Women, Family, and the Rural Economy

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INTRODUCTION

No economically successful country can run using less than half of its business resources and South Africa is no exception. Women and families in South Africa face an overwhelming amount of issues in the rural economy. They mostly face poverty, HIV/AIDS, lack of support systems, and a variety of abuses and hardships that make it extremely difficult for children to reach their goals of becoming a healthy, stable, and successful adult.

Women in South Africa make up over half the business force and their contributions have not been adequately nurtured. The role of South African women is perceived as motherhood and economic independence (www.cwc.ie, 2009). While they constitute a large percentage of the informal economy, women’s contributions such as home-based tasks, child care, collecting firewood and water, subsistence farming, and taking care of other dependents are reportedly systematically omitted as contributions to the rural economy. Reportedly, South African women entrepreneurs could be the key to unlocking economic growth if better and more targeted support was made available to them (Sunday Times South Africa, August 12, 2007:p. 2).

This unit will explore the rural economy and the contributions and challenges of women in South African business, industry, and commerce.
Unit 3: Women, Family, and the Rural Economy  
Sub-Unit Topic 1: South African Women as Entrepreneurs in the Rural Economy  
Scholar: Mary M. White  
Level: Post-secondary/University

I. Unit Overview

This unit was developed for instruction in higher education. For the purpose of this unit, an entrepreneur is defined as a person who is self-employed and tends to be a job creator not a job seeker.

This research seeks to answer four questions that are important to understanding the role of South African women as entrepreneurs in the rural economy of South Africa:

A. What are strategies and opportunities that influence job creation among women, with a special focus on South African women entrepreneurs?

B. What is the profile of women entrepreneurs in South Africa?

C. How can the level of awareness of successful women entrepreneurs in the United States be enhanced to include women in South Africa?

D. Are resources and support initiatives available to promote entrepreneurship among women in the rural economy of South Africa?

The methodology included a qualitative research design using primary data. These data included interviews and observations (women in a nursing home—retired senior citizens such as the first and only female mayor of the Alice township, retired teachers and community activists who were Nelson Mandela’s followers and leaders), extensive literature review, traditional academic lectures and panel discussions at historical black higher education institutions in South Africa (University of Zululand, University of Fort Hare, Western Cape University), campus/school visitations in rural and local schools (elementary, intermediate, and high schools).
and tours to rural communities and markets (Richards Bay, Zululand, Durban, Melani village, Alice Township, Cape Town—Robben Island, Free State—Reitz and Johannesburg), and visitations to the Johannesburg--Apartheid Museum, the Nelson Mendala Museum, and the Soweto community.

Over a four-week period, exploration of historic sites, tours, and solicitation of information provided a platform for acquisition of rich primary data. Extensive travel agendas in the South African rural and urban economy allowed direct observations of women and families in the rural economy.

II. Unit Objectives

A. To examine strategies and opportunities that influence job creation among women, with a special focus on South African women entrepreneurs.

B. To enhance knowledge of the profile of women entrepreneurs in South Africa.

C. To raise the level of awareness of successful women entrepreneurs in both the United States and South Africa.

D. To identify resources and support initiatives for the entrepreneurial success of women in the rural economy of South Africa.

III. Unit Contents

African women have been witnesses to their times, actors and key players; their role in the affairs of the continent continues to grow (Stewart, 2004). Women have achieved success in almost every facet of life. There still exists, however, questions around women’s full participation in economic, entrepreneurial, and political activities in the rural economy.

Strategies and Opportunities that Influence Job Creation
Statistics show the following: low levels of literacy, high infant mortality rates, high levels of poverty, soaring rates of domestic violence, high rates of HIV/AIDS infection among women, and the highest reported rape rates in the world (Vasintha, 2009). Approximately 2.6 million South Africans, mostly women, have been trapped in survivalist activities such as sewing co-ops, chicken farming, candle-making, gardening, and arts and crafts—activities that are below the poverty level (Kassim & Hendriks, 2002). Further, these women have been excluded from access to credit, ownership of land, educational opportunities and skills development. These tasks are commonly referred to as micro-enterprise projects initiated collectively by women’s community groups which reflect women’s homemaking skills in combination with other domestic or income-generating activities. Research reveals that private and public sector support for these activities are lacking, exposing women to high risks and poor outcomes (The Community Workers Co-operative, http://www.cwc.ie/news/art03/womansa.html).

Nelson Mandela made a clarion call to action at the opening of Parliament in 1994 by stating that “freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression . . . they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.” (www.cwc.ie, 5/22/2009). The reality of this dismal situation for women, particularly in the rural economy of South Africa, tends to remain very prevalent today.

Most developing countries rely on their rural areas to support more or less 80% of the population and produce food for the growing urban areas (Pala, 1976). Instead, the rural communities and the state-at-large depend on the neighboring commercial farmers for almost all of their food supply (Benbo, 1976).

Only 6% of the more than one million black women in South Africa who are self-employed operate in the formal sector. While black women have a higher rate of participation in
economic activity than white women (73% vs 59%) in South Africa, they are only 14% of the formally employed in South Africa. Unemployment rates for black women are over 40%, compared to 21% for black men and 5% for white women (Women in Africa Doing Business, 2008).

