

# Improving the measurement of rural women's employment: Priority areas for research and policy

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Workshop: Improving the Availability and Quality of Individual-level Data  
on Women and Youth in LSMS surveys  
November 28-29, 2018

# The policy case for better measurement

Rural women's LFP is concentrated in seasonal and informal work, and generally not measured well:

- Small-scale agriculture
- Contributing family roles
- Heavy unpaid work burdens, often conducted simultaneously

Importance of addressing these data gaps:

- Links between women's earned income, their bargaining power, and children's health and education
- Country initiatives to target small-scale rural employment, amid rural economic transitions (out-migration, fragmentation of landownings, increased food demand in urban areas)
- International momentum: SDGs, 50x2030 initiative, ICSE-18, ICLS 19

# How could additional survey data be useful for rural program design?

## Workfare programs

**NREGS (India):** regular data needed on constraints to participating (women having to work longer hours to get the same wages, lack of jobs)

## Skills development and access to technology

**Rural Capacity Building Project (Ethiopia):** difficulties in targeting extension services to women farmers (HH-level outreach that ends up reaching men, gender differences in human capital, networks)

**Entrepreneurship training programs:** formal business training for women often finds little effect, due perhaps to skills not improving enough or the right skills not being taught (McKenzie and Woodruff, 2014)

## Finance

**Productivity-enhancing finance to women farmers/entrepreneurs:** hampered by clear understanding of who manages farm/business (Holloway et al, 2017)

# Data to better capture rural women's work burdens and economic mobility

## Topics covered

- Counting rural women's employment: boundary, recovery questions
- Labor underutilization and time use
- Earnings and decision-making
- Employment outcomes amid rural economic transitions (migration, skills, economic mobility/constraints, use of technology)

Descriptive examples from Ethiopia 2015-16, Malawi 2016-17, Uganda 2013-14 LSMS-ISA surveys

Boundary between paid/unpaid work:  
Malawi 2016-17 LSMS-ISA (farming/labor module)

E07a	E07_1					E07_1a	E07_1b	E07_1c
How many hours <u>in the last seven days</u> did you <u>spend</u> on <u>household farming activities</u> whether for sale or for household food?	List up to 5 crops that you worked on during the last 7 days, listed in accordance with importance (importance defined as value addition in terms of non-market (consumption) or market (commercial sales) terms).  REFER TO CROP CODES AT THE END OF THE AGRICULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE. LIST ALL CROPS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE, STARTING WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT CROP. IMPORTANCE DEFINED AS VALUE ADDITION IN TERMS OF NON-MARKET (CONSUMPTION) OR MARKET (COMMERCIAL SALES) TERMS.					In regards to the first crop listed in E07_1, are the products you worked on...  READ RESPONSES:  ALL INTENDED FOR SALE.....1>>E07_2a  SOME ARE INTENDED TO BE SOLD AND SOME KEPT FOR USE OR CONSUMPTION BY YOUR FAMILY.....2  ALL ARE INTENDED TO BE KEPT FOR USE OR CONSUMPTION BY YOUR FAMILY.....3>>E07_2a	In regards to the first crop listed in E07_1, is it intended to sell...  READ RESPONSES:  LESS THAN 1/4.....1 1/4.....2 1/2.....3 3/4.....4 MORE THAN 3/4.....5	In regards to the first crop listed in E07_1, In general, in the past have these products been mainly sold or mainly kept for family use or consumption?  READ RESPONSES:  MAINLY SOLD.....1  MAINLY KEPT FOR FAMILY USE OR CONSUMPTION.....2
HOURS	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH			

# Counting employment: boundary questions

## Malawi 2016-17 LSMS-ISA: main intended destination of crops, and gender gaps

	Households below poverty line			Households above poverty line		
	Men	Women	Gender gap <sup>(b)</sup>	Men	Women	Gender gap <sup>(b)</sup>
Those responding for themselves:						
Share of individuals in crop agriculture in last 7 days:						
Who report any crop being mainly intended for sale <sup>(a)</sup>	0.40 [0.49]	0.34 [0.47]	0.06***	0.49 [0.50]	0.39 [0.49]	0.10***
Who report all crops for household use/ consumption	0.51 [0.49]	0.60 [0.49]	-0.09***	0.41 [0.59]	0.51 [0.50]	-0.10***
Number of men and women in crop agriculture	1366	2191		1337	1737	

Notes:

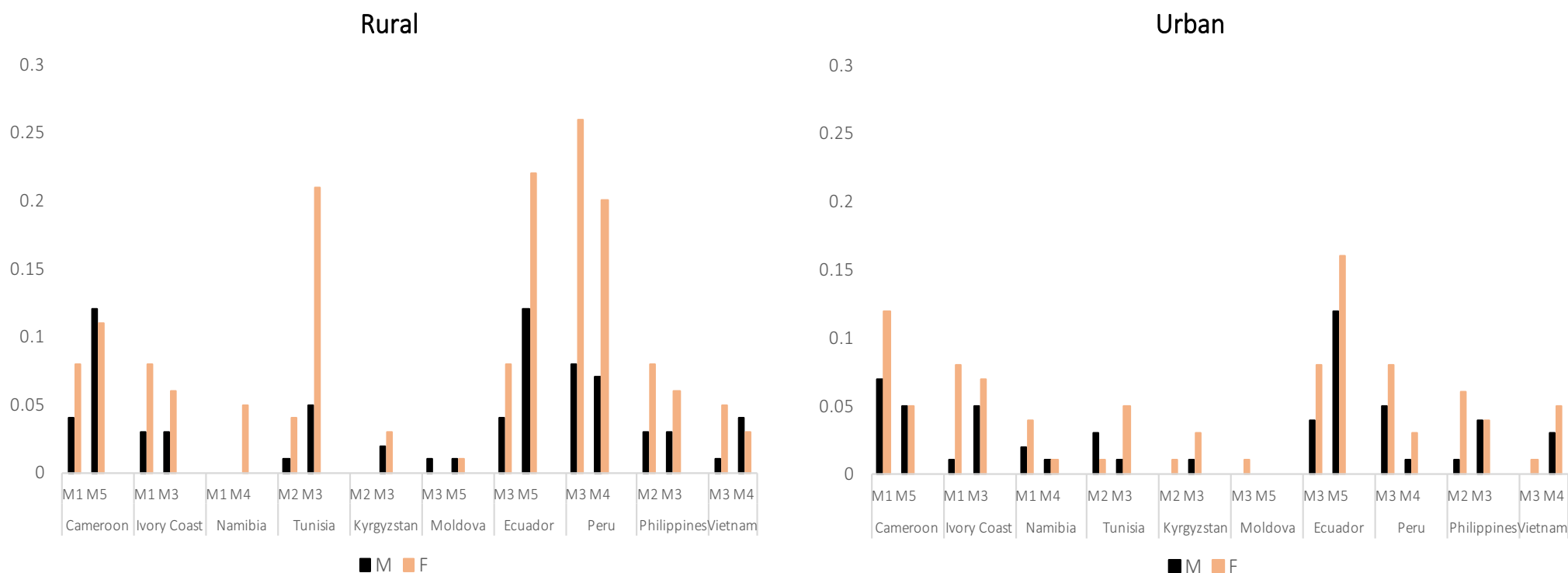
(a) Mainly intended for sale = either all, or at least half of output intended to be sold, for at least one crop

(b) T-tests of equality of means were conducted across men and women within each set of columns; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

(c) Sampling weights used.

# Counting employment: recovery questions

ILO LFS pilot countries: share of men and women re-classified as employed, through recovery questions on contributing family work



Notes: Similar patterns observed for recovery questions on paid work in agriculture, and to a lesser extent on small/secondary jobs.

Source: Koolwal (2018), based on ILO LFS pilot study data accessed at ILO.

# Labor underutilization

- Narrowed definition of employment under ICLS 19 → need to consider additional measures of labor underutilization, along with standard measures of unemployment

