enhancing the status of women in the leather industry.

He emphasized the role of women in development, and hence the need to develop the capabilities of both men and women as inseparable and integral parts of the human resource base of the industry.

He wished the participants fruitful deliberations and declared the workshop open.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS PRESENTED

Mr. Massay, National Expert, UNIDO leather project

Mr. Massay gave an account of the background of the UNIDO project on hides and skins, leather and leather products improvement scheme, (US/RAF/88/100). He enumerated some of the activities undertaken by the project since its inception. He, in particular, outlined the activities of the project in terms of gender and development issues. In conclusion, he reminded the participants that the workshop marked the beginning of various follow up activities in the important subject of gender and development in the leather industry. The paper is presented in full text in annex 3

Ms. Chigudu, Women-in-Development Expert, UNIDO leather project

Ms. Chigudu argued that women are a very important resource that must be developed and used for the benefit of the country's development. She said that it was evident that in Tanzania women play important roles in the different areas of development. She argued that women's participation in the economic sector is negatively affected by numerous cultural, social, economic political and legal barriers.

Ms. Chigudu gave an overview of the participation of women in the leather industry. She then presented the Zimbabwe case study on the enhancement of women in the leather industry. Ms. Chigudu hoped that there were lessons which Tanzania could emulate. Her paper is presented in full in annex 3

Mr. Masemele, Regional Hides and Skins Improvement Officer, Shinyanga Region

Mr. Masemele indicated that women participate in hides and skins programmes in the Shinyanga region.

There are two hides and skins Improvement Officers.

The few women have been provided with bicycles for extension work.

In the past workshops no efforts were made to recruit women.

More funds are needed to enable women to participate in hides and skins improvement programmes.

Mr. Majala, Regional Hides Skins and Improvement Officer, Mwanza Region

Women's participation in hides and skins improvement is limited as compared to the men.

At the moment, there are only two women extension workers in the region, two women butchers and 4 women involved in hides and skins trade.

Problem: lack of awareness, some women do not realise that they can participate in hides and skins activities. When farmers are invited for demonstration programmes, the assumption is that a farmer is a man.

Ms. F. Rweyamamu, a woman entrepreneur

Ms. Rweyamamu, summarised her experience as a woman entrepreneur. She discussed the problems that her enterprise was facing. Ms. Rweyamamu thanked UNIDO for sending her to India for training.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

After the papers were presented, a general discussion followed.. Some of the major issues raised during the discussions are summarised in annex 2

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In the afternoon the participants were split in two groups. Each groups discussed strategies for enhancing the status of women in the leather industry. The group convened into a plenary to present the strategies. The strategies were presented in the form of recommendations.

CLOSING

The chairperson summarised major points raised. He thanked everybody for participating. He, in particular, thanked two participants who had travelled all the way from *Mwanza* and *Shinyanga* to attend the meeting. He hoped that gender issues would continue to get serious attention especially in the Ministries of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Industry and Trade. He thereafter called on Ms. Chigudu to officially close the workshop.

Ms. Chigudu, on behalf of UNIDO, thanked all the participants for their contribution to the workshop. She said that the exchange of information and views at the workshop would help all concerned to incorporate gender in their programmes. She thanked the two UNIDO national experts for the excellent preparatory work in organising the workshop. She also thanked the chairperson for the efficient way in which he conducted the workshop. Ms. Chigudu observed that most of the recommendations were of practical nature and could actually be implemented immediately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS
Efforts should be made to ensure that women are involved in hides and skins improvement programmes.	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, UNIDO Leather Project.
Training at tertiary and field levels should emphasise the role of women in hides and skins improvement activities.	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, UNIDO Leather Project
Women involved in hides and skins trade and those who would like to be involved should be given a relevant information and training.	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, UNIDO Leather Project
Influential people, especially at district level, should be used to create awareness to the role of women in hides and skins improvement activities.	Ministry of Agriculture, District Community Development Officers
The revolving fund should be used to improve women's activities in the leather industry	Leather Association and UNIDO
In all leather related workshops/ seminars gender should be put on the agenda. This is one way of ensuring that industrialists who normally do not attend workshops on gender issues get a chance to appreciate the importance of gender issues in the leather industry	UNIDO, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Arrangement should be made to hold at least one day workshops with women employees to sensitize them to their role in their places of work. Such workshops should also be used to expose women employee to various planning methods.	NGOs, UNIDO Leather Project, Ministry of Women
A footwear training workshop should be organised for women in this sub-sector	UNIDO Leather Project, Leather Association
Electronic media and other channels of communication should be used to disseminate information on the leather industry so that all women who wish to enter the sector can do so from an informed point of view.	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Leather Association, UNIDO Leather project