Unemployment exists at a very high rate in the rural areas of South Africa. Lack of job opportunities has caused an influx of people to the cities. In a survey conducted in the Alice region in 1997, it was found that 17.1% of the population was working externally either as migrants or commuters, 43% were internal migrants or commuters such that 22% was either partially or wholly absent (Dube, 1997). Dube noted that the majority of the rural population that could effectively rehabilitate agricultural production are women, but most policies are not aimed at integrating women into agricultural development.

In a bid to tackle unemployment in South Africa, various job creation strategies have been identified. One example noted is as follows: As a young girl, Ndumi Medupe, helped out at her parent’s shop. This is where she discovered her love for numbers. Today, she owns Indeybo Consulting, a successful accounting firm, with a staff complement of twenty-five (Sawubona, June 2009, p. 167.) Tourism was noted as another key driver in job creation.

Profile of South African Women as Entrepreneurs

South Africa’s entrepreneurial spirit seems to be awakened by people who have the ability to dream and the passion, perseverance, patience and power to pursue it—South African women are no exception. According to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel speaking at South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) in 2008, women are at the forefront of change in South Africa. He acknowledged that South African women in business can bring encouragement to those in other countries who face entrenched barriers to access, whether in the credit market for
small enterprises or in executive and board-level decision making. He stated that he is equally conscious of the enormity of challenges women of South Africa still face.

Lupuwana, a woman at the helm of small business development services in South Africa, is the new CEO of the Small Enterprise Development Agency which is an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry known as SEDA (Sawubona, June 2009: p80). This CEO is responsible for addressing one of the biggest challenges facing entrepreneurs—access to relevant business information and the provision of support resources to help them harness business opportunities. Inspired by resilient people who achieve despite people and challenging odds, Lupuwana indicates that this description can certainly be applied to many entrepreneurs in South Africa who face the challenge of shrinking markets in the economic downturn. Further she believes that entrepreneurs need to develop solid business plans which should be adjusted as the environment and circumstances change. She offers entrepreneurs a helping hand through business consulting, training and referrals to key services.

Small enterprise development holds the key to economic growth. Resources, service providers and partnerships will be useful to assist fledging businesses succeed. Lupuwana reports of the great entrepreneurial potential in South Africa that needs to transform necessity entrepreneurs into opportunity entrepreneurs where entrepreneurial thinking is not just based on substance, but on properly identifying and harnessing available business gaps (2009, p81). Her successful business, the SEDA, started its operations in 2005. It offers several products and services: information and advice, business planning and development, company/business registrations, access to technology platforms, business incubation and access to markets. This small business provides these services through its national network and in partnership with other role players in the small enterprise support arena. It takes a multifaceted approach to assisting
entrepreneurs which includes innovative national initiatives and programs. The successful SADA Technology program uses an incubator model to fast-track small businesses in the range of industries. The concept is a get entrepreneurs up and running in a protected environment, allowing them time and providing access to resources, intensive mentoring and support, that will make their business viable in the shortest time possible.

The World Bank Group Gender Action Plan launched a two-year research program on reforms that improve business opportunities for women entitled “Women in Africa Doing Business” (2007). It was the first in a series of regional reports to showcase successful women entrepreneurs and explore how they overcame obstacles to business creation and growth. Seven women entrepreneurs shared their stories, successes, frustrations, commitment to creating a more level playing field for other women entrepreneurs. Their stories evolved into a series of case studies of women entrepreneurs across Africa, representing Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Uganda, who have overcome legal and regulatory obstacles to create new business opportunities. Reportedly, Rwanda has the third highest percentage of women entrepreneurs of any country in Africa with forty-one percent of businesses being run by women. Only Ghana, with 44%, and Cape Verde, at 43%, has more women actively running businesses (p. 7).

Brief profiles are presented of six of the seven successful women entrepreneurs including annual turnover in US dollars: a management consulting firm called STRATEGIES--$500,000; a handicrafts company, Gahaya Links--$300,000; an interior design company called, Aissa Dione Tissus--$700,000; a home ware company called Gone Rural Pty Ltd.--$600,000; a financial services company, Sero Lease and Finance Ltd.--$6 million; and a juice manufacturing company called Delight Ltd.--$3.9 million. The seventh successful entrepreneur is Sibongile Sambo who
founded SRS Aviation Ltd, an aviation services company in South Africa with an annual turnover of US$5 million and 9 employees and a global business reach. Sibongile’s obstacle is doing business in South Africa was getting credit for owning the business (Women in Africa Doing Business, 2008).

Women as Farming Entrepreneurs. Women do not only play a key role in food production but also seek income for their household; therefore, rural women are traders almost everywhere (Adeniji, 1991). Based on conclusions of the CDRC Report (1979), most rural women play a major role in the social and economic well-being of their communities and must be made to recognize the value of their contribution and importance of promoting a change in attitudes towards the meaning of work. The World Bank report (1975) stressed that for new projects the goal should be to reach the rural poor, the small farmer, the malnourished, and the illiterate. The report also indicates that to implement this practice research results insist that measures to raise the production and incomes of small farmers must often take explicit account of women if they are to be successful because the tasks they aim to simplify are the one the women perform.

