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Introduction

Introducing the Decisions for Life project

From 9 through 11 May 2011, more than 100 women from 23 countries gathered at an International Young Women's Conference to discuss the next stage of a campaign to empower young women workers around the world. The conference was held in Amsterdam, in the framework of the Decisions for Life) campaign, and organized jointly by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the UNI Global Union, the Wage Indicator Foundation (WIF) and the University of Amsterdam (see Box 1.1). The authors of this volume are associated with this university.

The DFL campaign started with the DFL project, covering trade union and web activities in 14 developing countries: Brazil, India and Indonesia; the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine; and the southern African countries Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project was awarded a substantial grant from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of its strategy to support the UN Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3), "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women". DFL focused in particular on one of the four MDG3 priority areas as identified by the ministry: promoting formal employment and equal opportunity at the labour market.

The DFL project ran from June 2008 until December 2011. It aimed to raise awareness amongst young women about their employment opportunities and career possibilities, about family building and about work-family balance – in short, it aimed to empower young women and show them that they have choices in life. The project's point of departure was that the lifetime decisions adolescent girls and young women face will determine not only their individual futures but also the future of society: their choices are key to the demographic and workforce development of the nation. The project targeted women in the service industries because these industries employ the majority of working women in the 15–29 age group and because these industries are expanding in (almost) all 14 countries. The project focused on eight occupational groups in commerce (salespersons/cashiers in retail), finance (secretaries, bookkeepers), call centres and IT/BPO (call centre operators, IT programmers) and tourism (hotel housekeepers and receptionists, travel agents).

The Decisions for Life project followed a two-pronged awareness-raising strategy. The national trade unions developed campaigning activities through meetings and training sessions in 12 of 14 countries. These activities were facilitated by online information through the respective national *WageIndicator* websites, particularly on statutory minimum wages and on rights of women and labour. Female organizers of the unions affiliated with ITUC and UNI – increasingly those from other unions too – played major roles. As a result, at the end of the three conference days in 2011, the participants unanimously adopted a declaration in which they demanded that ITUC and UNI, as well as their affiliates and the *WageIndicator*, expand Decisions for Life and mainstream the methods used in the project.

Box 1.1 Tabisa

The International Young Women's Conference was dedicated to the memory of Tabisa Sigaba, a young South African woman and a DFL campaign leader and full-time shop steward from SACCAWU (South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union). In 2010 Tabisa passed away suddenly because of a tragic car accident. She came up with the idea to organize an international conference with young women. The event in Amsterdam was held in memory of her passionate commitment to the empowerment of young women workers.

In the Decisions for Life project, the University of Amsterdam, in particular its Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS), was responsible for drafting a gender analysis of work and employment for all 14 countries involved. These inventories served the campaigns and the websites. Although Botswana and Malawi were not included in the trade union and web activities, these countries are included in this book. In total, 14 country reports were published as AIAS working papers (Van Klaveren et al. 2009a–g; 2010a–g). This book builds on these reports as well as on DFL project reporting, *WageIndicator* survey data and recent literature.

Impact of the Decisions for Life project

The trade union activities deployed in the Decisions for Life project have considerable impact. The national union campaigns under the DFL umbrella reached out directly to the nearly 100,000 girls and young women who attended meetings or were talked to in streets and public places. For Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe alone, an evaluation report stated that the DFL trade union activities had reached over 21,000 beneficiaries between 2009 and 2011. This resulted in an increase in union membership of the target group and an increase of women's participation in union decision-making bodies ranging from 1 to 40 per cent. The *WageIndicator* websites reported five million web visitors to the websites in the 14 countries in 2010 and 2011. Brazil and India reported 850,000 and 680,000 web visitors, respectively. In 2010 the midterm DFL project evaluation meeting of 40 representatives from southern Africa and Brazil presented a snapshot of their experiences. They considered the achievements up till then as unique in their trade union history: allowing them to put working women's problems and needs on the union agenda, triggering new union policies and leading to solutions. Already in November 2009, the COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) confederation in South Africa decided to integrate the DFL aims in its programme for the next three years. Since then, the DFL project has been filtering down through all COSATU affiliates, as illustrated in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2 Decisions for Life in South Africa

"In terms of the effect the Decisions for Life project has had on the trade union organization as such, it supports the need to rejuvenate the leadership. Young female trade union activists have picked up the relevance of the Decisions for Life aims soon after their introduction and used them to widen working girls' horizons, open up their minds and give them a more optimistic outlook on working life. And while doing so they have explored their own capacities to direct a union and to recruit new members, which are very much needed." (Theodora Steele, organizing secretary COSATU, DFL midterm meeting, Maputo, 22–6 March 2010)

"It is important, [it] comes at an opportune time for the trade union and it is a good tool. "Because times have changed. During the anti-apartheid struggle it was quite normal for working people to join the unions, it was the sensible thing to do. But in today's South Africa unions are in membership need, in particular of young recruits, and especially in the services sector where female employment predominates. But young working girls are not interested, they don't even know the unions exist, or they think it is something for older people. They don't automatically come to the unions any more. Yet, the Decisions for Life project somehow is changing that." (Patricia Nyman, national gender coordinator, South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), Maputo, 22–6 March 2010)

On the last day of the International Young Women's Conference, the participants unanimously adopted a declaration in which they demanded that the ITUC and UNI, jointly with their affiliates and the *WageIndicator*, expand Decisions for Life to other countries and fully support, integrate and mainstream DFL methods. The declaration then stressed demands to be made in the organizational and facilitating sphere. Of the five ways specified, these three stand out: (1) building a modern trade unionism which is inclusive for young women and includes a young woman–centred approach reflected in trade union policies, actions, structures and in the composition of its membership and leadership at all levels; (2) helping to build spaces where young women feel safe to meet and talk and receive education which assists them to make decisions in life; and (3) providing to young women vital labour market information about wages, salaries, law in national *WageIndicator* websites, plus in-print, radio and television discussion, including union media resources and social networks, to encourage young women to use the *WageIndicator* instruments. The reactions to this declaration of the ITUC staff members in the conference room were highly positive; clearly the worldwide union umbrella is committed to integrate DFL methods and best practices in its policies and activities (cf. the Decisions for Life website).