Women who would like to enter the leather industry should be assisted to write acceptable project proposals and to carry out feasibility studies.	NGOS, Leather Associations, Min. Of Industry and Trade
Various incentive schemes should be introduced to encourage women employees to reduce or minimise the rate of absenteeism.	The Leather industry, the Leather Association.
A workshop should be held in a years' time to review progress made.	Ministry of Industry and Trade, Agriculture, Livestock, Leather Association and UNIDO leather project

PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

OPENING REMARKS

PAPER PRESENTED BY MR. MASSEY. NATIONAL EXPERT, UNIDO LEATHER PROJECT

TEA BREAK

PAPER PRESENTED BY H. CHIGUDU, WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT EXPERT, UNIDO LEATHER PROJECT.

LUNCH

PAPERS PRESENTED BY TWO HIDES AND SKINS IMPROVEMENT OFFICERS

PAPER PRESENTED BY MS. RWEYAMAMU, A WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

GROUP DISCUSSION

PLENARY

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

ISSUES RAISED

- * It was observed that men outnumbered women in a workshop discussing women's status in the leather industry. This, it was noted, was a healthy sign because the only way of changing societal attitudes is to continue to invite men to participate in such workshops.
- * Men own animals and they slaughter them. However, in the majority of cases, in the rural areas, women and children are the ones who rear animals on men's behalf. Hides and skins improvement programmes will therefore not be successful without the women's active participation.
- * Participants to the workshop wondered if men really understand why women should be trained in their own right to take care of the animals. Other questions raised: In the target areas, have men ever been educated to appreciate the role of women in improving the quality of hides and skins? Do women know the importance of good hides and skins? Why does the programme target men when it is women who rear the animals?
- * There is need to carefully identify districts where livestock is mostly taken care of by women.
- * What has the project achieved in terms of enhancing the status of women in the leather industry in Tanzania?
- * It seems that the training offered within the project has so far emphasised the technical aspect; general management seems to have been ignored.
- Response: The project is limited by financial constraints.

Feasibility studies indicated that the main constraints were in the area of technical skills and the wearing down of machineries. To provide managerial training was not a priority of the project.

Nevertheless, in the case of women, any technical training incorporates a managerial training component.
- * It was observed that in tanneries women's performance is no less than that of men. In the footwear sub-sector, women are good stitchers. There is no reason why women should not be employed in all the sub-sectors of the leather sector.
- * Liberty shoe company employs 60 % women. The women have shown big potential though their rate of absenteeism is high due to their reproductive role.
- * There is need to have more women entrepreneurs like Ms. Rweyamamu. Such women will create awareness among other women to their potential in the leather industry

- * The leather project should seek advice from other U.N. organisations like UNICEF on how to integrate gender issues in the sector.
- * Use the Zimbabwe experience to demonstrate what women can do in the leather industry.
- * Gender issues should be regarded as developmental issues and not just something that should be left to women.
- * Societal attitude can change and they do change. For example in the early colonial days, all secretaries were men. Women, except Europeans, were not allowed to drive cars. The situation has now changed and this is proof that gender roles can change and do change.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Opening Remarks by Mr. Krassiakov, UNIDO Country Director, DAR

The Regional Africa Hides and Skins, Leather and Leather Products Improvement Scheme started in 1989. A special contribution for the Women-in-Development Expert was made in 1990 by the government of Germany.