Time-related underemployment

Potential labor force

Working hours

Availability to work

Desire to work

Seeking work

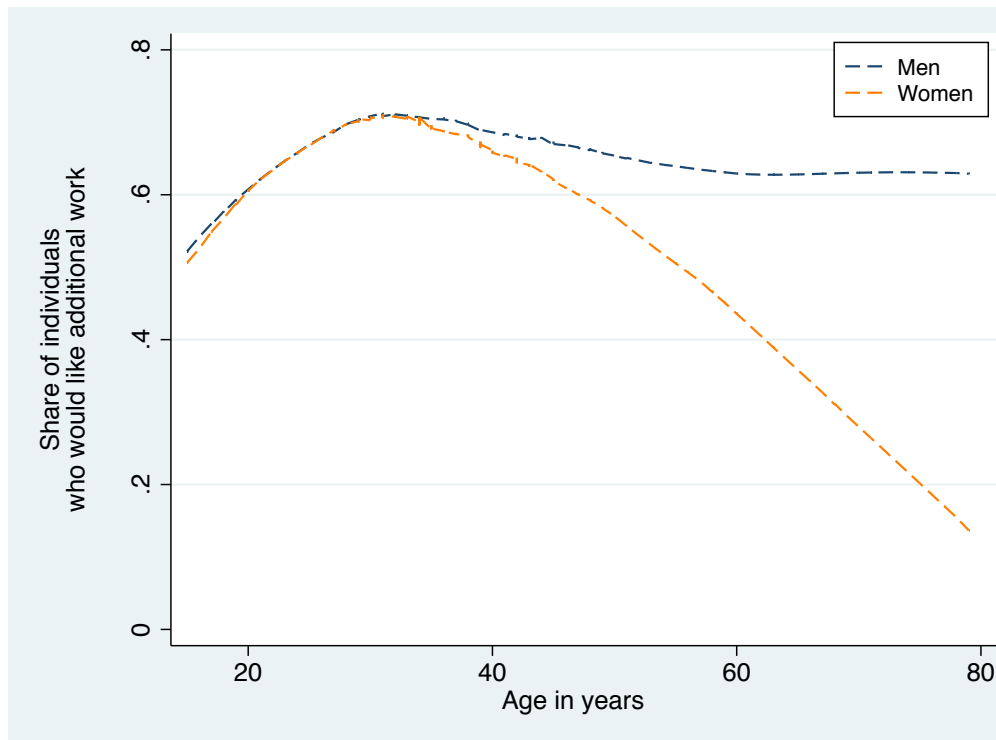
- **Unpaid work burdens:** rural women's engagement across different paid and unpaid activities, often simultaneously, leads to constraints on their time and economic opportunities



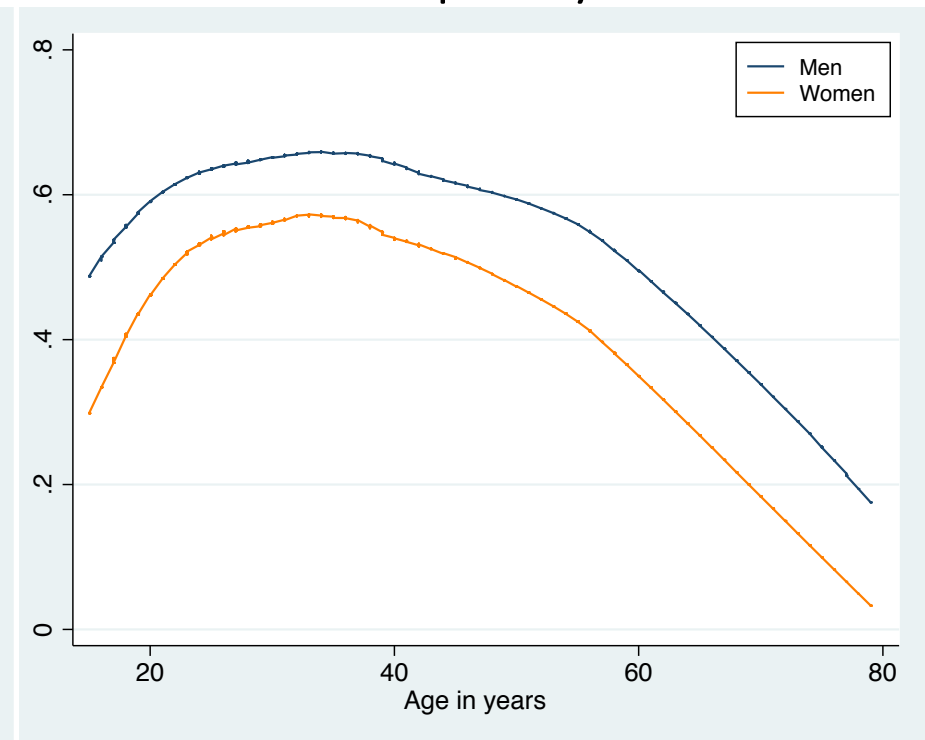
# Labor underutilization: desire to work

Uganda LSMS-ISA, 2013-14: how desire to work varies with age  
(own-reporting sample)

