

# Chapter 1

## The Progress of Women: Empowerment and Economics



## Introduction: Partnerships for Progress

Progress – the word conjures up images of purposeful movement towards a better life; of marking out and travelling a pathway to higher ground. But women have learned that it is not always easy to determine the direction in which to proceed, and whether the changes we are experiencing, and helping to bring about, take us forwards or backwards.

Women live their lives in many different ways, and different women have different ideas about what would make their lives better and how to achieve this. Many women fear that the world is changing in ways that destroy much that is valuable. They remind us that market liberalization entails the freedom to go hungry as well as opportunities for independent incomes. Others argue that a return to the past is impossible. They remind us that the protection of traditional ways of life perpetuates bonds of oppression as well as affection, and point to the ways in which women are constrained by family and community.

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“For me, women’s progress is when every woman can make and contribute to informed decisions about her rights, welfare, and general well-being of her society.”

— Elsie Onubogu, ICTR sexual assault team, Nigeria

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These positions represent opposite views of the complex process of change enveloping women. It is important to be open to a variety of viewpoints and to recognize that others will see things differently. A consensus about what counts as progress has to be negotiated, not assumed. But in order to take effective action in partnership with others, it is necessary to make strategic simplifications in a complex world.

The starting point for this report is that all human beings, in seeking to form and express their ideas and to preserve or to change their current ways of living, find their lives shaped by larger economic, social, political and cultural trends. Many of these trends, including environmental degradation, armed conflict and widespread violence and increasing inequality between and within nations — have the potential to undermine human rights and dignity, turning people into bodies to be violated, vessels to be used to preserve one or another ideology. A more complex trend is the increasingly global reach of market forces and transnational corporations, which have the potential to open new opportunities or close existing ones, depending on people’s access to and control of resources. For the



Conny Code



UNICEF/S.Pouf



Suzette Mitchell

most part, women face greater constraints than men in their ability to take advantage of such forces, but this is changing as women demand the right to shape the process of change in ways that enable them to participate on a more equal footing.

All human beings experience to some degree the human pleasure of personal connection and intimacy with family, neighbours, friends, colleagues; and the human pain of disconnection, separation, ultimately the pain of death, one’s own and that of loved ones. But societies position women and men differently in terms of their ability to manage such pleasures and pains. In most communities the time and effort needed to care for others is required mainly of women, and if men provide more of this time and effort they may risk being seen as “unmanly” rather than “unselfish.”

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“It is good to swim in the waters of tradition but to sink in them is suicide.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

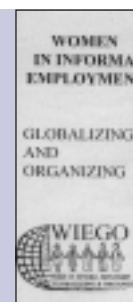
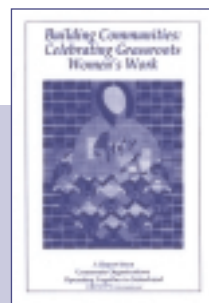
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This report speaks about and for international partnerships and coalitions of diverse people, willing to negotiate both their difference and their connectedness, to promote women’s dignity and rights as full and equal human beings (see Box 1 for examples). It

### Box 1: Women's International Partnerships for Change

Women are increasingly organizing through international networks and coalitions which bring diverse women together to negotiate and pursue common objectives. Partnerships with which UNIFEM works include:

- DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), a network of women scholars and activists from the economic South who engage in feminist research and analysis of the global environment and are committed to working for equitable, just and sustainable development. Website: [www.dawn.org.fj](http://www.dawn.org.fj)
- GROOTS International (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood), a global network of women's groups committed to developing a movement giving voice and power for change to low-income and poor women's initiatives. Organizations within the network are active in areas such as credit, asset creation and small business development, sustainable agriculture, food processing, housing, popular education, health and bottom-up community development planning. Website: [www.jtb-servers.com/groots.htm](http://www.jtb-servers.com/groots.htm).
- WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing), a worldwide coalition of individuals from grassroots organizations, academic institutions and international development agencies concerned with improving conditions for women in the informal economy, through better statistics, research, programmes, and policies. Website: [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)
- HomeNet, an international network of women's groups, trade unions and other civil-society organizations advocating for the rights of home-based workers. HomeNet was pivotal in securing NGO and government support for the International Labour Organization Convention on Home Work, adopted in 1996, and campaigns to make governments aware of the need to ratify this and all other ILO Conventions. Website: [www.gn.apc.org/homenet](http://www.gn.apc.org/homenet).



offers tools to clarify and deepen international dialogue about the progress of women. It emphasizes women as active, achieving, purposeful human beings. But it also recognizes that women face constraints not of their own making or choosing, and that many of these constraints can be weakened only by social choices, collectively made, and not through individual choices alone.