Enhancement of the status of women is one of the objectives of the project and this is in line with UNIDO's long-term plan, 1994-95. The policy states that;

"Any policies and measures addressing the development of the manufacturing sector must take into account the crucial role that the female industrial workforce assumes both for economic and industrial progress for the achievement of social development objectives...."

The objective of the UNIDO programme for the integration of women in industrial development is to enhance the contribution of women to the industrialisation process of developing countries and enable them to participate on an equal basis in industrial decision making and the benefits of development.

During UNIDO's medium-term plan;

"UNIDO will ensure that women are fully integrated in technical cooperation and promotional activities as well as in policy study and research programmes and that they are equal beneficiaries especially in projects related to small scale and agro-industries as well as to the development of appropriate technologies and human resources"

Considering the role that women play in development, the importance of a project like this cannot be over-exaggerated. It is important to note that the capabilities of both men and women are inseparable and integral parts of the human resources base of the industry.

It is for this reason that UNIDO decided to hold this workshop to discuss the strategies for enhancing the status of women in the leather industry. It is hoped that the participants in this workshop will be able to debate various ways of not only enhancing the status of women employees in the leather industry but also of disseminating information to women entrepreneurs so as to enable them to enter the leather industry.

I wish you successful deliberations.

Thank you.

Paper presented by F. Rweyamamu; Pelly's Enterprise

I would first of all like to thank UNIDO for the training I received in Zimbabwe and India. The training exposed me to leather making technologies and processes.

Unfortunately, I have so far not been able to utilise the training I received because of the following reasons:

- Lack of proper equipment such as splitting and skiving machines makes it impossible for my business to produce adequately both in terms of quality and quantity.
- Lack of raw materials: I import my leather from Kenya. This, it is hoped, is a problem which will be solved when all tanneries in the country start producing leather.
- Communication: it is a real problem to communicate both externally and internally. It is impossible to get orders at the proper time and to communicate with leather producing factories and customers because I do not have a telephone.
- Inability to secure a loan from financial institutions.

MY ENTERPRISE

My enterprise is situated along Morogoro Rd. in the suburbs of Dar-Es-Salaam City. The enterprise employs six workers five of whom are women. I made a deliberate effort to employ women after my courses in Zimbabwe and India. I find that women are active, they cooperate and do not mind being corrected.

CONCLUSION

I have gained a lot from the UNIDO leather project and the women that I employed have also benefitted indirectly. However in order for me to utilise the knowledge gained, I need hand tools and machineries.

I would as well like to ask relevant organisations attending this workshop to help women like us to secure loans from financial institutions.

I thank you very much for inviting me to attend this workshop.

**REPORT ON UNIDO REGIONAL AFRICA LEATHER PROJECT BY S.W. MASSAY
NATIONAL EXPERT - US/URT/91/110, DAR ES SALAAM, SEPTEMBER, 1994**

INTRODUCTION

The UNIDO Project on Hides and Skins, Leather and Leather Products Improvement Scheme largely resulted from the Regional Meeting on Leather and Leather Products Industry in Africa held in Alexandria, Egypt, January 1987 as realization of the objectives of the Industrial Decade for Africa. As a result of this meeting UNIDO was required to prepare a scheme for integrated sectoral approach in collaboration with FAO and seek the required funds for its implementation. Consequently UNIDO prepared the necessary study and documentation which resulted into the launching of the Regional Hides and Skins, Leather and Leather Products Improvement Scheme (US/RAF/88/100) with the associated national country projects in Eastern

and Southern Africa Region starting from Ethiopia, Sudan Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Recently, Uganda, Botswana and Namibia have been added in the list of recipients of the assistance.

In case of Tanzania, the first phase of the project coded US/URT/88/100 was implemented from July 1989 to June 1992 and the second phase of it US/URT/91/110 started from July 1992 to date.