Below poverty line



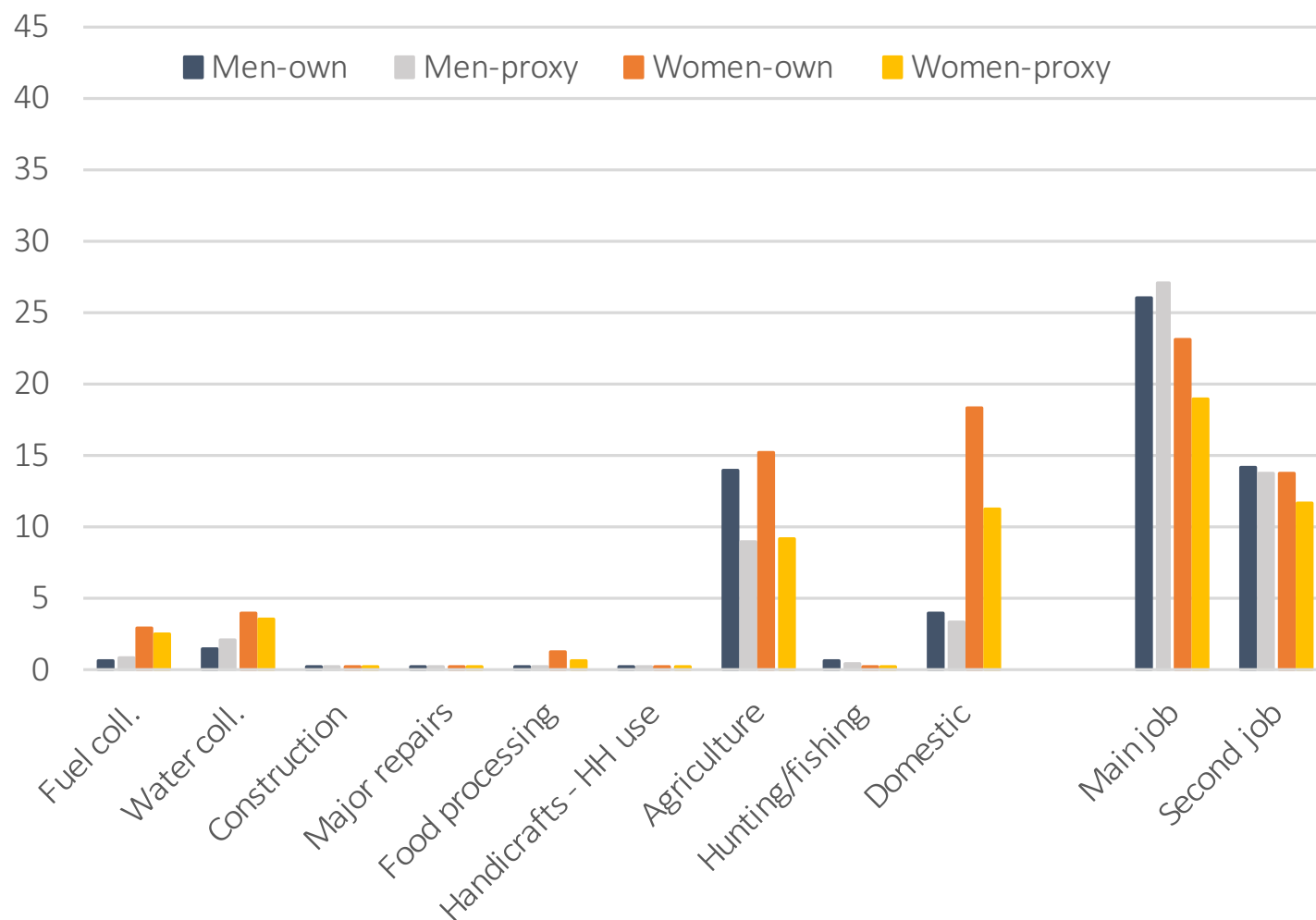
Above poverty line



- Need for more contextual questions on reasons for wanting/not wanting to work more (quality of available economic opportunities, time constraints)