The target group

In the 14 countries, the DFL project targeted adolescent women in the 15–29 age group and working in commercial services. This seemingly clear definition of the target group hides a heterogeneous group, including school-attending girls of 15, late adolescents (the 16–19 group), adolescents of 20 and over, and women with a partner and children. This age group is in several stages of the transition into adulthood, whereby entry into adulthood is mostly retreat into the domestic sphere. The transition differs greatly based on gender. Compared with the younger years, it is at this age when gender roles intensify and increasingly shape day-to-day experience. Temin and Levine (2009, 11) emphasize that successful health programmes must accommodate gender-related needs, including the need for confidentiality and an awareness of girls' unique vulnerabilities. We add that this also applies to programmes and campaigns focusing on education and employment. In all these activities adolescents cannot just be treated as adults. What is more, this age group is currently also part of the first generations to come of age in a world facing a complex constellation of challenges, ranging negatively from HIV/AIDS to, mostly positively, mobile phones and the Internet (cf. Donahue 2010). Although the world they are growing up in is built on choices made by adults, the women in the 15–29 group will make their own decisions concerning their future. This book addresses the challenges facing this group.

Against this backdrop, we aim to provide a lively but also – as far as possible within existing limits – statistically underpinned overview of the perspectives of our target group. In 192 countries around the globe, approximately 860 million girls and young women in the 15–29 group are living (authors' calculations based on ILO EAPEP database, ILO 2011b). In the 14 countries at stake, DFL reached out to 11.8 million girls and young women working in urban areas in commercial services; that is, to about 1.4 per cent of all females in this age cohort in the world, including wage earners as well as self-employed or contributing family workers. The countries contributing the largest numbers of targeted girls and young women were Brazil (4.3 million), Indonesia (2.5 million), India (2.4 million) and South Africa (1.4 million). We also calculated that in the next five years in the DFL countries 4.6 to 5.7 million girls and young women (depending on economic conditions) would enter into commercial services employment (calculations based on ILO 2011b and national statistics).

The figures assembled make clear that neither agriculture nor manufacturing is leading in providing female employment; the service sector at large is the current mainstay of female labour. In eight of 13 DFL countries – including South Africa (84%), Brazil (73%) and Ukraine (63%; data for Angola is lacking) – the share of services at large (including government services) in total female employment is over 50 per cent. Indonesia (45%) makes up a middle category of its own, whereas with 26 per cent India displays a substantially lower score. The share of females employed in the service sector in the mainly agricultural southern African countries is even lower: Mozambique has just 10 per cent, Malawi 9 per cent, Zambia 18 per cent. The share of females employed in commercial services (including domestic workers) shows similar variation across countries: with 55 per cent it is largest in

South Africa, followed by 46 per cent in Brazil, 39 per cent in Botswana, 35 per cent in Indonesia, 30 per cent in Kazakhstan, 28 per cent in Azerbaijan, 18 per cent in India, until only 9 per cent in Mozambique and less than 7 per cent in Malawi (sources: Figure 4.2).

The MDGs and empowerment

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that all 193 UN member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. One of the eight is MDG3, aiming to promote gender equality and empower women. How progress to this rather vague goal was to be measured is specified. MDG3 aimed to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 but at all levels by 2015. The 2005 goal was not met, and this book will discuss the chance that it will be met by 2015 for our 14 countries. MDG3 additionally aimed at increasing the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments. A second MDG is also important for women; namely, MDG5, which is aimed at improving maternal health. Progress on these two important MDGs is mixed. According to UN reporting in 2011, in the ten years since 2000 in the developing countries, primary education progress for girls has shown significant improvement towards gender parity, and the share of women in non-agricultural paid employment increased to almost 40 per cent in 2009, though progress has slowed in recent years. Finally, the maternal mortality ratio dropped significantly, to 290 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, but here the MDG target is still far off (UN 2011).

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2012*, on gender equality and development, strongly holds that closing the persistent gender gaps in education and health matters (World Bank 2011b, 2–3). According to this report, it matters because gender equality is a core development objective in its own right and because greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation and make institutions more representative. Based on these and similar arguments, the conclusion is inevitable that women's empowerment is critical to reaching the MDGs. Our vision on empowerment builds on connotations derived from the *World Development Report 2012* and other international reporting, as well as on grassroots experience. Our vision on grassroots empowerment has in substantial part been shaped by experiences from the DFL project. The basic message was and is that, first of all, girls and young women have to invest in themselves and in the project. Thus, empowerment cannot only be regarded in terms of the results of (young) women's activities in the DFL context undertaken in and jointly with trade unions; empowerment should also be seen in terms of the activities themselves. Of course, outcomes matter, whether they concern higher participation in employment, higher wages or broader life choices regarding education, jobs and family life. But the variety of activities and experiences in a project like DFL matters, too; clearly the DFL project exposed quite well that such activities and experiences are instrumental for many women to gain self-confidence and self-esteem and to show that they are "active agents that navigate social, economic, and political life" (Neumayer and De Soysa 2011, 1066). The implication is that empowerment basically is a dynamic process of change whereby "those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability" (Kabeer 1999, cited in Mahmud et al. 2012, 611).