The Project is administered from the Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya where the Chief Technical Adviser is based and in each country the National Experts are responsible for the coordination and implementation of project activities while reporting directly to the Chief Technical Adviser. There are several International Experts working under the CTA in various fields in hides and skins leather and leather products industry who are fielded on specific missions in respective countries according to requirements and programmes.

This project is being funded by donor countries which include Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Japan etc.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE PROJECT

Since its inception the project has implemented various programmes on regional and national basis in areas such as provision of equipment, training, technical assistance and consultancy. At this session, it may not be possible to enumerate all the activities undertaken by the project but the salient feature can be exemplified as follows:-

(a) PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT

Under the first phase of the project US/URT/88/100 equipment for hides and skins improvement in the selected target region of Shinyanga was provided including - motor vehicles for transportation of hides and skins:

- Vehicles for senior hides and skins improvement officers.
- Motor cycles and bicycles for extension staff.
- Funds for rehabilitation of slaughter facilities in urban and rural areas.
- Equipment such as knives, hide pullers.
- Chemicals for preservation of hides and skins.

With regard to the tanneries and leather products industries some machineries and spare parts were provided to the following recipients:

- Former Morogoro Tannery
- Afro Leather Industry
- Morogoro Leather Goods Factory.
- Shah Industries

Under the Second Phase US/URT/91/110 the selected target region is Mwanza where the same equipment and facilities as mentioned for Shinyanga were provided by the Project.

Factories which received equipment included.

- Afro Leather Industry
- Morogoro Leather Goods
- Twins Leather Goods
- Tanzania Leather Industry (former Morogoro Tannery).
- Africa Tanneries (former Mwanza Tannery).

(b) **TRAINING**

Training was provided throughout the two phases in terms of seminars, on the job training and fellowships as follows:-

- Tannery Machinery Maintenance Seminar in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for 5 days in October 1990 attended by 36 participants from the region including 3 from Tanzania.
- Hides and Skins Seminar in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 5 days Nov 1990, 33 participants, Tanzania 2.
- Leather Tanning and Finishing Seminar Nairobi, April, 1991, 10 days 45 participants Tanzania 5.
- Pollution Control in Leather Industry Seminar Nairobi, June 1992, 5 days 54 participants, Tanzania 5.
- Leather Goods Technology workshop, Morogoro, 3 weeks March/April 1992, 16 participants, Tanzania 5.
- Leather Goods Workshop for Women in Bulawayo, 3 weeks March 1993, 14 participants, Tanzania 2.
- Shoe Designing and Pattern Making Workshop, Bulawayo, October 1993, 12 participants, Tanzania 1.
- Hides and Skins Improvement Seminar, Morogoro, June 1994, 5 days 45 participants, Tanzania 7.

Fellowship courses included the following:-

- Leather Goods Technology in UK for 9 months candidate from Shah Industries.
- Leather Goods Technology in Italy for 6 months-3 candidates from Morogoro Leather Goods and Bora 1993.
- Leather Technology course, Zimbabwe for 3 months from KAJ - 1993.
- Leather Goods Technology, India for 4 months- A woman private entrepreneur 94
- Footwear Technology, Czech Republic 6 months a woman private entrepreneur 1994.

On the job training was provided by project experts in tanning, machinery maintenance, footwear and leather goods technology, marketing and effluent treatment through field missions covering weeks or months according to indicated needs in plants such as Shah Industries, Twins Leather Goods, Morogoro Leather Goods, Mwanza Tannery, Morogoro Tannery, G and T shoes Company, Liberty Shoes, Pelly's Enterprise.

As a result of the training provided by UNIDO during the project period, it is evident that significant achievement has been realized in the following areas:-

- Increased quality and quantity of production.
- improved level of skills
- Exposure to and integration with counterparts and experiences in outside countries.
- Increased work morale.

(c) **GENDER DEVELOPMENT**

Although Gender Development was not included in the initial Project Document it has been one of the major components after the Funding of this aspect was obtained from the Government of Germany.