# Unpaid work burdens

## Uganda LSMS-ISA, 2013-14: hours spent in unpaid and paid activities last week

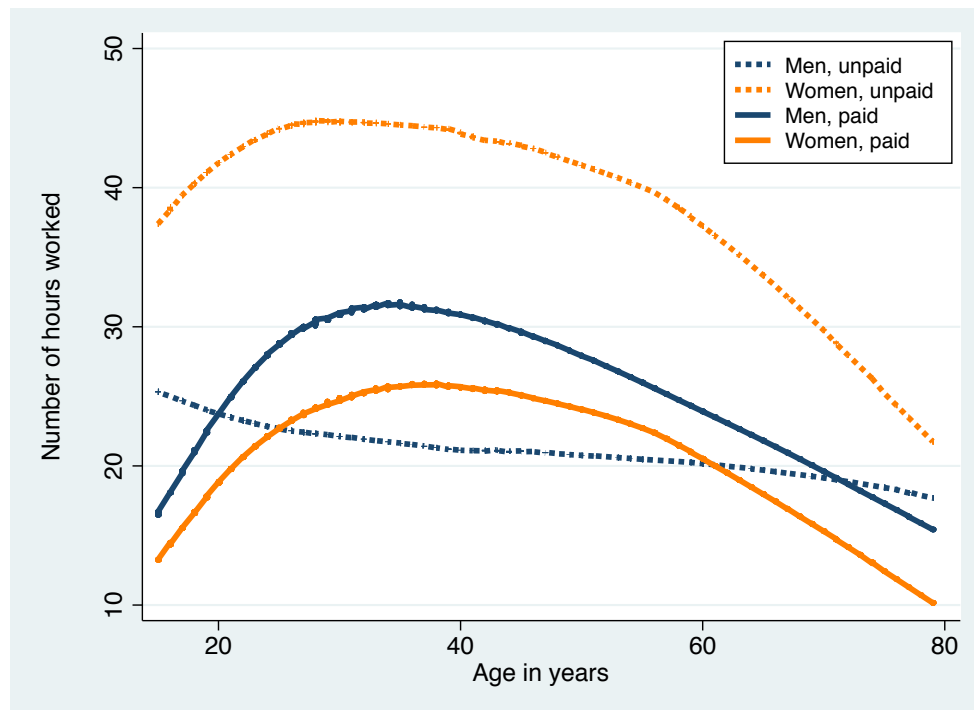


- Possible breakdown across market/non-market activity in agriculture
- Within domestic work, break out time spent in caring for children, elderly and disabled (Buvinic and King, 2018; Folbre, 2018)
- How to handle simultaneous activities?

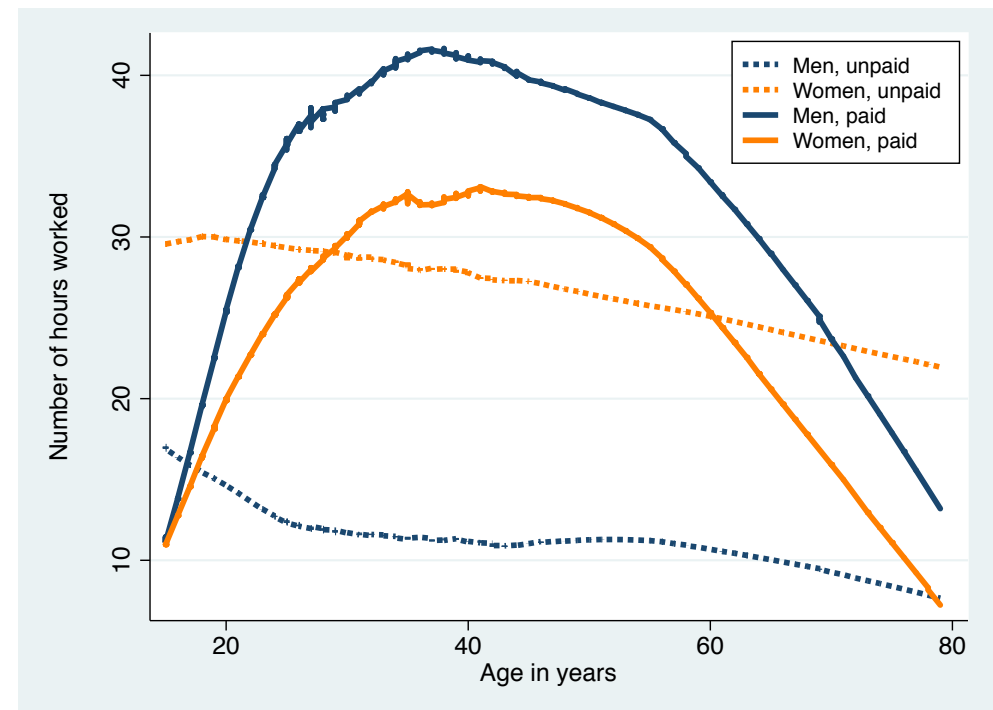
# Total work burdens: higher for rural women