Discovering the target group

It obviously took some time until the international community, policymakers, researchers and trade union and other activists alike discovered our target group in its broad sense – adolescent girls and young women in the 15–29 age group. In an early stage of the DFL project, it became clear that dedicated programmes and projects focused on empowering that target group had been quite limited in number and largely also in scope. Reporting from the UN "machinery" delivered a wealth of evidence from both field research and mostly UN-supported surveys on health, education and employment issues but rarely focused on problems, needs and aspirations of the target group. In the early 2000s some projects, like Meeting the Development and Participation Rights of Adolescent Girls, covering 12 countries (UNFPA/WHO/UNICEF 2003), started up, but they remained limited and isolated. In many countries major sectors in society, including health and education, have to a considerable extent neglected the needs and interests of adolescent girls. As far as we can see, the needs and interests of the next cohort, young women in the 20–9 age group, have been only slightly better served.

The international community has also largely overlooked adolescent girls. Concerning health, for instance, the report "Start with a Girl – A New Agenda for Global Health", points out that of 19 indicators for the health-related MDGs, only four pertain to young people, and only one is specific to girls (Temin and Levine 2009, 10). Such neglect has obviously had practical consequences. The foreword of the final report of the same project frankly states: “Yet today, only a tiny fraction of international aid dollars is spent – and spent effectively – on needs specific to adolescent girls [. ...] The girl effect is the missing and transformative force needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with the unique power to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty” (Levine et al. 2008, xi).

In the course of the 2000s, rapid changes could be observed, including impressive outcomes in terms of intervention programmes linked with research and high-level publications. Here we mention those that seem most important. First, the “Because I Am a Girl” project, initiated by Plan International, a global children’s charity fund working with the world’s poorest children so they can move from a life of poverty to a future with opportunity. The campaign aims to support four million girls to stay in education and fulfil their potential. The plan does so by raising financial and other forms of support. Part of the plan’s campaign was the fascinating “Real Choice, Real Lives” cohort study (Plan International/Plan UK 2007, 2010; Plan International 2011). A second project of importance, already signalled above, was the “Adolescent Girls Initiative” of the Center for Global Development (Washington, DC) and supported by the Nike Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It aimed at implementing a comprehensive health agenda for adolescent girls, including eliminating marriage for girls younger than 18, focusing on HIV prevention and making secondary school completion a priority (Katz 2008; Morrison and Sabarwal 2008; Levine et al. 2008; Greene et al. 2009; Lloyd 2009; Temin and Levine 2009). The third project concerns the Adolescent Data Guides, a UN research and data collection project which aims to provide decision makers at all levels – governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and advocacy groups – with data on the situation of adolescent boys and young women in the 10–24 group. This project covers a large number of countries and draws principally on data from the national Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS; website UNFPA). Fourth, there is the DFL project, based on the wider *WageIndicator* project. Central to this project is labour market transparency, as will be explained in the next section.

The *WageIndicator* project: labour market transparency

Economic labour market theories assume that individual workers have perfect information and that they know how much other workers are earning and what prevailing market wages are. In a job search, knowledge of current wages helps workers make informed decisions, particularly in cases of job search in another region. In wage negotiations trade unions' knowledge of wage information for similar jobs in other companies has the potential to prevent unfairness or exploitation. Employers can enjoy similar advantages by making wage determination fairer and more transparent. Having reliable and transparent data is the key to launching collective bargaining and ensuring productive and effective social dialogue. For several reasons, however, employers' and workers' information about wages is not perfect. First, mouth-to-mouth communication, a major mode of exchanging wage information, bears several risks: of exaggerating or even falsifying information, of reaching out to only small populations and of leaving workers with little or no information concerning job decisions in the wider region. Second, collective bargaining and collective agreements are not spread widely. Third, as will be discussed in Chapter 8, minimum wage information is not well disseminated. Fourth, job vacancy advertisements, if they mention wages at all, present only starting wages. Though in a few industrialized countries websites provide salary information, it is seldom free of charge and is often targeted at higher job levels. In many developing countries, where no labour market information at all is available, room is left for the *WageIndicator* to fill the gap.

With the Internet opening immense possibilities for increased labour market transparency, the independent, non-profit WageIndicator Foundation (WIF) has addressed the challenge. It has done so by using the Internet to spread information about wages and benefits for occupations at all levels and thus making it far more widely available and readily accessible than it has ever been. As Jelle Visser, professor of industrial relations at the University of Amsterdam, stated at the third *WageIndicator* conference in April 2008: "A *WageIndicator* website may serve as a Lighthouse: providing signals to users about the wage norm or standard rate for particular jobs, or about pay gaps." The mission statement of the WIF reads: "Share and compare wage information. Contribute to a transparent labour market. Provide free, accurate wage data through salary checks on national websites. Collect wage data through web surveys."

