

Community development and ELR: a gender-aware perspective

The Jefes y Jefas program in Argentina



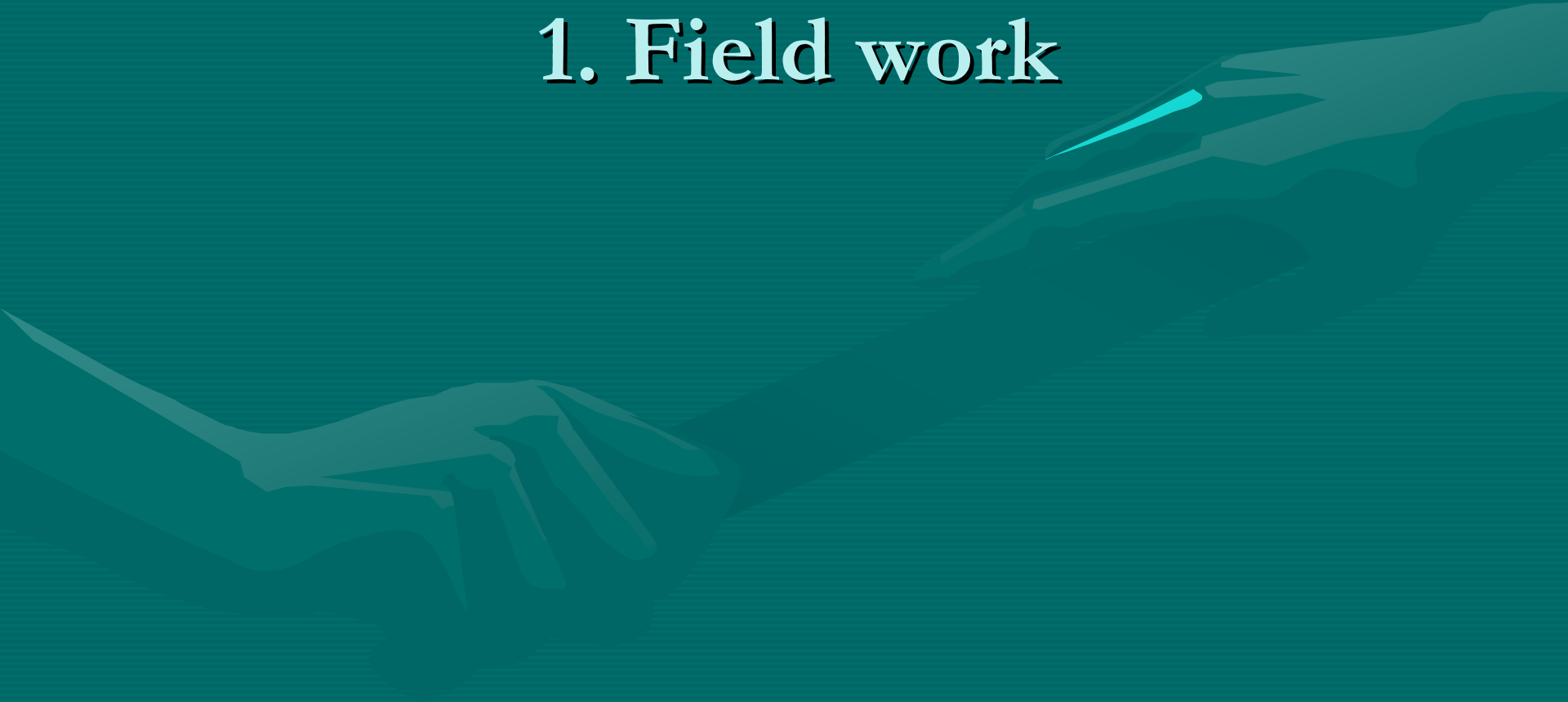
70 years later... the piqueteros [Berni, MALBA]

Goals

- The Jefes y Jefas program is an emergency employment policy created after the 2001 crisis to provide a job (community work) to the poorest heads of household.
 - prevented the Argentinean society from collapsing.
 - The economy is now recovering: ELR is still needed to promote sustainable development.
- The ELR is a multi-dimensional program that can be applied in developing countries:
 - to promote overall economic development (Pastoret 2005)
 - To promote community development (dimension studied in this paper)

- Women:
 - main beneficiaries (>70%) of the Jefes y Jefas program (work, education, emotional support, childcare...)
 - major actors making welfare-enhancing community projects possible and relatively successful.
- Method: surveys (August 2006) in the poorest neighborhoods of Buenos Aires.