### Dignity and Daily Bread

Women's ability to realize themselves as full human beings is complex and multifaceted. This report will pay particular attention to the economic dimension: to dignity and daily bread. In so doing it responds to the growing concerns of women in both the North and the South, concerns that were first expressed by women in developing countries in 1975 at the World Conference on Women in Mexico City and culminated in the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women and parallel NGO Forum in Beijing. There, demands for economic justice were voiced by women of the South under pressure from World Bank and IMF-designed adjustment policies; by women of Eastern Europe plunged into insecurity with the break-up of the system of public ownership and state planning; and by women in industrialized countries facing economic restructuring, with cuts in public expenditure on health, education and welfare services, and privatization of public services and enter-

prises. Approximately 500 of the 3,000 panels at the Forum dealt with economic issues. Indeed, Indian feminist economist Bina Agarwal identified economic crisis as "the single most critical issue" at the NGO Forum.

Since then, the importance of economic issues has increased still further, with financial crises in East and South East Asia, Russia and parts of Latin America, and further deterioration of the prices that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa obtain for their exports. Indebtedness has continued to rise in many developing countries, while unemployment persists in many developed countries. Economic inequality has deepened both between and within countries (UNDP 1999). Thus Agarwal (1996) has drawn attention to the formation of a "strategic sisterhood" to confront a global crisis of economy and polity.



Impact Visuals/Donna Binder



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“The feminist movement and the demands of women in any particular country grow out of the reality of that country, and it is wrong to say that what we want is what everybody should want and what we do not want nobody should ask for.”

— Wang Jiaxiang (1991)

Of course, the way in which a woman gets her daily bread (or bowl of rice, or beans or maize porridge) is influenced by and influences other aspects of her life. A woman who lacks economic independence is often more vulnerable to violence in the home: if she cannot obtain a living in her own right, it is all the more difficult for her to leave a home in which she is beaten and abused. However, if a woman's income depends entirely on selling her labour, and there is no social safety net for her to fall back on, she may be forced to work

### Box 2: Reproductive Decision-making and Economic Empowerment

There is mounting evidence that women's ability to fully enjoy human rights – indeed, even to demand such rights – is integrally linked to their economic empowerment. A study of the circumstances in which women in poor communities feel entitled to make decisions about marriage and childbearing, contraception and sexuality was carried out by the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group in seven countries: Brazil, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines and the United States. Among its conclusions is that the ability to take such decisions requires a sense of personal autonomy, which develops in tandem with the knowledge that women can provide for themselves and their children. Their sense of personhood is sparked by motherhood and nurtured by participation in organized groups, but fundamentally depends on having incomes of their own.

For most of these women, livelihoods remain uncertain, and autonomy provisional, subject to factors outside their control, including the rising costs and care burdens they experience as a result of cuts in government spending and the privatization of social services. But for a few, those with a paid job or a small business and money they can call their own, economic empowerment conveys the right to imagine a different future. With it comes the courage to stand up against husbands and partners, parents and in-laws, to assert their rights to decide whether and when to have sex, or bear children, to resist violence, to make household decisions.

Source: Petchesky and Judd, eds. 1998.

under exploitative conditions, even to endure sexual harassment in the workplace. If a woman is illiterate or lacks technical skills, she will be barred from more remunerative work. But if educated women are discriminated against in the labour market, and earn less than men, parents may be more likely to prioritize the education of boys rather than girls. A woman who lacks access to ways of effectively controlling her own fertility is more likely to find herself in a position of economic dependence. An impoverished woman in an impoverished society is less likely to survive childbirth. Health, education and enjoyment of liberty free from violence are all vital parts of a dignified life for a woman. But they are all related to the economic environment in which she lives, and the way in which decisions are made about the allocation of resources (see Box 2).

### Women's Progress and Human Development

This report is based upon the belief that women's progress is facilitated by a “human development” approach to economic policy. Criticizing an “excessive preoccupation with GNP growth and national income accounts,” the first UNDP Human Development Report declared that “we are rediscovering the essential truth that people must be at the centre of all development” (1990: iii), and launched the idea of human development as a focus for formulating policies to bring this about.