In 2000 the *WageIndicator* project started as a paper-and-pencil survey for establishing a website with salary information for women's occupations in the Netherlands. A year later, the website, once launched, was instantly successful. Soon information about men's occupations was included, and the number of web pages in the site increased to cover a wide range of labour-related topics. The number of web visitors grew constantly. In 2003 WIF was established under Netherlands law and based in Amsterdam. The foundation expanded its operations to other European countries from 2004 on, and it included countries outside Europe from 2006 on. In 2012 the foundation was operating national websites in over 65 countries on five continents. It had regional branches in Ahmadabad, Bratislava, Buenos Aires, Cape Town/Maputo and Minsk.

All *WageIndicator* websites post job-related content, such as labour law information, minimum wage information, tips for interview talks and a free and crowd-pulling feature called Salary Check, presenting average wages for various occupations. It also lists earnings of VIPs to attract web visitors. Additionally, web operations include search engine optimization, web marketing, publicity and answering visitors' email. Countries are clustered by region, each region with its own web manager. Coalitions with job vacancy sites, media groups and publishing houses with a strong Internet presence contribute to the sites' large numbers of visitors. The sites are consulted by employees, students, job seekers, individuals with a job on the side and the like for information gathering, job mobility decisions, annual performance talks, occupational choices or other reasons. Increasingly, social media are used to reach out to targeted groups. In return for the free information provided, web visitors are asked to voluntarily complete a web survey on work and wages. Between 1 and 5 per cent do so. The web survey takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and has a prize incentive. Each web survey, in the appropriate national language(s) and adapted to peculiarities of its country, is continuously posted and is anonymous. The survey contains questions about wages, education, occupation, industry, socio-demographics and the like (Tijdens et al. 2010). In the ten years since the start of the first survey, more than a million web visitors have added valid information about their weekly or monthly wages to the *WageIndicator* wages database (see Box 1.3). This database is used for the computations underlying the Salary Check.

In countries with high Internet access rates, web visitors are to a large extent representative of the population at large, but in countries with low access rates web visitors are predominantly young and well educated. This leads to a bias towards young and educated individuals in the web survey data. To counterbalance this bias, the WIF increasingly conducts face-to-face surveys in countries with poor Internet access. In 2010 and 2011 such surveys were conducted in Indonesia and Zambia, among other countries. In the next chapters, data from both the *WageIndicator* web survey and the face-to-face surveys will be used.

Box 1.3 Mozajarplata, Belarus

"In the spring of 2009 I lost my job. It was absolutely unexpected for me and I didn't know what to do to find a better job. The situation was worsened by the economic crisis. And I really needed a new job as my wedding was planned for September. I didn't want to start to build a family being unemployed and unsure of the future.... It was necessary to organise a self PR campaign. I read the articles about how to get an interview, how to respond to the recruiters' questions, what to dress to wear and how to distinguish myself from other candidates. My technique was to create a self-presentation in PowerPoint. And it worked – I got the job I wanted! Where did I learn these important tips? The answer is simple – on website Mozajarplata.by. And I still visit it and read it with interest. Our family celebrates the first anniversary of our wedding, and I think I'll start visiting the section on mothers' rights and child benefits soon." (Marina, 25, Belarus, Decisions for Life project website)

Characteristics of the 14 countries

ITUC, UNI and WIF, partners in the Decisions for Life project, with their choice of 14 countries "condemned" the authors to the study of these countries, including comparisons in quite a few fields. One can identify two clusters, the seven southern African countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and the four CIS countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine), as having more characteristics in common but also major differences, with Brazil, India and Indonesia, not least because of their immense populations and diversity, standing alone in many ways. In total, in 2010 the population of the 14 countries numbered 1.885 billion, over one-quarter of the world's population, divided as follows: over 145 million inhabitants in the African countries, 81 million in the CIS countries, 195 million in Brazil, 220 million in Indonesia and 1.225 billion in India. The DFL country with by far the smallest population is, with 2.2 million, Botswana (UNICEF country statistics). In the course of this book, comparisons focusing on health, education and employment issues will reveal characteristics of the 14 countries.

Figures concerning standard of living, measured by per capita gross national income (GNI over 2010, in constant 2008 PPP US dollars), indicate that the development levels of the 14 vary widely. Of the 13 countries with adequate data (Zimbabwe is missing), the GNI per capita was lowest in Mozambique (US$854 per year), followed by Malawi (US$911) and Zambia (US$1,359), and highest in Botswana (US$13,204), Belarus (US$12,926) and Brazil (US$10,607). South Africa's figure (US$9,821) was close to Brazil's, while the levels of Indonesia (US$3,957) and India (US$3,337) were in the same league (UNDP 2010c). Two reservations are needed here. First, since some of these figures hide large internal income inequalities, they may give a too rosy impression of the living standards of large parts of the population in, especially, Botswana, Brazil and South Africa.

A second reservation is that higher income levels do not necessarily translate into higher living standards; the relative purchasing power of earnings has to be taken into account. As an illustration, a highly uniform product available everywhere in the same quality – a Big Mac sandwich – is used as a comparison. The combination of Big Mac prices as collected by *The Economist* in July 2010 and wage figures derived from the *WageIndicator* survey in 2010 (converted into US$) allows an impression to be given of the value of wages across countries. For example, according to this exercise a manual worker from Brazil could on average afford 0.6 Big Macs per hour of work, whereas his or her colleague in the UK on average gained 3.5 Big Macs in that hour and a Dutch colleague 2.7 Big Macs. Similarly, an Indonesian manager could on average afford 1.1 Big Macs, but the manager's British counterpart could afford 4.8 (Guzi 2011).