A woman farmer bettering her income as one of the best agro-dealers in her area, while helping farmers get fertilizer, is an example of job creation achievement and what women are working to achieve all over Africa. Shopkeepers can help supply farmers not only with inputs, but also agricultural advice.

On a small farming plot not far from her grocery store, Dinnah Kapiza points at the different types of fertilizers, explaining how each should be used. Local farmers gather around her, asking questions about the pros and cons of each brand she sells at Tisaiwale Variety Shop.
in Mponela, 60 kilometers from the Malawian capital, Lilongwe. The 58-year-old businesswoman is one of a new breed of “agro-dealers,” who not only sell products, but are certified to advise customers on how to best use them. As a shopkeeper, Kapiza serves an area of about 9,000 people. At first she sold household essentials such as bread and cooking oil. But business was slow, so she diversified and realized a 70 % increase in sales since adding seeds, pesticides and fertilizers to her store. She now employs four people: two cashiers and two men to guard the store. Confident and enthusiastic about her future, Madamombe reports that Kapiza is hardly recognizable as the same woman who thought her world had come to a standstill seven years ago when her husband died. She opened the store soon after to help with income to care for her 10 children. Her hope now is to expand her entrepreneurial farming expertise by opening at least two more shops (Madamombe, 2007).

Historically in the rural communities, women were responsible for all aspects of cultivation using the hoe as the main implement (Oram, 1984). Pala (1976) indicated that traditionally women had been the producers of food and they played an integral part in the production of food in the form of staple crops. In places like Swaiziland and Malawi where agriculture is still practiced to a great extent, women are still highly involved in all kinds of cultivations. Zwane (1994) in her report indicated that in most agricultural organizations she dealt mostly with women because very few men participated. She added that in Swaziland 50 percent of livestock herding is practiced by women. Donge (1984) stated that African culture has placed most African women as farmers, artisans, homemakers, and traders working hard to provide for the needs of the society.
Entrepreneurial Awareness among South African Women

At the turn of the millennium, African leaders and their citizens started looking to the future with renewed hope. The continent had come through decades of economic stagnation, poverty, corruption, authoritarian rule and devastating wars. But the end of the 1990s brought the first signs of a new turn. Some of the region’s most protracted conflicts had begun to wind down. Economic growth rates picked up--positive trends which gave rise to a heightened sense of purpose for African women to take charge of their own future.

Self-Reliance. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program, completed in 2003, urged investments in three selected “pillars”: (1) extending sustainable land and water management, (2) increasing the food supply, and (3) improving rural infrastructure and capacities for market access. Of course, these types of investments would require self-reliance. Given Africa’s own limited financial means, the difficulties and uncertainties of its external economic relations inevitably affect the pace at which NEPAD’s ambitious programs and projects can be realized. But an important aspect of NEPAD is its emphasis on self-reliance. As much as possible, African countries are expected to mobilize more of their own domestic resources, by fighting corruption and waste, promoting local entrepreneurial activities and widening the tax base.

Careers of women in South Africa includes entrepreneurial awareness and related activities at the university level. Professor Rachel Gumbi, Rector and Vice Chancellor of the University of Zululand (also referred to as Unizul) since 2003, advocated change and an attitude of resilience for women of South Africa in her lecture to Fulbright Scholars of Jackson State University on June 2, 2009, when she stated “women must move from being job seekers to job...
creators!” Considered a profound woman leader of an entrepreneurial university, Vice Chancellor Gumbi shared literature with the group indicating that her transformation agenda for Unizul seeks to offer a mix of university and career-focused courses that will cater simultaneously for the needs of industrial and rural community stakeholders. She purports combining the best features of entrepreneurial and alternative education and believes Unizul must develop a more entrepreneurial and outward-looking culture (University of Zululand, 2005).

**Information Sources and Support Initiatives**

In most rural communities, the old methods of performing most tasks are still followed because most people are ignorant of the new methods even if they are aware of their existence (Brydon and Rutgers, 1989). Rural women have been traditionally responsible for putting into practice most of the innovations introduced in the rural economy (Dube, 1997). Because rural women are not fully exposed to the prevailing better ways of performing certain tasks and/or lack the knowledge, information sources may be of great importance to their recognizing entrepreneurial opportunities. Kamara (1986) reports that most rural women rely on radio programs for information on new skills which is of disadvantage because no one is available to help them put the theory into practice nor to answer related questions.

Optimists report the recording of many success stories that advocate increased opportunities for enhancing the women’s movement to eradicate rising unemployment, poor housing (Badden, Hassen & Meintjies, 1999), and resource support to enhance women’s participation in education, politics and economic development initiatives. The Freedom Charter and the Women’s National Coalition were part of the national call for a Bill of Women’s Rights
that provided a platform for embracing broader issues of gender inequality and challenges for collective action in the 21st century.