The first report defined human development as a process of “enlarging people's choices”:

*Human development has two sides: the formation of human capabilities such as improved health, knowledge and skills and the use people make of their acquired capabilities for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs. If the scales of human development do not finely balance the two sides, considerable human frustration may result (1990: 10).*

The idea of expansion of human capabilities as the standard of progress was introduced into economic theory by Nobel prize winner Amartya Sen, who describes capabilities as what people can or cannot do: that is, “whether they can live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well nourished, be able to read and write and communicate, take part in literary and scientific pursuits, and so forth” (1984: 497). He points out that focusing on the expansion of goods and services is inadequate, because “the conversion of commodities into capabilities varies enormously with a number of parameters, e.g., age, sex, health, social relations, class background, education, ideology and a variety of other interrelated factors” (1984: 511). This

focus on expanding the activities that people are able to engage in rather than the extent to which they say they are satisfied avoids the problem that people's preferences are shaped by their experiences. Oppressed people may say that they are content with life because anything better seems inconceivable.

"The insecure sharecropper, the exploited landless labourer, the overworked domestic servant, the subordinate housewife, may all come to terms with their predicament in such a way that grievance and discontent are submerged in cheerful endurance by the necessity of uneventful survival. The hopeless underdog loses the courage to desire a better deal and learns to take pleasure in small mercies."

— Amartya Sen (1984)

From this viewpoint, a focus on fulfillment of basic needs is also inadequate, since it is a passive concept, emphasizing what can be done for a person, rather than what a person can do. Unlike the concept of capabilities, that of basic needs does not have a link with positive freedom ("freedom to").

A person's enjoyment of capabilities is linked to the exercise of entitlements. The ability to live a long life in human dignity depends on whether a person can establish sufficient command over resources. Amartya Sen points out that in a private ownership market economy, people's entitlement to resources depends primarily upon the resources they own (including their own skills and health and strength, as well as any natural resources or equipment) and how they can transform these resources through production and buying and selling (Dreze and Sen 1989). The problem is that there is no guarantee that a market economy will entitle a person to sufficient resources. Markets open up new opportunities. But they also open up new risks. So people in market economies always face the danger of "entitlement failure" – the inability to acquire enough resources to be capable of living in human dignity, because what they have for sale does not command a high enough price to buy the necessities of life.

Of course, there are other ways in which people can legitimately acquire resources in a market economy through transfers from the state, exchanges with family, neighbours and friends and charitable gifts. But these means are also subject to failure, and frequently do not have the status of legally enforceable claims. Moreover, the growth of market relations tends to undermine these non-market ways



of transferring resources; partly by undermining their legitimacy, partly because market economies tend to be subject to periodic crises in which whole communities, indeed whole countries, are simultaneously subject to a loss of livelihood. So there is always a question mark over the security of people's enjoyment of their capabilities; and the poorer and less powerful the person, the bigger the question mark.

The issue of insecurity is particularly important to women, because women typically have the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of children. Women's ability to stretch diminishing resources further is the ultimate safety net for children and men often at the sacrifice of women's own well-being. Because of the risk of entitlement failure, the human development approach stresses that markets have to be socially regulated. This means establishing a framework of rules and norms that set limits to the market behaviour of firms and individuals and provide incentives for them to act in ways that support rather than undermine human development objectives. It requires the participation of civil society as well as government to create new social agreements on the scope of markets and on ways to pool risk and provide security when markets fail. The approach also calls for new forms of democratic accountability of governments to citizens in order to promote the restructuring of public expenditure to develop the capabilities of poor people.

### Extending Human Development: Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice

There are some ambiguities in the definition of capabilities in terms of "what people can and cannot do." The courage to choose depends upon a person's sense of his or her own worth and of what he or she is entitled to demand, which in turn depends upon their personal experience and the social environment in which they live.

"If we do not have the courage to choose to live in a particular way, even though we could live that way if we so choose, can it be said that we do not have freedom to live that way, i.e., the corresponding capability?"