Of course, a country's progress or an individual's well-being cannot be measured by money alone. On the basis of this assumption, over two decades ago leading development thinkers worked out the Human Development Index (HDI) for the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and its annual *Human Development Reports*. Over the years, the HDI has received much public attention. It is a composite measure of achievements in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life (life expectancy), access to education (years of schooling) and a decent standard of living (per capita GNI). For ease of comparison, the average value of achievements in the HDI is put on a scale of 0 to 1, greater being better. Through the HDI it is possible to roughly trace the vicissitudes of countries on the path of human development over the course of more than 30 years, as shown in Figure 1.1 for the 14 DFL countries.

By focusing on 2011, the figure pictures the current large differences across these countries. The underlying data clarify that the 2011 HDI values vary widely: 0.322 for Mozambique (ranking 184th of 187 countries), 0.376 for Zimbabwe (worldwide rank 173), then up to 0.745 for Kazakhstan (rank 68) and 0.756 for Belarus (rank 65). Among

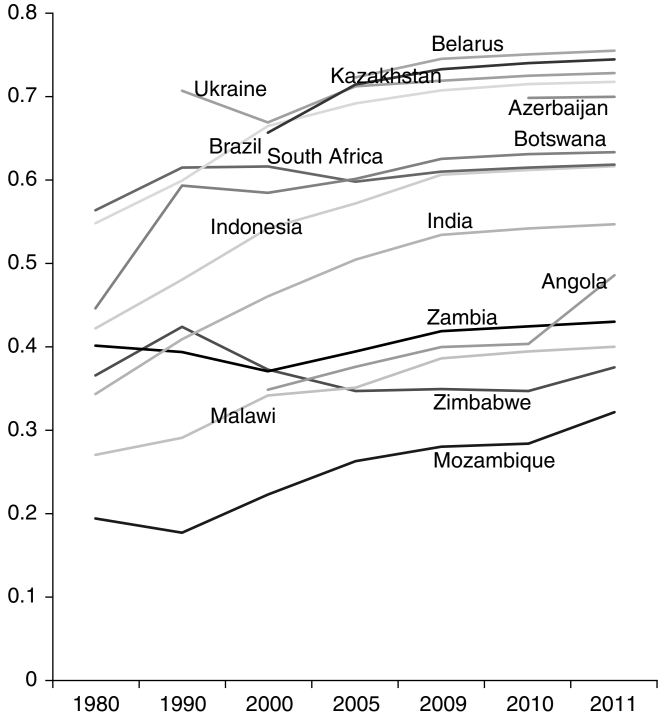

Figure 1.1 Development of the Human Development Index (HDI), 1980–2010, on a scale of 0 to 1

Source: UNDP 2010a, T. 2.

the largest DFL countries, Brazil's HDI ranks highest (0.718, rank 84), followed by Indonesia (0.617, no. 124) and India (0.547, no. 134). Over time, the HDIs of most countries show continuous progress, in line with progress around the world from an average HDI of 0.594 in 1990 to 0.682 in 2011 (UNDP 2011). Four out of 14 countries were exceptions here; their HDI values decreased during five or more years: Zimbabwe between 1990 and 2010, Zambia and Ukraine in the 1990s and South Africa from 2000 to 2005. The positions of the 14 countries have not changed much, except for the relative rise of Botswana and the fall of Zimbabwe and, albeit to a lesser extent, South Africa. In comparing most recent developments (i.e., 2005–11 with 2000–5), progress has speeded up in eight of the 12 countries for which data is available (they are lacking for Azerbaijan and Belarus), has continued with the same speed in two countries (Brazil and India) and has slowed in two countries (Kazakhstan and Ukraine).

Human development and inequalities

Measuring progress along the HDI has many limitations. In conformity with the *Human Development Reports*, where work and employment have hardly found a place (cf. Alkire 2010, 14), the index does not at all cover employment, including compliance with labour rights. Neither have human and women's rights been integrated, aspects closely connected with empowerment of people and with political freedom and participation (cf. Ranis et al. 2006). Though addressing these aspects in one index presents practical and methodological problems, the lack of indications on human, labour and women's rights implies serious limitations in characterizing countries with the HDI's help. In a basic way, the challenge to compare countries according to "rights'" yardsticks is borne by Chapter 7.

The UNDP has recently met two other criticisms of the HDI; namely, that the index did not look at inequalities within countries and that it captured the gender dimension only weakly. To start with the inequality issue, there were and are good grounds to provide more insight on internal inequalities in income and asset distributions. First, as Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) have shown for 23 high-income countries and the US states, income inequality is strongly associated with shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality, more depression – in brief, with shorter and unhealthier lives. The most unequal countries do worse on almost every quality-of-life indicator; put otherwise, the more equal the society, the better its performance on these indicators. Although these authors hesitate at drawing the same conclusions for developing countries, it is unlikely that these would not also apply to this country category (cf. VandeMoortele 2011, 17). Second, there is a growing consensus that developing countries with initially relatively equal distributions of income and assets tend to grow faster than countries with high initial inequality (Van der Hoeven 2010). Conversely, growth paths that enlarge inequality and, for that matter, poverty may well meet major problems in providing decent employment opportunities for women in particular (cf. Heintz 2006).