Greater attention is now being paid to women’s needs, and to addressing gender imbalances in the energy sector, according to Annecke (2005). She reports that the majority of women use fuel wood, coal or kerosene for cooling, none of which are safe fuels. Thus, their safety is an issue. Identifying women’s needs and challenges include not only safety but affordability and accessibility. The Women’s Energy Group (WEG) was a key resource network for women of South Africa in the early 90’s. A number of initiatives and lobbying efforts, including actions by the Women’s National Coalition and the Commission for Gender Equality have influenced national policy and agendas related to women’s interests. Further, these groups have served as catalysts for social change indicating new opportunities, particularly in entrepreneurship, for women of South Africa in the rural economy.

IV. Instructional Strategies

To insure assurance of learning in achieving the identified unit objectives, the instructor will utilize the following instructional strategies:

A. Students will be introduced to a combination of lecture-discussion and working in groups methods to examine strategies and opportunities that influence job creation among women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Working in groups expectations will include oral presentations via the development of PowerPoint presentation that include video clips. (Objective 1)

B. Students will engage in discovery/research, role playing, and individual presentations methods to explore profiles of women entrepreneurs in South Africa. (Objective 2)

C. To raise the level of awareness of successful women entrepreneurs in South Africa, the combined lecture-discussion-questioning-demonstration methods will be utilized. (Objective 3)

D. Students will engage in library and internet research to identify resource and support initiatives for women entrepreneurs. (Objective 4)
Case studies, guest speakers, seminars, field trips, research reports, reflective journals, computer technology and self-paced instruction will be additional methods used interchangeably throughout the unit by the instructor to enhance and maximize student learning. (Objectives 1-4)

V. Unit Activities

A. Students will engage in case study analysis and group learning to examine strategies and opportunities that influence job creation. Students will present their findings by assigned student teams. Points will be awarded to each team based on ability to address main points, clarity and preparedness in addressing Q&A. Team members will receive group and individual point credits. Details of this assignment will be discussed in the first class session. Students will listen to presentations from international guest lecturers to learn about entrepreneurial activities in the rural economy of South Africa.

B. Students will prepare individual Entrepreneur Profile Reports focusing on successful South African women entrepreneurs. Further, they will individually select a local female entrepreneur or famous female entrepreneur to interview prior to writing the assigned project. An Entrepreneur Profile Log will be provided each student prior to completing the “E” profile report. The report will consist of a maximum 5-page double-spaced summary about the entrepreneur, lessons learned, business strategies used by the entrepreneur, obstacles and key takeaways (using the learning log as a guide). Students will orally present their findings in a 10-minute presentation using PowerPoint presentation media.

C. Student teams will lead seminars on entrepreneurial topics denoting entrepreneurial awareness strategies. Guy Kawasaki’s The Art of the Start book will be used as a key resource. Students are expected to research topics using the Internet, research data bases (Lexis-Nexus & Proquest) to prepare for the seminars. Students will be encouraged to provide written or presentation materials to supplement their presentations. Each member of the team must participate in the oral presentation. Visual aids and state-of-the-art technology.

D. Students will visit the JSU International office to examine information sources and support initiatives. Further, they will visit the local export assistance center to explore available resources, read current events from South African newspapers and journals working in small groups.

VI. Critical Thinking Activities

A variety of critical thinking activities will be incorporated by the instructor that will include roundtable discussions, weekly reading assignments, reflective journal entries, and focus groups in relation to the unit objectives and instructional strategies identified.

VII. Suggested Research Activities
The students will be expected to complete one major research paper and engage in related research activities for maximum assurance of learning for the unit objectives identified. The related research activities will include an annotated bibliography, group research, and preparation for a one-half seminar with a South African women entrepreneurial focus.
Unit 3: Women, Family, and the Rural Economy  
Sub-Unit Topic 2: South African Women in the Rural Economy  
Scholar: Keith Riley  
Level: Post-Secondary/University

I. Overview of Unit

The women of South Africa contribute to the South Africa’s economy in many ways. South African women find themselves at an interesting moment to examine both the progress and challenges faced by women in South Africa in the rural economy. Though South African women have progressed somewhat, what challenges do they still face in the rural economy? How does empowerment of South African women through collective action help in survival in today’s society? This unit will give information on the importance of rural South African women in the rural economy. The unit will focus on the challenges rural South African women face and the fundamental contributions South African women contribute to their culture in the rural communities of South Africa. Also, information on the empowerment of South African women will give some ideas of progression of South African women. The qualitative unit includes a study by which information is gathered on South Africa women by research studies, interviews, observations and lectures on South African women in rural areas.

II. Unit Objectives

A. To increase the knowledge of the importance of South African women in the rural economy. 

B. To identify challenges faced by South African women the rural communities. 

C. To examine strategies that promote the empowerment of South African women through collective action techniques that influence policy making.

III. Unit Content
In years past women in South Africa have always modeled how people can survive through very hard struggles with very limited resources to make a change in society. Even in this present time South African women display their strength to fight in spite of obstacles. These strong women contribute to the development that helps make South Africa what it is today. Rural South African women face many problems within the rural economy. But along with the challenges South African women face, South African women have progressed in the women’s empowerment move.

Gender inequality is an extremely big problem with South Africa. South African women are still having problems being able to have equal rights and advantages as South African men. South African men are still seen as the “head” of everything. Men in South Africa have not come to a point as seeing women being able to do certain jobs. Women tend to do what is called softer positions such as nursing, teacher training and sewing. The government in South Africa is open for women being visible in other positions such as engineering and mining. But because of the South African’s mentality, the men feel that the women in South Africa should not go into these positions which causes the South African men to still dominate in several ways.

