

<p>Institution: Queen's University Belfast</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 23 - Sociology</p>
<p>Title of case study: The Grass Ceiling: Reaching Women in Rural Areas</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact 56% of the European Union (EU) population and 35% of the population of Northern Ireland (NI) live in rural areas. While rural living is sometimes portrayed as an idyllic lifestyle, the reality often differs. Lower population density means that services are more limited than in urban areas, with different impacts for particular socio-economic groups, especially women. For example, lack of childcare provision can affect rural women's ability to work outside the home. The gendered nature of farm ownership means that farming policies have not always addressed farming women's needs. The research in this case study had the following impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development of a £1.5 million Rural Childcare Programme in NI. • Assisting the development of future EU rural policy by informing the European Parliament and European Commission about the role of women in agriculture.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which has a seven year cycle with the current one ending 2013, continues to be the most expensive European policy. It is often initially understood as a policy that subsidises the farming industry. However, the CAP has broader reach, affecting the lives of men and women on farms, and rural dwellers generally. As farming income declines, the off-farm employment of women on farms is essential to the survival of the family farm. Women often play a managerial role in farm decisions. While women's position is shaped by the fact that they do not inherit land, there is no reason women should not play an equal role to men in rural development programmes. However, little research to date has considered the role of women in rural development.</p> <p>Four pieces of research underpin this case study. Research studies 1 and 2 relate specifically to the EU rural development programme in NI. Research study 3 relates to the CAP at an EU level. Research study 4 relates to childcare provision in NI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender Proofing CAP Reforms. Funded by the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme. £87,000. January 2000-July 2001. Researchers: Shortall and research assistant Kelly (now working as Clerk to the Bill Office, NI Assembly). This project examined the implications of CAP reforms on farm families and people living in rural areas in NI, with a particular focus on women. We interviewed farming unions, women's networks, civil servants, EU officials and conducted focus groups with men and women on farms and rural dwellers. The report noted the need to specifically target women to ensure that they engaged with the Rural Development Programme. It also noted the issue of inadequate childcare provision in rural areas and how this impacted on women's employment options. The stress of minding children on a farm, which is a workplace as well as a home, was also highlighted in this study. 2. Gender Mainstreaming the Rural Development Programme. Funded by the ESRC Follow on Fund, 2012, £85,184 with an additional £8,700 from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). Researchers: Shortall and Kelly (see above). This research updated previous work detailed in point 1 above on how to more effectively engage women in the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for NI. Despite the previous research being over a decade old, it is still being quoted in DARD policy documents, NGO reports and in childcare studies. This research was designed in close consultation with DARD, the Local Action Groups who deliver the RDP, women's networks, and key rural development and agricultural organisations. The methodology replicated the previous study as much as possible; we interviewed farming

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unions, women's networks, civil servants, EU officials and conducted focus groups with men and women on farms, and men and women in rural areas. The timing of the research was significant as it can inform the end of the current Programme and the drafting of the next Programme post-2013.

3. **Women working on the farm: how to promote their contribution to the development of agriculture and rural areas in Europe. 2010.** Funded by the European Parliament, Brussels. Researcher: Shortall. This research provided **an overview of the situation of women in farming across the EU**. It was primarily desk research, pulling together European research, with some additional analysis by Eurostat. It looked at women's contribution to the farm labour force, their contribution to farm income through off-farm work and diversification activities. It considered the political and legal framework of the EU and how it impacts on women on farms. Finally it offered some recommendations for the CAP post-2013, including **how to increase women's representation on national monitoring committees**.
4. **Participation in the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group** to prepare a report to inform a rural childcare strategy. 2007-2008.
Researcher: Shortall and advisory group. Shortall was one of the 21 members of the group, including NGOs, childcare providers, academics and civil servants. The group was convened to advise the Minister on **how to address inadequate childcare provision in rural areas**. It considered existing research and heavily used reference 1 below. In addition to desk research, the group visited rural childcare facilities. This group recommended that DARD should fund a specific rural childcare programme and provide training to increase the number of registered rural childminders.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Policy Reports and Briefs:

1. Shortall, S. and R. Kelly (2001) *Gender Proofing CAP Reforms*. The Rural Community Network NI, Cookstown.
2. Shortall, S. (2010) *Women working on the farm: how to promote their contribution to the development of agriculture and rural areas in Europe*. Brussels, European Parliament
3. *Rural Childcare: investing in the future (2008)*. Report by the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Journal articles:

4. Kelly, R. and S. Shortall (2002) 'Farmers' Wives': Women who are off-farm breadwinners & the implications for on-farm gender relations. *Journal of Sociology*. Volume 38, No. 4 pp.327-343.
5. Shortall, S. (2002) Gendered agricultural and rural restructuring: a case study of Northern Ireland. *Sociologia Ruralis*. Volume 42 No. 2 pp.160-176.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Impact 1. Local level: Rural Development Fund & childcare provision

The research summarised in Research studies 1, 2 and 4, supported by References 1, 3, 4 and 5, has highlighted the differential impacts of rural policies on women in NI. Particular findings include the need to target farm-training at women living and working on farms. The need to provide childcare in rural areas in order to facilitate female employment was recognised in the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group report (reference 3). This report recommended that the Department should fund a specific childcare programme, train childminders living in rural areas and create new childcare places.

Policy makers and civil servants have used the research extensively to develop rural policies, most notably, the £1.5 million initiative to improve childcare provision in rural parts of NI, launched by DARD in 2009. Working through the Childminding Association, **training and support was provided to create 100 new child minders and 400 new childcare places over a two year period**. This was part of DARD's wider policy to address poverty and social exclusion in rural

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areas. As recognised by the research outlined in this case study, the policy recognised that the lack of rural childcare was a barrier to parents' participation in employment, social and community activities, and this was particularly true for women.

In the press coverage of the launch, the Minister explicitly made the connection between the new policy initiative and the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group Report (reference 3). The DARD website on the Rural Childcare Programme also refers to the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group Report as does the programme guidelines. The Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group Report in which Shortall participated underpinned this policy initiative. Furthermore, Kelly and Shortall's (2001) research (reference no. 1) is heavily used in the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group Report.

The impact therefore relates to a wide range of actors. For example, policy makers and civil servants, who drew heavily on the research to design rural policy, childminding organisations who were funded to train childminders, people (all women) who were trained to be childminders and therefore skilled for employment, as well as rural families.

Impact 2. EU level: EU rural policy

The research, summarised in Research study 3, was on foot of a commission by the European Parliament in 2010. This led to the publication of a policy report (reference 2), which assesses the situation of women in farming in the 27 EU Member States. Furthermore, the report provides a series of recommendations on how the Parliament could improve the position of women in the revised CAP policies post-2013. The report, prepared for EU civil servants, highlighted the need to increase women's representation in rural policy, for example, on national monitoring committees.

The research, directly requested by EU Parliament, provides the necessary evidence base to inform the direction of future rural policy post-2013.

The impact relates therefore not only in terms of policymakers at an EU level but also in terms of achieving a greater representation of farming women on **Rural Development Programme national monitoring committees across Europe**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Verification – some examples:**

1. Evidence to corroborate impact no. 1 above: Direct link between research and involvement in the Rural Childcare Strategy Group leading to the £1.5 million Rural Childcare Programme introduced by DARD in 2009. See below links to Ministerial statements and DARD webpage identifying the Childcare Report as the lynchpin in this policy development.

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-drd-281212-rail-refurbishment-and-2/media-centre/news-departments/news-dard/news-dard-june-2009/news-dard-090609-gildernew-launches-new.htm>

2. Evidence to corroborate impact no. 2 above: Publication of evidence report for the European Parliament on their website informing future direction of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Shortall, S. (2010) Women working on the farm: how to promote their contribution to the development of agriculture and rural areas in Europe. European Parliament, Brussels. IP/B/AGRI/IC/2010_090

Contacts were provided at the following user/beneficiary organizations:

The European Parliament (to corroborate impact no. 2):
Assistant to Agriculture and Rural Development

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland (to corroborate impact no. 1)
Grade 7: Sustainable Communities Branch