Uganda LSMS-ISA, 2013-14: time spent in paid and unpaid activities, by age

Rural

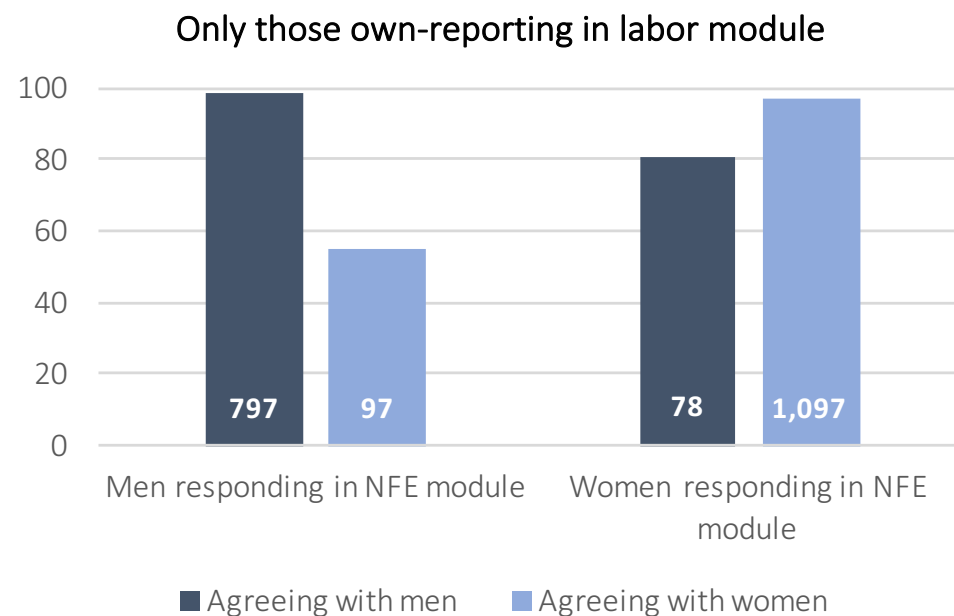
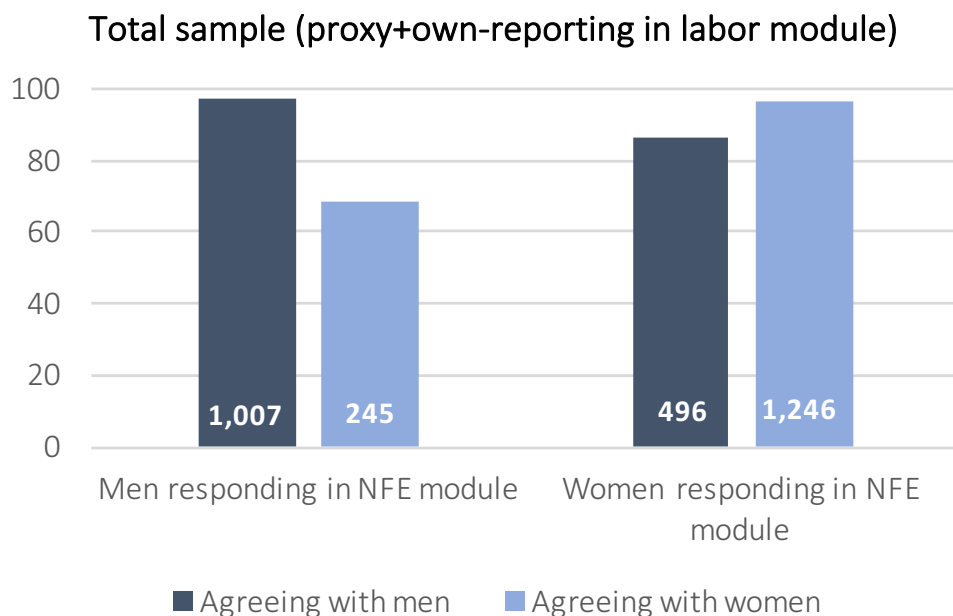


Urban



# Earnings, ownership and decision-making roles

Malawi LSMS-ISA, 2016-17: share of respondents in NFE module, agreeing with men and women who report in labor module that they run a business



- Decision-making questions over earnings and management of operations: useful in contexts where family businesses/farms are common, and individual allocations of profits are difficult to measure.
- But ensuring reported decision-making roles are consistent across modules/ household members can be challenging

# Data needs amid rural economic transitions

## Work-related migration

- **How have economic shifts and rural-urban migration affected rural men and women?** Individual-level data on place of migration, sector of work, and remittances (Ethiopia LSMS-ISA has detailed questions; Malawi LSMS-ISA has data on individuals aged 15+ sending remittances)

## Qualifications and skills

- **Considering education separately from skills (ICLS 20 guidelines):** need to examine job-specific/technical skills as well as non-cognitive skills, especially for self-employed (Campos et al, 2017; Donald et al, 2017; Women's Employment in Agriculture Index; Buvinic and Furst-Nichols, 2014).