So far significant work has been done in terms of collection of data on women employment in leather industry, status and role of women, their potentialities and constraints, gender sensitization and strategies for women development. All this has been achieved through recruitment of Women-in-Development Expert as one of the International Experts of the Projects.

Several field missions have been undertaken by the expert throughout the region including five visits to Tanzania during which various aspects of gender development were discussed with relevant government authorities, leather institutions and industries and other related non-government organisations.

Also seminars and meetings on the subject have been organized and held in the countries covered by the project, including a Regional Workshop on Gender and Development held in Malawi from 7th to 10th March, 1994 which was attended by 3 participants from Tanzania.

The workshop being held today is a follow up to the Regional Workshop and is expected to be the beginning of various follow-up activities in the important subject of Gender Development in Leather Industry.

GENDER DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY: THE ZIMBABWE CASE STUDY: PAPER PRESENTED AT A WORKSHOP ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY 27.09.94 IN DAR ES SALAAM BY HOPE CHIGUDU

INTRODUCTION

Women make up half the population and are thus a very important human resource that must be developed and used for the benefit of the country's development. Nevertheless, this has not always been the case. For example in Tanzania in 1990/92 labour force survey, of the total 933,358 in paid employment, only 230,423 were females (24.7%). This shows how females are not given equal opportunities as males in terms of paid employment. Here one could be right in stating that females are segregated when it comes to jobs of a higher status. Majority of the females are found in very inferior jobs.

The materials, equipment, and tools used by women for economic activity are generally traditional, available within or around the household with little or no cash outlay, requiring labour intensive methods of production. Such equipment yield poor returns. Without capital and know how, there are no alternatives to traditional technology. In rural areas land, cattle and property are owned and inherited by men. Land rights allocations are made to heads of households who are usually men.

Women's productive and effective utilisation of their own labour are conditioned by the level of their education and skill, availability of their own labour (time) for productive work and their physical (health) condition. Lack of time and multiple roles assumed at an early age also prevent skill acquisition through formal training.

Women entrepreneurs have limited access to markets due to lack of contacts resulting from social norms which restrict women's movement since most of their enterprises are operated at home. The undeveloped informal sectors where most women are to be found, do not provide opportunities easy access for women and women's groups to be subcontracted by well established industries.

It is disappointing to note that women are still accorded a low status despite the fact that in 1961, immediately after independence, President J. Nyerere declared that all Tanganyikans were equal irrespective of gender.

Women in the manufacturing industry

In the last two decades the proportion of women in the manufacturing industry has increased. With the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, increase in poverty, land degradation more and more women in Africa are looking for paid employment in the manufacturing industry. For most women, such an employment has ceased to be a matter of choice, but rather as a strategy for survival.

Working in industry in a formal sector is perceived by women as a better alternative than say working in domestic service or the informal sector. Income and job opportunities are often better in established industries.

Despite women's contribution to development, most development agencies have continued to take a welfare approach in tackling women's problems. The approaches have failed to address the patriarchal and social structures that perpetuate the subordination of women both in the public and private domains.

As Africans prepare for yet another women's decade meeting, this time in Beijing, it is still clear that most of the programmes remain gender blind. There is hardly any data on the actual situation of women in the manufacturing industry. The leather project is thus significant in the sense that it is one of the few that has examined the situation of women in the manufacturing industry.

1.1 Gender Perspectives

Before discussing the situation of women in the leather industry, it is important to discuss the importance of gender perspectives in the labour market. Labour market inequalities and segregation tend to reflect cultural labour market patterns and stereotype which are present in a given society.

Historically, the concern of women in development was based on the realisation of the heavy cost of neglecting or even undermining women's roles in the development process. Women comprise the majority of the poor and the economically and socially disadvantaged in most societies. They also suffer from gender based hierarchies and subordination. Yet women in most societies are responsible for nutrition and health of their families.