— Amartya Sen (1993)



Gaining the courage to choose is part of what UNIFEM means by empowerment. UNIFEM's guidelines on women's empowerment (1997a) include:

- acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and ways in which these relations may be changed;
- developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life;
- gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power;
- developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Achieving this requires both a process of self-empowerment, in which women claim time and space to re-examine their own lives critically and collectively; and the creation of an enabling environment for women's empowerment by other social actors, including other civil-society organizations, governments and international institutions (Gurumurthy 1998). This concept of women's empowerment goes well beyond women's participation in agendas set by others (Bisnath and Elson 1999). It entails both the development of women's own agency and the removal of barriers to the exercise of this agency.

A characteristic of women's successful self-empowerment is the ability to speak out on issues that concern women (see Box 3). Women speaking out is an important stimulus to governments, businesses and international financial institutions to make changes to economic, social and political conditions so as to widen the choices available to women. In this way, the internal and external dimensions of empowerment can be mutually reinforcing and women can develop both the capabilities and courage to use them.

Strengthening women's entitlements is a critical aspect of the external dimensions of empowerment. The concept of entitlement also has ambiguities. People may be able to acquire resources without breaking the law but in ways that demand self-abasement and are

inconsistent with human dignity and the realization of women's human rights. Women are often treated, both in law and in social practice, as the economic dependents of men. Many women can only access the resources required to build and realize their capabilities through the goodwill of their fathers, brothers and husbands, who are supposed to protect them. Women without such protection are frequently at a disadvantage because economic and political institutions are constructed on the basis of the belief that men are the primary "breadwinners" and women need only earn a supplement. Women who are supposed to enjoy such protection are also at a disadvantage because of their lack of legally enforceable rights and real bargaining power. They are dependent upon the goodwill of male relatives—and too many discover, in the words of the popular American "blues" song that "A good man is hard to find."

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"We had tongues but could not speak, we had feet but could not walk. Now that we have the land, we have the strength to speak and walk."

— Rural women in Bihar, India, late 1970s (Agarwal 1995)

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### Box 3: Speaking Out

Economic empowerment requires both personal determination and collective support, as shown by an analysis of grass-roots women in eight communities in South Asia. Together they give women the confidence to speak out: "to share problems, make demands, negotiate and bargain, and participate in public speaking and decision-making."

"Even if someone opposes me I can reply with confidence...Now I am going everywhere and am no longer afraid."

— Bibi Safida, Hussaini Women's Organization, Pakistan

"Before we organized ourselves in a Women's Organization we used to believe everything and agreed with everything our men told us. Now we have learned to state our opinions and views...."

— woman in northern Pakistan

"Previously, I never spoke to anyone on any subject. Now the strength of the members gives me the strength to speak to anybody."

— woman in southern India

"We do not fear authority. We can talk to officials, even police, because of the union."

— woman in the construction workers' union, southern India

Source: Carr et al. 1996.

#### Box 4: Women's Empowerment: Case Studies in South Asia

The empowerment of women requires both micro- and macro-level institutional changes, brought about in different ways at different levels. A study of women's day-to-day experiences of economic empowerment in South Asia, sponsored by UNIFEM and the Aga Khan Foundation, examines eight case studies where women organized to bring about improvements in their standard of living. The study defined economic empowerment as an "economic change/material gain plus increased bargaining power and/or structural change which enables women to secure economic gains on an on-going and sustained basis" (Carr et al. 1996: 203). The case studies showed that moving towards economic empowerment required changes in a whole series of institutions, some of which are usually labelled "economic" (like the market), some of which are usually labelled "social" (like the family) and some of which are usually labelled "political" (like the local and national state).

Each of these micro-level institutional changes required women's organizing. For example:

- where women had been secluded and not active in the market economy, economic empowerment involved women joining local support networks to defy strong patriarchal kinship norms and enter capital, labour and product markets;
- where women had been active in the market economy but were lacking in opportunities to sell their labour or their products, economic empowerment involved building alternative economic opportunities through grassroots women's organizations;
- where women had been active in the paid labour force and the local economy was strong, economic empowerment involved women organizing through a union to demand better terms and conditions of work.

None of these changes were possible without local-level organizing. But women's local-level gains would have been limited without their being able to bring about changes at the national level as well. By pursuing their concerns within organizations, women were able to make their voices heard by policy-makers and to get laws and policies changed in their favour:

- women construction workers in Tamil Nadu were able to get a Construction Workers Act passed that extended labour law protection, including maternity benefits, to construction workers, along with the provision of accident relief to workers' families;
- women in Andhra Pradesh secured a change in the laws on cooperatives to create a better environment for women's cooperatives;
- women in Gujarat persuaded the Forestry Department to modify trade liberalization policies that had been operating to the disadvantage of women gum collectors.