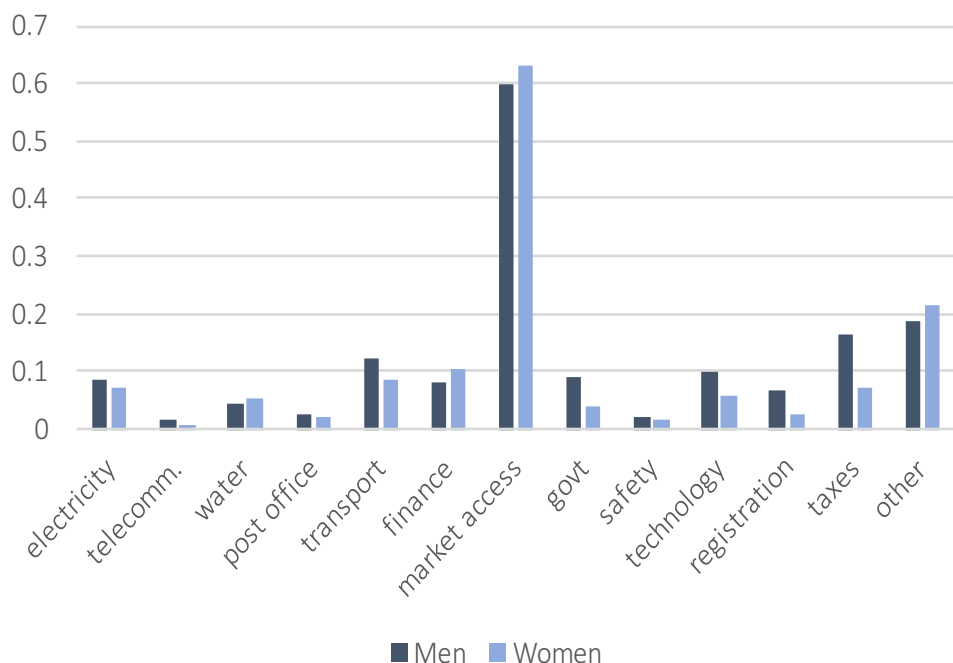
## Economic mobility and technology

- **What economic constraints/opportunities do men and women face?** labor underutilization, growing a business; using/adopting new technologies like mobile phones (for agr., bank transactions, information on weather, markets) (Udry, 2018; Global Findex, 2017; Aker and Mbiti, 2010)

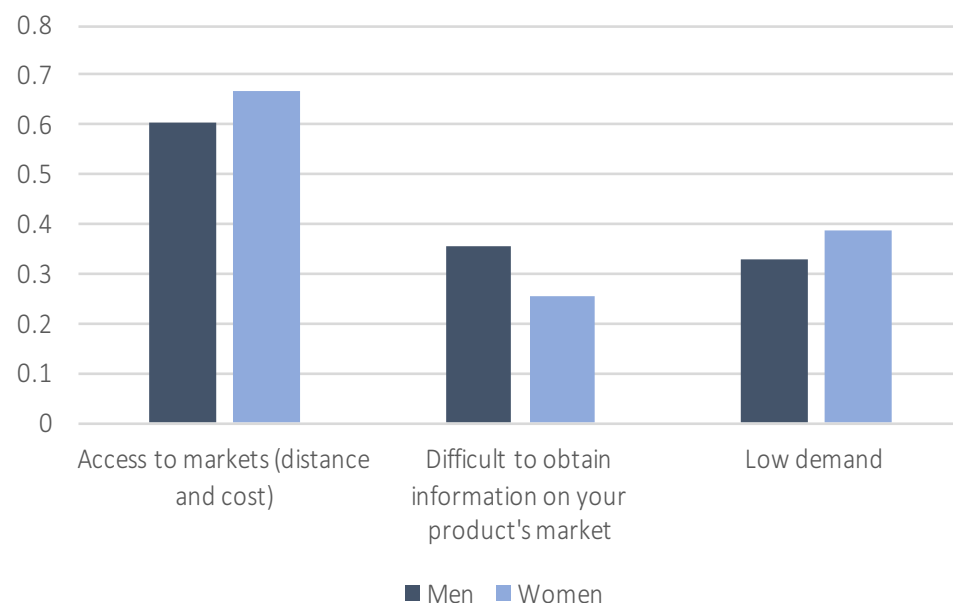
# Constraints to market access for NFE owners