The 2010 *Human Development Report* introduced the inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), a measure of the human development level that accounts for inequality. When there is inequality in the distribution of health, education and income, the HDI of an average person in a society declines and is less than the aggregate HDI; the lower the IHDI (and the greater the difference between it and the HDI), the greater the inequality. In 2011 the average worldwide loss in HDI due to internal inequalities was 23 per cent. By then the largest overall loss due to inequalities in the 14 DFL countries was 32 per cent in Malawi, followed by five countries (Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Brazil and India) with losses in the 28 to 30 per cent range. The CIS countries lost relatively little in HDI value due to inequalities, and Belarus (8%) and Ukraine (9%) showed the smallest losses (UNDP 2011). The recent *Human Development Reports* also present subdivisions of the losses in HDI due to within-country inequalities in life expectancy, education and income. Chapter 2 will treat the outcomes for "our" countries in health, and Chapter 3 in education. Here, note the outcome presented in the 2011 edition: that in the last two decades worsening income inequality has offset large improvements in health and education inequality on a global scale. Though according to the UNDP researchers, the largest increases in income inequality took place in Europe, North America and central Asia, they also refer to income becoming more concentrated among top earners in China, India and South Africa (UNDP 2011, 28–30).

Concerning the gender issue, in 2010 the UNDP launched the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The GII approach is consistent with that for inequality sketched above; it compares women and men and considers only inequalities between them at the country level. Three dimensions are measured through five indicators: women's reproductive health, through maternal mortality and adolescent fertility; empowerment, through the ratio of female to male representatives in parliament; female educational attainment (secondary level and above); and labour market (female labour force participation, including the unemployed). The GII increases when disadvantages across dimensions are associated – that is, the more correlated the disparities between genders, the higher the index. According to the UNDP (2010, 90), overlapping disadvantages are an important aspect of gender inequality, and capturing them is a major advantage of the GII. Room for criticism here, notably on the narrow operationalization of "empowerment" may be present, but the researchers in question here refer to data (cf. Gaye et al. 2010).

The 2011 *Human Development Report* reveals that the largest losses due to gender inequality are in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia and the Arab states. In sub-Saharan Africa the biggest losses arise from gender disparities in education and from high maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates. In South Asia women lag behind men in each dimension of the GII, especially education, national parliamentary representation and labour force participation. On the lower ends of both scales, a close relation shows up between HDI and GII: all the low HDI countries have high GII values (UNDP 2011, 61). Indeed, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, low in HDI ranking, have high scores on gender inequality. However, for countries higher on the HDI ladder, this correlation becomes weaker. Botswana, Brazil and India have higher GII scores than comports with their HDI ranking. For example, on gender equality Brazil ranks 78th of 145 countries, against its HDI ranking of 84th (of 187) (UNDP 2011, tables 2 and 4). The conclusion to be drawn is that, measured by UNDP yardsticks, in the last three countries gender equality lags behind general societal progress.

The 14 countries in the 2000s

Since 2007 the world has been in the grip of an economic and financial crisis. Already in the course of that year, unmistakable signs of a slowdown of economic activity appeared, and the collapse in 2008 of parts of the US and UK banking systems aggravated negative trends in production, trade and investment. Worldwide foreign direct investment (FDI), for example, fell progressively by 16 per cent in 2008 and 37 per cent in 2009 (UNCTAD 2010). Yet, in 2010 FDI flows recovered by 5 per cent, and UNCTAD expects these flows to continue their recovery and regain their pre-crisis level by 2011. The trade and development organization at the same time states that "the post-crisis business environment is still beset by uncertainties" (UNCTAD 2011c, xii). It goes on to sum up a number of "risk factors", of which quite a few involve the actual restructuring going on in global power relations pertaining, most significantly, to the emergence of the BRICs – originally Brazil, Russia, India and China, with more recently South Africa added to form the BRICS acronym. The BRICS have become (or become home to) major international traders and foreign investors. UNCTAD (2011c), characterizing the emerging economies as "the new FDI powerhouses", noted that developing and transitional economies accounted in 2010 for 29 per cent of global FDI outflows. In this context its other reporting points at the major investments and loans of China in sub-Saharan Africa (UNCTAD 2011b). In 2010 total investment had not fully recovered globally and was about three percentage points below its pre-crisis level (ILO/IILS 2012, 82).

The worldwide recovery in 2010 and 2011 had a "two-speed character", with the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of the developing countries jointly growing at 7.4 and an estimated 6.3 per cent, as opposed to the by far lower rates for the developed countries – 2.5 and 1.8 per cent in 2010 and 2011. More specifically, the GDP growth figures for Brazil were 7.5 and 4.0 per cent, respectively, and for India even 8.8 and 8.1 per cent. According to UNCTAD (2011b, 2011c), the BRICS' sustained growth was caused by the recovery of commodity prices, governments' fiscal stimulus packages and an increase in domestic demand fuelled by wage increases. At the same time there remained the divide between the large developing countries and the low-income countries with smaller economies, a divide based on agriculture and highly vulnerable to natural disasters and food and fuel pricing. Since mid-2007 rapidly rising food prices have led to food uproars in a number of these countries. For example, in Mozambique, covering its wheat needs by importing two-thirds (Patel 2010), in September 2010 the government's cutting of food subsidies led to violent riots in the capital, Maputo. The large developing economies, notably India, Indonesia and Brazil, could more easily compensate for lost export demand with domestic stimulus policies and trade protection (UNCTAD 2011b).