Greater gender equality is important, but South African women are skeptical about achieving the equality. The Gender and Development Protocol signed by heads of state of the South African Development Community (SADC) region intends to ensure equal rights for women across a wide range of issues, including constitutional and legal reform, governance, education, productive resources, gender-based violence, health, peace-building and conflict resolution. It also aims to make certain that women have equal access to land, and participate equally in trade and entrepreneurship including access to state procurement opportunities.
Gender differences have become a critical topic to increase opportunities for women in South Africa. The SADC will hopefully change the unemployed and gender bias of South African women.

South African women normally have problems getting financed to possibly open their own business. Though several women may be entrepreneurs in their own rural homes, it is hard for the women to branch out and have an actually building to run a business. Women entrepreneurs are mostly found doing jobs such as catering, fashion designing, cooking and wedding coordinators. But to receive access to capital as men do is harder.

South African men are usually entrepreneurs more than South African women. Women in South Africa face problems of receiving capital for business. Many rural South African women try to start a business but have great financing problems.

Many women may have ideals of starting a business. But the obstacle of getting funding for the place and material is a problem. Women may to through all of the necessary steps to receive funding possibly form the government to start a business. But because of the way the government has the system set up and because it is dominantly controlled by the men, women still may not be able to start the business or can not run the business the way she desires. A study by the South African Commission found that 80 percent of employed women work as semi-skilled labor, while 20 percent of women stalled at junior management (Palitza, 2006).

Another problem for South African women is the fear in general of men in the home. A great majority or women have a fear of the man in the household. Men are seen as the head or chief of the home. Male children are educated to provide for the home. Women are to do trade work. But if a woman is doing a job other than a trade and makes more money than her husband, the woman fears what problems that will cause within the home.
Thabisite Buthelezi, a third-grade elementary teacher of 20 years, was interviewed about issues and fears of South African women. Thabisite stated that South African women have a fear of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and lack of employment. She stated that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is very high. Therefore, women do fear that they may contact HIV/AIDS or their daughters will. Drug abuse is seen everywhere. Thabisite seems to think that drugs are used because it easy to get and men tend to use drugs when they to not have jobs. Lack of employment is a problem too. When the parents are not working they depend on money from grants or social welfare. Therefore, if grants are the sole income, the parents or single parent may decide to have more children because each child will receive 240R. Having more children will help support the household and help to survive.

Thabisite, a wife and mother of 3, also spoke about other fears women face. She stated in most homes where there are two parents, the husbands are normally irresponsible and reject any responsibility that he has. Many of the men drink and have outside relationships outside the marriage which causes the marriage to break and the wife is alone. Thabisite also stated that discrimination against women to do certain jobs is a problem. Women in rural areas are expected to do housework and gardening. If a woman has another type of job and makes more money than the husband, it usually causes problems with the household and the husband normally leaves.

The rural economy in South Africa is mostly supported by women. Agriculture labor is a main job in rural areas and about 47 percent of women are comprised within that labor force. Women labor mainly exceeds that of men. Food production is the main job for women in rural areas. Women are responsible for 70 percent of food production, 50 percent of domestic food
storage, 100 percent of food processing, 50 percent of animal industry and 60 percent of agricultural marketing (Manuh, 1998).

Owning land in rural areas for women is rare. With the economic shift in South Africa land is a more centralized resource. For this reason South African women in the rural economy are left out. If women own any land at all, their holdings are smaller and less fertile in comparison to what men own.

Land titles are usually registered in the name of men. This is done regardless of the household contribution from women or female-headed households. Women are sometimes granted land to have gardens and generate income. When the gardens are plentiful the male owners look at the growth and may decide to take the land completely. Therefore, the South African women in rural areas never make it on top because of the males always are still in control of the economy.

Since the number of job seekers has increased, employment for South African women has increased. Women in South Africa face bigger challenges in finding employment because of lack of education and being guided to certain occupations. Also, having children and having to find child care limits the time for employment.

Women are two-thirds less likely than men to get waged employment, while only 3 out of 10 women in the labor force in sub-Saharan Africa are paid employees. In, 1990, about 5 percent of the female labor force worked in industry, 20 percent in services, 23 percent in sales, and only 6 percent in professional, technical, administrative or managerial positions (Manuh, 1998). In many cases women in the rural economy in South Africa earn less income than the income of men. Many women do not benefit from laws of maternity protection either. Also, many South African women lost jobs in the formal sector because of several budget cuts.
The formal sector shows that rural South African women may be in petty trading and home-based employment. But most of these women have little access to neither information nor finances. The women do not benefit from minimum wage and social security. Many South African women have to try to provide their own health care and retirement.

The informal sector jobs have become popular within the rural economy because of low capital needs. Survival for the family is the most important for rural women in the informal sectors. Even girls have been withdrawn from school to help survive.