## Ethiopia 2015-16 LSMS-ISA: Reported constraints to non-farm enterprise growth (own-reporting sample)

Across all reported constraints



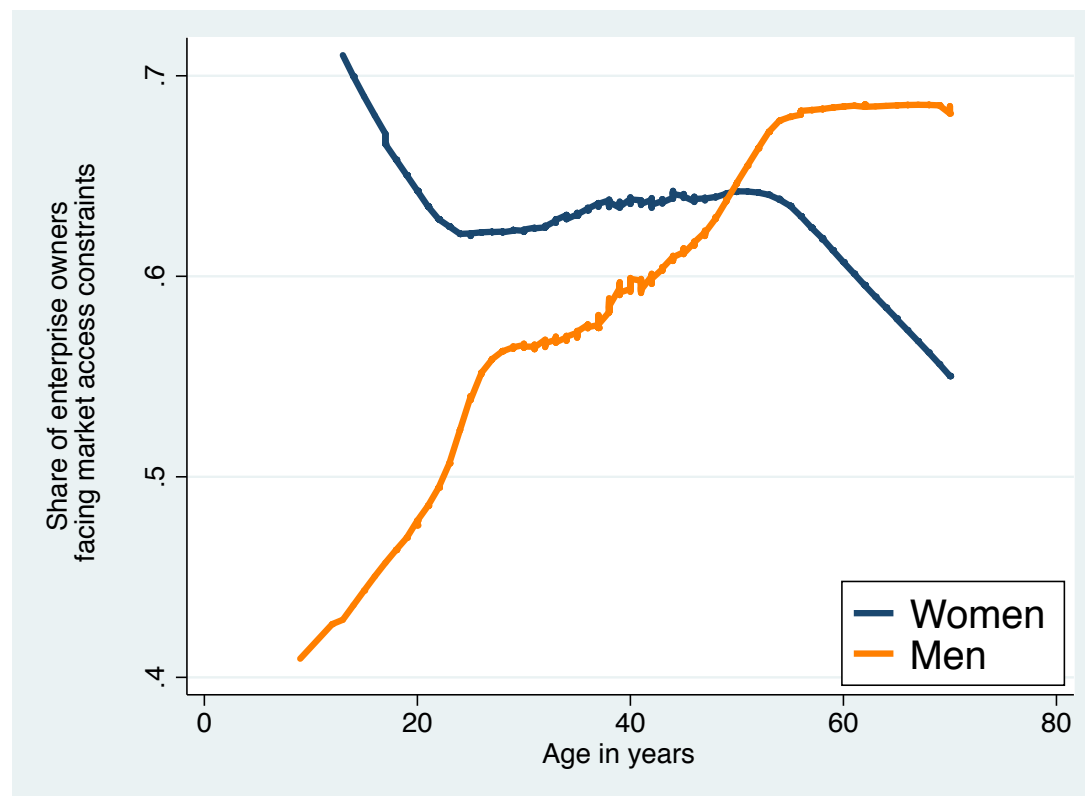
Within those reporting market-related constraints



- Additional question also asked on how same constraints affect household members from opening a business, but not asked at the individual level

# Constraints to market access for NFE owners

Ethiopia 2015-16 LSMS-ISA:  
Reported market access constraints to NFE growth  
(own-reporting sample), by age



# Conclusions

## Counting rural women's employment

- Boundary questions for agriculture – importance of own-use production, addressing seasonality
- Recovery questions for contributing family work, other smaller/informal jobs

## Labor underutilization and time use

- Importance of questions on desire to work
- Unpaid work: hours spent in own-use production, marketing/selling agricultural output, care work (children, elderly, disabled)

## Decision-making in businesses and farms

- Addressing sensitivity of these questions to respondent

## Employment outcomes amid rural economic transitions

- Individual-level questions on migration
- Skills (job-specific, basic (literacy/numeracy), and transferable skills); the importance of non-cognitive skills for self-employed
- Constraints to economic mobility: expanded data on market access specifically