To focus on employment, the International Labour Organization (ILO) concludes that the global recovery that started in 2009 has been short-lived and shallow and that a large employment gap remains; that is, global job creation is weak. The organization states that globally, nearly 27 million new job seekers have been added to the already high unemployment figure of almost 171 million prior to the crisis; this gap is expected to widen further as new labour market entrants struggle to find gainful employment. Against the ILO projection of 400 million new entrants over the next ten years, the current situation is called desperate for the world's youth: all over the world 75 million young people in the 15–24 age bracket are unemployed, five million more than in 2007. The situation is even worse than official unemployment statistics suggest; as discouraged young people leave the labour market, labour force participation is declining in many countries (ILO 2012). Earlier, the ILO concluded that especially in developing countries, where little or no social safety nets exist, the unemployment rate does not capture the full extent of difficulties young people face (ILO 2010b). In light of these facts and figures, the ILO's warnings are clear: "A continuation of current trends risks further undermining the already dim prospects and aspirations of the world's youth, sowing the seeds for continued social unrest and further weakening global economic prospects"; and "[i]n this light, the increase in social unrest in many countries and regions around the world is of little surprise" (ILO 2012, 31, 33).

Globally, job quality is also under pressure. Where new jobs are being created, they tend to leave new labour market entrants with a lower job quality, including less job security, than older generations had. For example, where new jobs were created between 2007 and 2010, survey data for 20 countries (including Belarus, Kazakhstan, South Africa and Ukraine) show that they were spread over the wage spectrum, with about half of them paying in the lowest 40 per cent range. Non-standard and vulnerable jobs were created in the lower more than in the higher ranks (ILO/IILS 2012, 11, based on *WageIndicator* data). Using a "vulnerable employment indicator' developed by the ILO, it has been calculated than since 2009, 23 million more workers worldwide are in vulnerable employment, with informal work arrangements, without adequate social protection and often working for low pay and under difficult conditions. In 2011 the share of women in vulnerable employment (50.5%) exceeded the corresponding share for men worldwide (48.2%). Women are far more likely than men to be in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa (85% versus 70%). In that region vulnerable employment expanded, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of all employment growth since 2007 (ILO 2012, 42–3).

Against this backdrop of worldwide and regional trends, it is obvious that many countries encounter massive problems absorbing young newcomers into the labour market. Most of the 14 DFL countries do so as well. Partly the strong macroeconomic growth figures were misleading, largely based as they were on expanding mining and related capital-intensive activities that, due to their enclave-based character, had little effect on employment and enlarged inequalities in the country as a whole (ILO 2011b). Angola is a case in point. In part other, specific national conditions played roles, as in South Africa the legacy of the apartheid era in many fields combined with the underperformance of investment and the low rate of private savings (Eyraud 2009).

Concerning employment creation, over the last decade in particular, Brazil, South Africa, Malawi and Angola underperformed. Calculated over the period 2000–10 (see Figure 1.2), lower average employment than population growth was found in these countries, the largest gap being in Brazil (an employment decrease of 0.1% versus 1.2% population growth) and Malawi (1.5% average employment growth versus

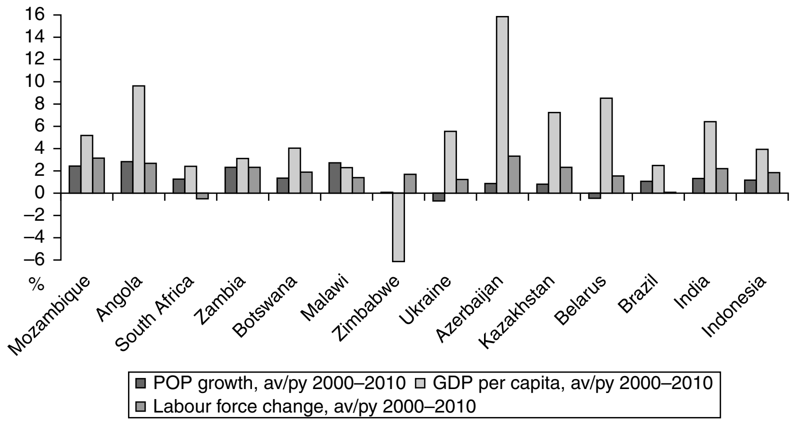

Figure 1.2 Average yearly percentage change, 2000–10, with respect to population, GDP and labour force

Source: For population growth and GDP change, World Bank 2011b; for labour force change, ILO Laborsta database.

2.8% population growth), followed by South Africa (0.7% employment growth but 1.3% population increase) and Angola (2.7% versus 2.9%). With 1.85 per cent per year, the unweighted employment growth averaged for the 14 countries was only slightly ahead of population growth, averaging an unweighted 1.3 per cent. In the years 2008–10 the gap was even smaller, with 1.45 per cent average employment growth over 1.2 per cent average population increase. Through these recent years three countries demonstrated lower average employment than population growth rates: again South Africa and this time also India and Zimbabwe. South Africa's performance is particularly worrisome, with on average 3 per cent fall in employment versus 0.8 per cent population growth (see Box 1.4). Yet the recent outcomes for India also indicate a situation of near-jobless growth. The country's high GDP per capita growth rates (6.3% average, 2008–10) cannot mask a confrontation with (preliminary) figures indicating minimal employment growth: 0.2 per cent yearly, against 1.4 per cent population growth (2000–10 and 2008–10; authors' calculations, based on World Bank 2011b [population] and ILO 2011b, ILO Laborsta database and national Labour Force Surveys [employment]).