Poverty and unemployment is a challenge South African women face in the rural economy. Rural South African women are seen mostly in motherhood and working within the home. South African men encourage rural women to do these 2 positions though South African women constitute a large percent of the rural economy. Home-based tasks, childcare, collecting firewood and water, subsistence farming, taking care of other dependents are all tasks that are systematically omitted in the broad analysis of women’s contribution to the economy. The burdens of black African women excluded women from access to credit, ownership of land, educational opportunities and skills development (www.cwc.ie June, 2003).

It is estimated that approximately 2.6 million South Africans are trapped in survivalist activities which are below the poverty level (Kassim and Hendricks, 2002). South African women in rural areas face economic constraints which stops new emphases of economic survival. With the poverty level being high in South Africa, trade is declining and external debt is continuing to increase. This causes an unfavorable environment for development. Of the limited resources available, little is allocated to women in rural areas.

High rates of sexual and domestic abuse against women are found within the rural areas of South Africa. South African women are considered to have one of the highest rates of male
violence committed against women. The statistics reveal that one woman is rapped every twenty-six minutes and that one in four women is a victim of domestic violence (www.cwc.ie June, 2003). Approximately 80 percent of victims being abused in South Africa are South African girls. Though the government is trying to intervene, the rate of violence against women is continuing to increase which caused the rate of HIV/AIDS cases to increase.

Itabia Steiba, a social science librarian, spoke about the severe violence in the rural areas. She stated that a lot of the abuse against women occurs because the government is not doing enough to enforce legislation. A lot of abuse occurs in the homes of married couples and single parent homes. She stated that within the married home the husband may abuse the wife because of the woman producing more than the man. If the woman receives a little more income than the man does it may cause problems and lead to abuse. The husband wants to always be in control and when he thinks he is not he will abuse the woman. Even in the single parent home, the woman is still abused because the father of the child will come to “be in charge”. The man seems to do a lot of abuse when he is somewhat drunk. Itabia stated that the women stay in these situations because of fear of men.

Itabia, a wife and mother of 2, state another problem with rural South African women faces is sexual abuse. She stated that it happens a lot within the single parent homes. She also said it happens in the homes where there are girls within the home as well. Men tend to sexual abuse the younger girls a lot. Most of this comes from the male being angry with the female for some reason. But sometimes the sexual abuse is taken out on the daughter if a daughter is present.

A tremendous change in legislation has occurred in South Africa. Changes have been made in the arena and the social society. Transformation has become priority of South Africa.
Despite the change in South Africa, women have not quite arrived to be seen as leader as South African men. Participation of South African women as decision makers is critical to the society of South Africa. South African women must play a supportive role, not as a bystander, but as a leader for an equitable and just society for all.

In 1987 there was a national call for the formation of a consolidated coalition against apartheid. This was further reinforced by a national call for Bill of Women’s Rights that was in accordance with the Freedom Charter. In 1992 more than 100 women’s organizations collectively formed the Women’s National Coalition. Its main objective was to ensure that women’s issues were placed on the political agenda. (www.cwc.ie June, 2003). A Women’s Charter was adopted after this. The Women’s Charter facilitated the Women’s National Coalition to promote a common ground for South Africa women to share concerns. Gender inequality was a concern that women brought out. South African women began to commit to liberating the nation. Women’s movements began to flourish in response to issues such as rising unemployment, poor housing, lack of services, high rents and corrupt local councils (Badden, Hassen and Meintjies, 1999). Initiative by South African women enforced how crucial the role of women is in the liberation struggle.

South African women have strived to take action to empower women in the society of South Africa. Many success stories have come about from successful roles of South African women and women’s groups. South Africa has a wealth of women leaders. The woman must continue to strengthen skills to help expand opportunities for women to develop even more leadership roles for South African women,

Against all odds, women collectively came together to attend the African Women’s Preparatory Conference. The African Platform for Action dealt with rural and urban poverty of
South African women, improving education and health services, relationship to the environment, and concerns of the girl-child. The conference also recognized other women’s groups and their platforms. The Beijing conference that followed in 1995 stressed the empowerment of women as one of the central development goals of the 21st century. It adopted a Platform for Action which called for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programs, including development programs. It committed countries to design their own specific programs and activities in consultation with women’s groups and others to implement the Beijing Platform for Action (Manuh, 2003).

Professor Connie Mokadi is an example of a South African woman in leadership. She has been a Vice Chancellor for seven years at Technikon Witwatersrand and Pro Vice Chancellor for one year at the University of Johannesburg. Mokadi faced many challenges being a black woman in a leadership capacity in higher education. She felt that higher education had to look at past inequities to make the current better. South African women needed skills and economic knowledge in this competitive world.

Regardless of challenges Mokadi had a mind to press forward as a black female leader. As a chief executive officer, Mokadi found a way to effective approach the role as being a leader. She had visions and dreams for a favorable end result. She valued the persons that she led and worked with her staff as a team. Mokadi carried out her lead position by being sure that personnel were adequately trained and that the staff was respected.

Mokadi understood that she had to stand out being a black woman in higher education. Because most positions in higher education are dominated by men, Mokadi knew that she had to be strong to contribute to the empowerment of women in lead positions. She stated that she always instinctively guarded against viewing leadership as some kind of abstract
conceptualization (Dei, 2006). Mokadi new that showing her leadership that she had to be committed, open minded and honest.