Thus if planners do not have a clear understanding of gender differences in a given society, development programmes many have unexpected results.

For example, there is an assumption that a man is always the bread winner in a home. Apart from this statement being inarticulate, in the sense that there are many women headed households, few men make enough money to provide enough bread for wives and children. Women and children therefore continue to survive by trying to scratch out an existence in the country side. This keeps women impoverished and powerless.

Thus gender roles are those which are ascribed to a particular sex by custom and tradition, although the roles could be performed by either sex. On the other hand, sex roles are biological, this would include functions like breast feeding and child rearing.

Engendering, therefore, means accepting a perspective which recognises that if gender is socially constructed it can also be deconstructed. There are many examples of women taking over jobs in factories during the second world war when the men had gone to fight in the war and so radically changing the gender roles, in their societies.

Women's sex and reproductive roles mean that their participation in the labour market is often volatile and interrupted by responsibilities of child rearing, attending to sick family and so on. But as family patterns change with more and more families being female headed households, there is a growing need for women to enter the labour market in order to meet their cash needs.

As many employers in the leather industry indicate, some women employees are constrained in various ways on account of their productive and reproductive roles. However a manager who ignores the fact that men and women may bring different constraints and skills to their work situation as a result of gender roles that they play in the wider society will be missing a very critical variable in his/her production related programmes.

2.0 WOMEN IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY

2.1 General information

According to UNIDO medium term plan, 1994-1999:

"Any policies and measures addressing the development of the manufacturing sector must take into account the crucial role that the female industrial work force assumes both for economic and industrial progress for the achievement of social development objectives.

The objective of the UNIDO programme for the integration of women in industrial development is to enhance the contribution of women to the industrialisation process of developing countries, and enable them to participate on an equal basis in industrial decision making and the benefits of development.

During the period UNIDO will ensure that women are fully integrated in technical cooperation and promotional activities as well as in policy study and research programmes and that they are equal beneficiaries especially in projects related to small scale and agro-based industries as well as development of appropriate technologies and human resources."

In keeping with the UNIDO gender plan, the UNIDO leather Unit in its programme, *Hides and Skins, Leather and Leather Products Improvement Scheme, and Regional Africa Leather and Footwear Industry Scheme, and National Country projects* include the integration of women in the leather industry as one of the objectives. The programme covers ten countries Uganda included.

The leather industry is composed of several sub-sectors namely;

Hides and skins production

tanneries

footwear and leather goods construction

Below is a summary of women's participation in each of these sub-sectors.

(a) Hides and Skins production:

Slaughter, removal of hides and skins, fleshing and preparation of raw materials for cure is heavy work generally. In most abattoirs in Zimbabwe this work is done by men. It is claimed that it is heavy work which requires male muscles. Anyone who has observed African women on lengthy tracks carrying heavy loads of firewood cannot help seeing how arbitrary the indicators of strength are. In the rural areas in Zimbabwe, where in most cases, men have migrated to towns, women do assist particularly during fleshing. It has been observed that women tend to be more careful and thorough during hides removal and fleshing operations, and in the application of salt to the surface of prepared hides. As a result raw materials suffer less damage from through cuts. Penetration of preserving salt tends to be more uniform with better quality hides production and increased hide value.

Both private merchants who buy hides in the communal lands, and the major urban abattoirs, preserve hides in a shed prior to sale to tanners. Tanners again store bought hides until they are needed for production. Work in hides sheds is male dominated. However, there are some hide merchants in Botswana who employ only women with success. According to one merchant, women do not get drunk and hence do not absent themselves as often as men.

(b) Tanneries

Few women are employed in tanneries in tasks from soaking through to finished leather. However, in Zimbabwe, in one tannery, a woman was employed in the wet section responsible for soaking, liming and wet blue operation. All these involve heavy manual work. The woman in question has now won a scholarship to study leather science in Britain.

In the Sudan, one of the few tanneries employs 143 women and 57 men. The manager in this tannery had no problems concerning the women's efficiency.