In many reports international organizations in recent years have warned governments in developing countries not to fly blindly on economic growth results. One example out of many: in southern

Africa, governments were warned in the *2011 Economic Report on Africa*, by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union, that the relatively high growth figures were not being translated into needed jobs. The problems encountered by southern African administrations may develop in a similar vein in India. Undoubtedly, many in that country's huge cohort of about 135 million young women and 145 million young men in the 15–29 age group aspire to finding a decent job. Indian government officials have expressed confidence that the huge cohorts of young people and children will be good for the economy, but demographers and social scientists are sceptical about India's capacity to fulfil the new generation's aspirations (UNFPA 2011, 12). If their scepticism proves justified, ideals of empowerment and decent jobs may degenerate into a harsh fight for jobs tout court, and human dignity and decency may well be far off.

Box 1.4 Youth (un)employment in South Africa

South Africa may serve to illustrate the urgent problems concerning job creation for young people. The fundamental problem was and is that after the fall of apartheid South African economic growth has been marked by near joblessness. After Mandela's inauguration as president, the new government quickly found that South Africa's economy was in dire straits, with a record budget deficit, hardly any foreign exchange reserves, immense unemployment and huge inequalities. The *Human Development Report 1996* indicated that if white South Africa was treated as a separate country, its standard of living in 1994 would rank 24th in the world, while black South Africa on the same basis would rank 123rd. Since then, South Africa has faced tremendous challenges on the poverty-inequality-unemployment front, due in part to the legacy of apartheid (cf. Chibba 2011, 79).

Between 1995 and 2000 slow GDP growth in South Africa went along with small employment growth. A process of pro-poor (or shared) growth did not take off (Hoogeveen and Özler 2005, 13). After 2000, in spite of a more radical economic strategy of the government, these trends continued, and structural weaknesses in the South African economy remained. Between 2000 and 2011 total employment grew quite modestly: 7.4 per cent, or just 0.7 per cent per year. Female employment grew even less: 4.3 per cent, or less than 0.4 per cent yearly (SSA 2009b, 2011). Projected against annual population growth of 1.3 per cent, the outcome is immense unemployment and economic inactivity, particularly among the young. In mid-2011 over 1.3 million of the 10.4 million South Africans in the 15–24 age group were officially unemployed, and at least another 2.3 million of them fell in the category of homemaker, ill or disabled, or discouraged work seeker (authors' calculations, based on SSA 2011).

Outline of this book

Chapter 2 looks at the demography and family formation, health and related inequalities in the 14 DFL countries, issues touching upon basic perspectives in girls' and young women's lives. After a brief introduction, fertility, life expectancy, child mortality, the adolescent fertility rate, early marriage and motherhood and similar issues are examined. The focus then shifts to health risks relevant to young people, including HIV/AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and orphanage concerns due to the AIDS pandemic. As health is closely related to inequality and poverty, this chapter ends with a discussion of mobility out of poverty.

Chapter 3 focuses on education and its importance and on skills of young women. The chapter discusses literacy and inequalities in education. It presents pictures of the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education, both including country overviews. The importance of vocational training for labour market opportunities is sketched, followed by a section on tertiary education. The chapter ends by reviewing female skill levels. All in all, what is seen is an impressive development of female participation in education, lifting the skill levels of women in many countries, in some of which they even outperform men.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to employment issues touching young women, starting with discussion of women's labour force participation. The focus then shifts to formal and informal employment – an important distinction in the 14 countries. Why do some countries notice a decrease in informal employment, whereas others do not? Next, unemployment and underemployment, the transition from school to work and child labour are covered. Migration comes to the fore again. A chapter about employment cannot be written without going into the distribution of women workers over various industries and occupations and into the female share in them. The Decisions for Life project targeted eight occupations in the services sector, and the chapter ends with a description of these occupations.

Chapter 5 treats another important labour market feature of young women; namely, their wages and working conditions. With wage rankings across industries in the 14 countries at stake, there follows a discussion of the gender pay gap. The focus then shifts to job quality, particularly to working hours, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace and combining work and family life. For young women in employment, compliance with labour legislation and collective bargaining arrangements is essential, but it is at the same time in nearly all countries the Achilles' heel. The problem is addressed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 6 provides an industry outlook on female employment in the 14 countries. Its introduction presents arguments why such an outlook is important for understanding women's work. Employment structures and prospects for the main economic sectors – agriculture, manufacturing and services – are analysed. Concerning services, after a short section on services at large, the bulk of the space is devoted to analysing employment prospects in the three sub-sectors of commercial services: the wholesale and retail trades, tourism and call centres – the core of interest for the target group of the DFL project. Finally, we briefly go into prospects in two adjacent industries, health, along with public administration and defence.

Chapter 7, describing the institutional framework important for young women's perspectives on work, discusses governance and labour market institutions in the 14 countries and the strategies and activities for empowering women, including women's and labour rights. Labour relations and union organization are discussed, including the position of women in trade unions. Communication and new media, including social media, are of growing importance for empowering women. Therefore, perspectives for using the Internet by and on behalf of girls and young women are examined. The use of print media, TV, radio, mobile phones, mobile Internet, broadband, and the Internet generally, including the important issue of Internet freedom, is looked at.

A main part of the DFL project was the launching of websites with work-related information in the 14 countries involved. The pages providing information on the statutory minimum wages turned out to be among the most popular. Thus, Chapter 8, the final chapter, focuses on information dissemination as it concerns the statutory minimum wage. The level of these wages, their potential to reduce women's vulnerability to low pay, their employment effects, and their effects on income distribution are discussed.

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