When women organize, the study concludes, whether to contest discrimination or demand access to resources, they shape the process of empowerment in ways that are "appropriate to their own needs, interests and constraints." Thus, "what may seem like shifts in women's status within their family, community or village often represents significant shifts in women's consciousness, perceptions, security and power."

Source: Carr et al. 1996.

Women, just as much as men, require clearly specified entitlements in their own right, enabling them to make independent claims that are both legally and socially recognized. Such claims should be enforceable by a legitimate source of authority that is external to the family, be it a village-level institution or a higher-level judicial or executive body of the state (Agarwal 1995). This kind of gender justice is a necessary foundation of democratic and egalitarian families whose members are genuinely mutually supportive, the kind of families that are needed if there is to be human development for all.

Extending the idea of human development to encompass women's empowerment and gender justice puts social transformation at the centre of the agenda for human development and progress of women. Choices for women, especially poor women, cannot be enlarged without a change in relations between women and men as well as in the ideologies and institutions that preserve and reproduce gender inequality

(see Box 4). This does not mean reversing positions, so that men become subordinate and women dominant. Rather, it means negotiating new kinds of relationships that are based not on power over others but on a mutual development of creative human energy (power to, based on power within and power with). It also means negotiating new kinds of institutions, incorporating new norms and rules that support egalitarian and just relations between women and men.

#### Commodities and Care

Conventional conceptions of the way in which economies operate offer limited guidance for policies to promote women's empowerment and gender justice. This is because these conceptions leave out much of the work that women do in all economies. Women have challenged conventional views and proposed new visions of economic life in which women's activities count, in several senses: counted in statistics,



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accounted for in representations of how economies work and taken into account when policy is made.

The conventional view of a national economy depicts it as a circular flow of labour, goods and services and money, operating to produce and distribute marketed commodities (both goods and services). This view is encapsulated in the System of National Accounts (SNA), which is used to measure economic activity in a country and summarize it in terms of Gross National Product (GNP).

“Every time I see a mother with an infant, I know I am seeing a woman at work. I know that work is not leisure and it is not sleep and it may well be enjoyable. I know that money payment is not necessary for work to be done. But, again, I seem to be at odds with economics as a discipline, because when work becomes a concept in institutionalized economics, payment enters the picture .... No housewives, according to this economic definition, are workers.”

— Marilyn Waring, former MP, New Zealand (1999)

### *The System of National Accounts and Women's Work*

The SNA was designed to reflect the operations of a market economy in which people are remunerated financially for the work they do. It draws a line, called the production boundary, between the activities which are seen as constituting the economy and those that are seen as non-economic. The SNA has been revised several times since it was first established by the United Nations in 1953. It began from the idea that production is carried out exclusively by enterprises, while households merely consume. This was gradually modified to recognize a limited amount of subsistence production by households (INSTRAW 1995).

The latest version of the SNA, agreed in 1993, recommends the inclusion in the GNP of all production of goods, whether intended for sale or for consumption. Thus the GNP should in principle include the following types of household

United Nations/Kay Muldoon



### **Box 5: Overburdening Unpaid Care-givers**

Irene van Staveren, an economist from the Netherlands, explored the issues of balancing unpaid care work and paid work with women in a focus group in Costa Rica. Their stories reveal the personal costs and undermining of women's own capabilities.

Thera says:

“It is not easy, because it requires superhuman strength. I get up at five in the morning, preparing the uniform, the breakfast, washing clothes, everything, go to work, come home in the evening at eight.... I think it would be very difficult for a man, well, he may do it but only when he develops the same mechanisms – but it requires a superhuman strength.”

Not every woman can be superhuman. Lili says: “I realise we are developing a whole series of symptoms, such as stress, or in my case, a chronic disease. This is how we women are really keeping up a rhythm of work in which we put other peoples' needs over our own priorities.”

Martina agrees:

“I am a mother of two little daughters and an adolescent and I have two jobs. I could, without exaggeration, say that all the work I do in a day amounts to, I guess not less than fifteen hours. Sometimes one asks: how do we manage? Of course I know: at costs of our health, we do it at cost of our happiness, we do it at cost of ourselves....”