South African women in the rural economy face many obstacles in the role of social change. But with the South African women coming together to address issues, change is occurring for South African women. South African women’s organizations are the voice for development in the rural areas. South African women will continue to influence and shape the rural economy in South Africa.

IV. Instructional Strategies

A. Students will pull articles off the internet on South African women in rural areas and give an overview of the articles for class discussion.

B. Students will interview a student from South Africa to get information on 1 challenge South African women face in the rural economy. Students may also find a person to email questions to on challenges rural South African women face. Students will write a paper on their findings.

C. Students will research South African women’s empowerment with women organizations.

D. Students will research how the actions of South African women have influenced policies of South Africa. Students will do a PowerPoint presentation giving examples of the progression of South African women in today’s society.

*These instructional strategies along with lectures and discussions will further educate students about South African women in rural areas.

V. Unit Activities

A. Students will present ideas for discussion from related readings.

B. Students will participate in the discussion of case studies.

C. Students will participate in small group discussions, problem solving, and decision making.

D. Students will be exposed to a variety of views of South African women and will reach their own conclusions by researching and questioning the culture of South African women.
VI. Critical Thinking Activities

A. Students will review case studies and give feedback on how the outcomes could be different (according to their point of view).

B. Students will choose a rural occupation and produce a small business plan to make the occupation more vital and produce more profit.

VII. Suggested Research Activities

Students will choose a topic that deals with a problem that South African women face. The student will do research on the topic and write a paper on the topic. Students will also write a paper explaining what they believe to be solutions to the problem.
Unit 3: Women, Family, and the Rural Economy
Sub-Unit Topic 3: South African Family Challenges/Issues in the Rural Economy
Scholar: Ramona Fernandez
Level: Secondary School

I. Parameters of the Study/Overview of Unit

The problem is that families in South Africa face an overwhelming amount of issues in the rural areas surrounding Richard’s Bay, Alice, Reitz, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. From data collected through interviews, observations, updated literature, and lectures from people within these areas, the challenges faced by these people become obvious: Families in the rural economy mostly face poverty within homes that lead to health issues, lack of a support system (financially and emotionally), and a variety of abuse (April, T. 2009). Because of these hardships, it is extremely difficult for children to reach their goals of becoming a healthy, stable, and successful adult. In this unit, the following questions will be addressed: What are the challenges faced by South African families living in the rural areas? Why does the cycle in South African families keep repeating itself? What are the contributions of women towards households in the rural economy? What is being done to help the rural living families of South Africa? In this unit, these specific questions will be researched, answered, and discussed in detail with possible solutions. Throughout the entire unit, learners will be able to step into the shoes of rural South African families to get a true understanding of their everyday struggles.

II. Unit Objectives

A. To identify and investigate the challenges and issues South African families face in the rural economy - inclusive of race, class, privileges, and power.

B. To examine the contribution of women towards households in the rural economy and provide possible solutions to help them move forward.

III. Unit Content
Families in the rural area of South Africa face many challenges on a daily basis; this problem has continued for decades. Poverty is the major challenge facing South African families. At least 45% of the population live in absolute poverty; for children, the statistics show that between 57% - 75% of children in South Africa are living in poverty. Poverty is measured in absolute terms, calculating the minimum income that would be required to provide for basic needs, survival, and a healthy life. Individuals surviving on less than $1 (USD) a day are said to be living in poverty. Although programs are in place to help these families, they are not extensive enough in their coverage, and do not reach the majority of families living in poverty (IRAN 2009).

At least 40% of women in South Africa find themselves outside the formal employment market, performing either non-market labor or engaged in informal sector activities with very little protection of their rights. In the rural areas, a large proportion of women earn either no wage or one that is insufficient to cover the cost of their basic needs (SARDC 1997). This then of course creates problems for the entire family on many levels. Poverty levels are extremely important because this indicates how many children may not be able to have their basic needs met. A lack of sufficient income has been proven to lead to a poor health, reduced access to education, and physical environments that compromise personal safety (Facts 2007). One challenge families are facing because of this are the living conditions. Families have to live in overcrowded dwellings. In other words, a 1 bedroom house with a kitchen and living room would be defined as overcrowded if there are more than 6 people living in it. Over 4.8 million children - more than a quarter of all children in South Africa - lived in overcrowded households in 2005. Households also are becoming overcrowded due to children growing up and starting their own families but do not have alternative accommodations to move. Overcrowding is a
problem because it can undermine children’s other needs and rights. Children in crowded households may struggle to negotiate space for their own activities. It may be difficult for schoolchildren in this situation to do homework at night or even wash/change in private. The right to health can be infringed as communicable diseases such as respiratory infections (including tuberculosis) and diarrhea spread more easily in overcrowding conditions. Overcrowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where boys and girls have to share beds, or children have to sleep with adults. Children under the age of six years are marginally more likely than other children to live in overcrowded households (Facts 2007).