In Zambia, the Small Enterprise Development Corporation employs a woman professional tanner.

There is then no reason why women should not be employed in tanneries and particularly so in drying and finishing sections where the work calls for care and attention to detail rather than muscle. Also education and academic/technical training-areas in which women have long suffered disabilities, are not essential requirements: practical experience and care are the criteria.

(c) Footwear and leather Goods Construction

In this sub-sector there is a reasonable number of women employees. For example in Ethiopia, in six footwear factories, there's a total of 2314 male employees and 1742 female employees. In the Sudan, there is a footwear plant which employs only women in sewing and closing sections. On the other hand in Malawi, in footwear factories, there is a total of 318 male employees and only 8 women employees.

In the leather goods subsector, in Ethiopia, women predominate at least in number. In one leather goods subsector, there were 204 women employees and only 44 men. On the other hand in all the leather goods factories visited in Malawi, until two years ago, there were no women. The most recent development in Malawi was the setting up of a leather goods manufacturing factory where 50% of the employees are women, thanks to the UNIDO leather project. The factory obtained equipment with the assistance of UNIDO on condition that it would employ at least this proportion of women.

In Zimbabwe, in eight leather goods and footwear factories, there was a total of 1116 men and only 24 women a year ago. The situation has now changed as will be explained shortly.

Much as it is true that there are very few women with technical skills, that does not explain why so few women are employed at the shop floor. Work such as pattern cutting, sewing and stitching, attachment of soles and heels and many other routine tasks can be performed by women if they were trained on the job. After all most men are trained on the job.

The footwear and leather goods sub-sectors at production floor level could be opened to women workers. Many operations in the footwear and leather goods sector; sewing and stitching of upper leather for example, are ones in which women probably perform better than

men and learn more quickly because most have been taught to use a sewing machine at school or at home. Although work on the shop floor is not accorded high status and is not well paid, it would give women a chance to earn an income on a regular basis.

When employment patterns in the leather industry are examined, it is that the division of labour in the leather industry has relegated large numbers of women to poverty and have given them few options for earning a living. Even when women are employed, they are located in lower paid and less skilled jobs.

Although the above information is from a few selected factories, the situation of women in all the other leather factories in all the countries involved in the project is no better.

There are many constraints and obstacles (identified by employers) to women's employment in the leather industry but they cannot be discussed within the confines of this report. Suffice to say that most reasons given by both employees and the women themselves indicate that attribution of specific characteristics to women and men persistently undervalue women as employees in the leather industry.

ENHANCING THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY: THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE

Mid 1993, the Royal Embassy of Denmark in Harare expressed an interest in funding the gender component of the UNIDO leather project for a period of two years. The funding started in September 1993.

Overall, the project aims at uplifting the economic status of women by enhancing their status in the leather industry.

3.1 PROJECT OUTPUTS

The following are the expected outputs of the project:

1. Well informed government authorities and private sector associations and a set of guidelines and recommendations on the gender issues.
2. Qualified and well trained women with various employable skills in different sub-sectors of the leather industry
3. Up to date data on the present status of Zimbabwean women in the sector, their prospects and opportunities for further development at the national level. Information material in the form of a report summarising the present status and actions for improvements.
4. Upgraded production facilities and improved performance of at least one leather goods factory managed by a woman.

3.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

Output number 1:

In February, a workshop was held to discuss strategies for enhancing the situation of women in the leather industry. The workshop drew participants from the University, trade unions, the leather industry, women's organisations and government ministries.

The workshop came up with recommendations and guidelines for enhancing the status of women in the leather industry. These have been disseminated to all relevant organisations. Since the workshop, there has been continual dialogue with both government and leather industry representatives.