Exhausted women are not well placed to contribute voluntary labour to community NGOs or to spend time supervising their children's homework or to maintaining the networks of reciprocity with relatives and neighbours that economists now call “social capital.” When stresses are very great, as they have been in many countries undergoing transition to the market, unpaid care cannot compensate for the withdrawal of state-provided support to care for children and the elderly and sick, and for the tearing of the social fabric of community. Ultimately, the social supports of the economy collapse, as they have in some parts of the countries in transition.

Source: van Staveren 1999; UNICEF 1999.





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members, looking after children and sick and elderly people and tending to the emotional needs of family and community members by spending time listening and talking to them? All of these are productive activities which take up a large amount of time and energy on the part of those who perform them.

In 1934, American economist Margaret Reid suggested a different approach, proposing that if a third person could be paid to do the unpaid activity carried out by a household member, it should be counted as part of production. Arguments made by statisticians and economists for not treating such household services as production are open to many criticisms (Waring 1999; INSTRAW 1995). Their strongest argument is that the provision of such services has limited repercussions for the rest of the economy, since an increase or decrease will have little impact on the operation of public and private-sector enterprises. However, while this may be true in the short term, in the long term it is these services that sustain a supply of labour to the economy and make human societies possible, weaving the social fabric and keeping it in good repair. Taking these services for granted may have unforeseen costs in terms of deterioration of both human capabilities and the social fabric (see Box 5).

However, even when it is recognized that services produced within the household for other household members are an important and valuable form of production, there is still the dilemma of how to make these services visible and to make them count. It is possible to impute monetary values to these services. The monetary value of cooking for family members could be assessed in terms of what it would cost to hire a cook, or to purchase the food

production, whether produced for the market or for consumption in the same household:

- production of all agricultural products and their subsequent storage, the gathering of berries or other uncultivated crops, foresting, wood cutting and collection of fuel wood, hunting and fishing;
- production of other primary products, such as mining salt, cutting peat, carrying water, etc.;
- processing of all agricultural and foresting products for own use or market;
- other kinds of processing, such as weaving cloth, dressmaking, production of pottery, footwear, utensils, etc.

This revision has the effect of including subsistence production within the SNA. In practice, however, the GNP often fails to include household subsistence production because questions in censuses and surveys do not cover it adequately.

As a matter of principle, the SNA continues to exclude the production of services for oneself and for other household members. It seems reasonable that eating, sleeping, washing and dressing oneself, taking exercise and engaging in leisure activities are not counted as part of production. But why exclude cooking and cleaning for family and community

### Box 6: Naming Women's Work

Names are needed to make visible women's provision of services within households for other household members. A variety of names have been used to call attention to the fact that this provision is:

- an obligation which has costs in terms of time and energy ("work");
- not remunerated by a wage ("unpaid");
- indispensable for the continuation of the entire society ("social reproduction").

Some of these terms can be ambiguous:

"Domestic labour": Does this refer to the work of family members to maintain the home or to the work of paid domestic help?

"Unpaid labour": Does this refer to what a woman does in taking care of her husband or the work she does without pay for the family business that he runs?

"Reproductive work": Does this refer to giving birth and breast-feeding or to maintaining the social fabric?

"Home work": Does this refer to unpaid housework or to paid work done in the home on subcontract from an employer?

The pros and cons of different labels have been discussed in *Feminist Economics*, a journal of the International Association for Feminist Economics: Website: [www.facstuff.bucknell.edu/jshackel/iaffe](http://www.facstuff.bucknell.edu/jshackel/iaffe)



ready-cooked, or how much money could be earned if the food cooked for the family were instead to be sold in the locality or what the person doing the cooking could have earned if she had taken up some paid employment instead. However, there is a danger with the idea of obliterating the qualitative difference between work done on a commercial basis and care provided for members of the family. It may simply reinforce the tendency for more and more of life to be brought within the scope of the market and reduce the care that women provide their families to just another commodity.

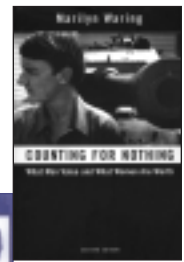
### *Unpaid Care Work*

An alternative to imputing money values is to measure the time taken to produce these non-SNA services and compare this total with that taken to produce goods and services that do get counted on the SNA. There are similar dilemmas about what name to give to services not included in the SNA. Women have used a variety of labels over the last 30 years, each with advantages and disadvantages (see Box 6, p.23). This report uses the term adopted by feminist economists during the 1990s, “unpaid care work.” The word “unpaid” differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO sectors and employees and self-employed persons in the private sector. The word “care” indicates that the services provided nurture other people. The word “work” indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social).