In an interview with Mrs. Bongiwe, a librarian at the University of Zululand, it was stated that many women are having to become the head of households because fathers are not staying present. Many women choose to have more babies because they will be able to receive more assistance from the government, not realizing that this is just creating more poverty issues. There are more single mother homes in South African now than ever before, which creates problems within itself. While some of these homes are created because the father leaves, others are because the females are becoming more independent (which single parent homes still face the same problems), and even some homes are ran by children themselves because the parents may have died. In many cases, grandparents are having to raise the children. All of these situations lead back to poverty challenges (Bongiwe, 2009).

The question remains - what is the government doing to help? Since 1994, changes for the good have been made. Approximately 80% of the welfare budget is currently spent on grants to the elderly, as well as child maintenance for single mothers. The remaining 20% of the welfare budget is spent on social service. Welfare is “doubly-gendered”: it is mainly women who both need and provide support, consequently cuts in the welfare budget have severe implications for
the ability of women to maintain themselves and those under their care. The Department of Welfare has begun a poverty alleviation program and a program to develop the skills of young women with children. Both aim to develop self-reliance and work-capacities among young women, including steps to facilitate their access to resources (SARDC 1997).

South African women in the rural area are considered to have one of the highest rates of male violence committed against women. The statistics reveal that one woman is raped every twenty six minutes and that one in four women is a victim of domestic violence. This type of problem continues to reoccur because children are seeing this as “ok” within the homes. South African women constitute one of the highest risk groups in the world. Not only are women physically afflicted, they are also psychologically and emotionally challenged. Most women as primary care-givers shoulder the heavy burden of nursing the sick and dying (Women in South Africa: Challenges 2003). Not only do the wives experience such brutality, the children do as well. National statistics obtained about crimes against children from 1993 to 1995 reveal that in most and sometimes up to 80% of child abuse cases, girls are the victims. This type of behavior becomes the “norm” in their communities. These numbers indicate only cases handled by the Child Protection Unit and specialized individuals. Even though these figures are high they fail to reflect cases handled by other units or those which are unreported. Crimes such as attempted murder, assault, abduction, kidnapping, etc. have been excluded, reducing the number even further (SARDC 1997). From “Beyond Inequalities: Women in South Africa” the following table was created:
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crimes against children under age 18</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>4736</td>
<td>7559</td>
<td>5702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodomy</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incest</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent Assault</td>
<td>3439</td>
<td>3904</td>
<td>2589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Offenses</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Crimes</td>
<td>9786</td>
<td>13204</td>
<td>9558</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an interview with Nana Vezi, who is a very ambitious young lady who holds a doctoral degree, she explains that many of these children struggle educationally because of so many challenges they face living in a poverty/rural area in South Africa. She stated, “Parents don’t have time to help kids or explain vital issues to them. Most parents are ignorant and don’t realize that an education is the way out. When the child gains the same mindset of the parent, the cycle of this attitude continues” (Vezi 2009).

IV. Instructional Strategies

A. Direct Instruction/Lecture on challenges and issues South African families face in the rule economy and the contribution of women towards these specific households.

B. Case Studies will be given to the students by the instructor. Students will take their notes and research findings to come up with solutions to the different unbearable cases that are based upon facts from the issues of South African families in the rural economy.

C. Collages will be made by the students to symbolize the South Africans’ point of views.
based on their living environment.

D. Facilitative Questioning will be provided by the instructor. Questions will center around the challenges South African families face and the contribution of women towards these type of households.

E. Student Research will be completed by the learners. Topics will include poverty on women/families, violence against women, abuse within the family, and overcrowding within homes.

F. Student Writing (Poetry, Position Paper) will be assigned to the learners by the instructor. The learners will create a poetry booklet throughout the unit to express their ideas based upon information learned. The learners will also be responsible for producing a position paper based upon a circumstance given by the instructor, topics limited to unit based subjects. The learners will take a position using data gathered throughout the unit to support their answers.

G. A newspaper creation will be completed by the learners. Based upon the critical issues South African families face in the rural economy found through their research, learners will create an up-to-date newspaper as if they were reporters in South Africa.

V. Unit Activities

A. Collage Creation - Learners will gather images to illustrate a concept or point of view based on the lives of South African families living in the rural areas

B. Student Poetry - Learners will use the information they have learned to create a poetry booklet, expressing their ideas about the issues in South Africa

C. Position Paper - Learners will be given different prompts based upon the problems that the rural South African families face, then they will be asked to take a position - then use
information from one or more written materials to support that position

D. Worksheets/Questioning - Learners will complete worksheets/questions based upon unit content

VI. Critical Thinking Activities

A. Case Studies - Learners will be given real life problems that families in rural South Africa face and they must do their best to come up with a solution

B. Group Discussions - Learners will be placed in groups of 3 and given open discussion questions based on unit content. Learners will present their individual group questions and answers to the class.

VII. Research Activity

A. Informative Research Paper Topics of Choice:

1. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women and how it effects the family

2. Violence against women

3. Compare/Contrast rural family issues of USA and South Africa

4. Persistent discrimination against violation of the rights of the girl-child in South Africa

5. Home overcrowding in South Africa

6. Poverty and how it relates to health issues within the family

B. Newspaper Creation

Learners will conduct research of the challenges/issues that rural South Africans face and create a South African newspaper based upon the findings.
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