Output 2:

- (a) A leather goods construction course was held in Bulawayo, at the Leather Institute of Zimbabwe. The course was attended by twelve women and was facilitated by an international expert. Most of the women were from a women's leather cooperative in Bulawayo. The same women are to be provided with simple equipment on a revolving fund loan basis.
- (b) A Harare footwear plant agreed to train six women, most of them single mothers, in upper closing and stitching for a period of four months. The training is now finished and the women have been employed by the same company.
- (c) A Bulawayo footwear plant also agreed to train a group of women for a period of two months in footwear closing. The training is now over and plans for training in other operations are under way. The course is now complete and the same women are being sub-contracted by the same company to make shoe uppers. The women are now providing 120 pairs of stitched uppers per day for a local factory utilising the Leather Institute facilities pending arrival of their own equipment. The group is to be provided with equipment on a revolving fund loan basis by the project.

Having access to raw materials and a ready market has lessened the workload of women. It would have been difficult for them to compete for markets with well established companies.

- (d) A woman entrepreneur was sponsored for a managerial and practical training course at the Central Leather Research Institute in Madras in India. The understanding was that she would come back, train and employ some other women. She has so far trained four other women and employed them.
- (e) Two women were sent to Malawi to be apprenticed to a leather goods consultant for a period of three weeks. One of the women is being groomed as an understudy for the leather goods consultant and is supposed to provide continuity, including conducting regular courses in leather goods.

Output three

Background data on the status of the women was collected in 1991/92 and a report is available. The report indicated that the status of women in the Zimbabwe leather industry was not satisfactory and the number of women employed in the production duties was very small. The report outlined the manner in which the situation could be rectified. In December 1993, data on the status of women in the leather industry was collected again. The data collected provided a sound base for the workshop which was held in February, 1994 as already discussed. A cursory look at the leather industry indicates that as a result of the DANIDA supported project, the situation has since improved.

Output four

Equipment for a leather goods factory managed by a woman has been ordered and some of it has arrived. Arrangements have been made for an international consultant to install the equipment and supervise the training of factory employees in its use.

3.3 FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The different groups of women will be trained in simple accounting, bookkeeping and banking. Currently, they are not able to negotiate on prices when complexity of uppers is greater and more stitching per pair is needed. They are not able to manage bills and invoices for machine repairs and spares properly and many other day to day matters. The project will identify a person with production of leather goods knowledge and general administrative experience to provide on going administrative training, help and advice.

More training for women is to be provided in the following areas:

entrepreneurship development

Supervisory and instructor training

product design

product marketing

training in various areas of leather goods and garment manufacturing both on the job and at the Leather Institute of Zimbabwe,

Training in various footwear manufacturing

3.4 CONSTRAINTS

- * Traditional views are still dominant in the leather industry. Many factories are thus predisposed to engage men. There are still managers who do not want to employ women because they see them as a burden. Women themselves are still victims of their own upbringing. Many do not believe that they can work in the leather industry.

3.5 CONCLUSION

- * The pilot project demystifies the belief that women cannot work in the leather industry. The project clarifies that bias towards male employment stems more from historical practices rather than from any differences in performance, given training and facilities.
- * The pilot project is an example of how gender roles can be changed given resources and commitment on the part of those who have the power to change and those who are oppressed.
- * The project has managed to put gender on the agenda of the leather industry. As already discussed, women's employment in the public sector has been emphasised since independence but little has been done to enhance the status of women in the private sector.

- * Women have been trained and are now working in shoe and leather goods plants in the country where previously hardly any women were employed. The trained women are acting as role models for other women who would like to develop a career in the leather industry. In addition, the women are forerunners to more intakes of women, an encouragement to competitive manufacturers to adopt similar policies.
- * The Leather Institute Council is now reasonably gender sensitive to the extent that the council has invited the Women-in-Development Expert to attend council and executive meetings. A woman entrepreneur has also been elected to the council. This heralds a new look, by leather industry management, at the employment of women in the leather industry.
- * The project has provided women with skills, training, experience and a sense of power that they would have otherwise found difficult to obtain. To this extent, one of the objectives of the project has been partly met.
- * The project is a good case study of how women can be integrated in the manufacturing industry as a whole. It can be replicated in other countries.

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