1. Field work



Methods

Interviews (research methods approved by the IRB):

- in general: 45 participants were interviewed during ~ 30 minutes, in a separate room (recording)
 - At their workplace or in employment offices
 - at home: we interviewed one woman at home with her family
 - Mostly women, we interviewed 5 men participants.
- a few collective recordings: weekly participants meetings
- interviews with managers

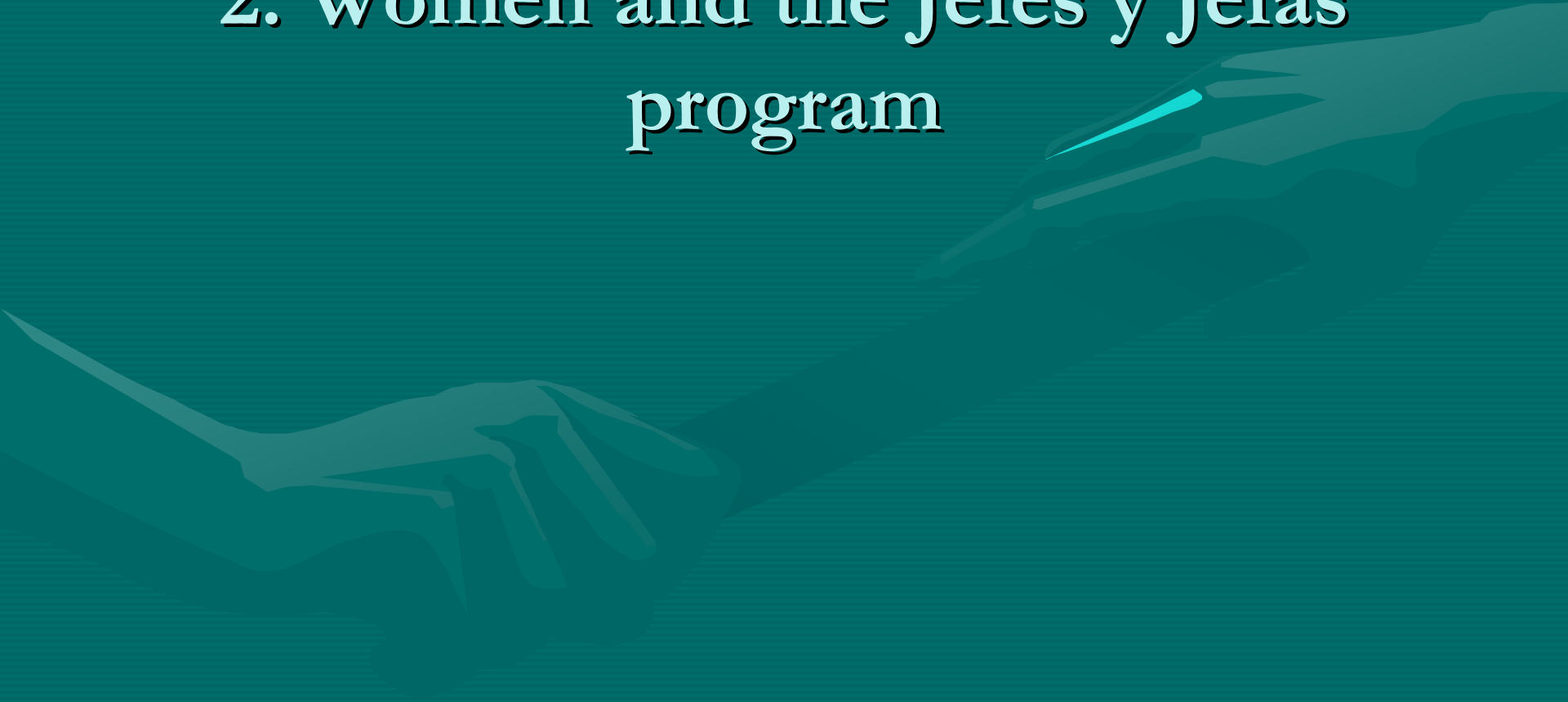
Projects visited

- Neighborhoods: high poverty, violence, drug, unemployment and informal jobs are the rule
-but immense solidarity and generosity and high “sense” of community
- Many projects visited are on the Lomas de Zamora municipality: this municipality can be taken as a model for linking ELR and community development.

Lomas de Zamora

- Municipality with a global project that goes far beyond the initial “Jefes y Jefas” program:
 - The “Municipal Institute for Production, Labor and Trade employment office” (IMPTCE) is a fundamental institution; it includes an employment office
 - articulates all the needs of the community (employment, financing of “productive” projects, women’s rights, education and training, poverty reduction, housing, violence prevention...) .
 - The ELR theory can integrate all these priorities.

2. Women and the Jefes y Jefas program



...er las voces,
...ncias y acciones
...mujeres en el
...laboral para
...ender la historia
...ajo y la producción.



...eres y varones en condiciones de libertad, igualdad, seguridad y dignidad humana.



"CONSTRUIR
TRABAJO DIG
ES TAMBIÉN
HISTORIA DE
MUJERES!"

Recuperar las voces,
presencias y acciones
de las mujeres en el
movimiento obrero



del trabajo y la p

IGUALDAD DE OPORTUNIDADES EN EL ACCESO AL TRABAJO

Derecho a elegir y ser elegida
para todas las oportunidades de empleo.



ASEGURAR EL EJERCICIO EFFECTIVO DE LOS DERECHOS LABORALES

Su cumplimiento se garantiza con la
oportuna del Estado y de las organizaciones
empresariales.

Ley de Contrato de Trabajo N° 20.540
Artículo: (Prohibición de hacer distinción)
Por esta Ley se prohíbe cualquier
tipo de discriminación entre los trabajadores
por motivos de sexo, raza,
nacionalidad, religiosos,
políticos, gremiales
o de edad.

"CONSTRUIR UN
TRABAJO DIGNO
ES TAMBIÉN
HISTORIA DE
MUJERES"

Instalación
de las mujeres
Mayo de 2006



Eva Duarte de Perón 12/3/47



"CONSTRUIR UN
TRABAJO DIGNO
ES TAMBIÉN
HISTORIA DE
MUJERES"

Women's reaction to the 2001 crisis

- Women relied on social networks to survive in a very hostile environment: high unemployment –both on formal and informal markets”, insecurity, violence, malnutrition....
- Women have played a major role:
 - to avoid the disintegration of their family and their community by developing an alternative economy based on solidarity (new institutions)
 - the Jefes y Jefas program (70% are women) provided the financial means and the infrastructure to make individual projects possible and to promote education, training and productive activities.
 - The state alone cannot do everything : the state, communities and individuals worked together at two complementary levels (individuals-structures positive interaction).

Women's high participation in the Jefes y Jefas (>70%)

- Strategy within the household: men have an easier access to the informal and formal labor markets (cartoneros)
- In men's mind, The Jefes y Jefas program is associated with women's "duties"
 - Not men's responsibility to be involved in community projects.
 - But men do think that women's works (public kitchen, nurseries, micro-enterprises) are crucial for women, their family and their community.
 - Division of labor within the community clearly based on gender.
- Men in the program:
 - They are usually older and lost their job (formal or informal) after the crisis and were then unable to find a new job.
 - They feel ashamed, desperate, feel they should not be here (except if receive education, training or work in some of the micro-enterprises).
 - They acknowledge that the Jefes y Jefas program provided them "a second family"

Women's involvement in the success of the projects

- Women are a major factor promoting economic development, solidarity, knowledge sharing...
 - Create their own projects
 - Or are very involved in the success of the projects they work in: work more than required or even work when are not required to (women who moved to familias)

How the J&J improves women's lives in very poor neighborhoods

- Work close to their home
- Women are relatively independent (Eva Peron's legacy?)
- The well-being of their children (and of all the children of their community) is their main motive for being involved in the J&J program. They spent most of the money they receive for their children
- Increase self-confidence, empowered women: most are proud to work and to bring better living conditions for their community
- The Jefes y Jefas projects also provide psychological and emotional stability ("second family" type links) to women in the poorest communities
- Prevention of violence and drug abuses (posters on the sites) and discussion groups (meetings)
- Political involvement (barrios de pie) and social consciousness (ideology, progressive policy, anti-imperialism)
- Better access to the private sector for women who want to work outside: training, counseling, new skills (ocupacion plan)

Interactions with the traditional productive sector

- Children are not a real constraint preventing women to find a job (older children, neighbors, family takes care of them if necessary)
- Better access to the private sector for women who want to work outside: training, counseling, new skills (ocupacion)
- Young women with children prefer to find a job in the private sector to buy a house, provide a better life for their family.
- Most women feel they would not be respected if they find a job outside the Jefes: many mentioned how they were “badly” considered when they were working in the informal sector (housekeeping...). They also mentioned the bad experiences they had when looking for a job. At least in the Jefes, they felt they are respected.

3. ELR and community development



ELR: a multi-dimensional program

The employer of last resort program can be implemented in:

- Developed capitalist countries: ELR plays the role of buffer stock to absorb employment fluctuations generated by business cycles. The ELR supports demand in the economy and improves workers' skills.
- Developing countries:
 - The ELR can be a long-term tool for development (see Pastoret 2005), in order to support full-employment developing policies.
 - The state defines the overall development goals and guarantees full employment.
 - The state can implement specific infrastructures, training and education.
 - PRODUCTIVE SECTOR (traditional definition of “productive” activities)

The ELR can also promote community development, especially in the poorest neighborhoods. The state or the community supports projects or programs that are PRODUCTIVE IN A GENERAL SENSE (non-monetary factors).

→ ELR becomes a buffer stock with an important social dimension

Solidarity-based economy

- Micro-enterprises
- Jefes y Jefas productive projects
- Feria or direct sales between neighbors
- Possible alternative monies (creditos)
- Profit/money is not the only motive for producing
- Strengthen the community

4. Detailed presentation of the projects