There is a risk that the use of the term “care” will mystify the relationship between the provider and the receiver. It must be recognized that care may be given unwillingly, extracted by psychological and social pressure or even physical violence, from women who can see no alternative but to provide care, even to those who oppress them. The lack of support for such care creates pressures on those who give it; thus caregivers may also visit their frustrations upon those in their charge, who are even more vulnerable to abuse. The advantage of the term is that it signals the fundamental importance of interpersonal attention to other people’s needs in the maintenance of human societies.

“If there is less, we eat less. You have to feed men more, or they beat you.”

— poor woman in Bangladesh (Neuhold 1998)



### *Revisoning Economies*

Conventional accounts of how economies work do not bring out the centrality of care work and the particular way in which unpaid provision of care relates to the market and the state (Folbre 1994). They envision economies in terms of market flows between households and enterprises, with households supplying labour and consuming the goods and services produced by enterprises with that labour. The public sector appears as an employer of labour and provider of services and social security payments, financed by levying taxes and charges for some services. Labour is treated in this vision as if it were like land — an input that exists without having to be produced, a “primary factor of production.”

Chart 1.1 (p. 26) shows a different picture of the economy, one drawn from women’s perspective. It highlights production by a domestic sector (the realm of unpaid care work in households and neighbourhoods) and an NGO sector, as well as a public sector and a private sector. In principle, one could measure the size of the sectors by the monetary value of the services produced by them or by the total number of hours of time spent on the activities included in them. National time-use estimates, currently available for a limited range of industrialized countries (United States, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Finland and Norway), can be analysed to compare the unpaid time spent in the domestic sector and the voluntary part of the NGO sector with the paid time spent in the NGO, public and private sectors.

*Time use measurements clearly have a potential for assessing the economic dimensions of human labour. Perhaps the most important indication they give is that, on average, the labour inputs into non-SNA activities are of the same order of magnitude as the labour inputs into SNA activities. Labour statistics however record only the latter; because of this enormous gap, labour statistics give a distorted image of how even industrialized societies utilise available labour resources to achieve their standard of living (Goldschmidt-Clermont and Pangnossin-Aligsakis 1995).*



HomeNet

UN/John Isaac

Data on paid employment is available for all countries, but it is usually organized according to industry and occupation. No international database presents employment data in terms of numbers of people employed in the private, public and NGO sectors. The private sector includes a variety of kinds of work, all of it included in the GNP, much of it directed towards generating profits for owners and managers of businesses (including the self-employed). The most visible form of private sector work is regular paid employment in registered businesses – often called formal sector employment. But the private sector also includes a large informal sector, including both paid and unpaid work.

The official international definition of the informal sector includes:

- unregistered enterprises below a certain size;
- paid and unpaid workers in informal enterprises (i.e., family farms and businesses);
- casual workers without fixed employment.

This definition embraces many wage-earners, including sweatshop workers and domestic servants; all those people who work on an unpaid basis for family farms and businesses producing for their own subsistence consumption and for the market (labelled in labour force surveys as “unpaid family workers”); and many “own-account” workers, the name given in labour force surveys to those who are self-employed or employers. It includes home-based paid workers working on subcontract and those whose workplace is the street. Estimates of the size and gender composition of informal sector employment vary widely, according to size of enterprise included and whether agricultural activities are included (UN 1999b: 27-30).

Estimates produced by WIEGO suggest that the informal sector accounts for well over half of urban employment in Africa and Asia, and a quarter in Latin America and the Caribbean. If agriculture is included, then three-quarters of total employment in Africa and Asia, and almost half in Latin America, is informal

(see Table 1.1). Informal work lacks the social protection afforded to formal paid work, such as job security or health insurance, and is often irregular and casual. Much of informal work is subcontracted from the formal sector and its low costs contribute to the profits of larger businesses. In principle, informal work as well as formal work in the private sector should be included in the GNP. But informal work is often under-counted, especially when it is unpaid.

Work in the public sector is both paid and formal. These jobs offer the highest social protection, though not always the highest financial returns. The point of this work is not to make profits, but to provide a public service. Financing via taxation means that the public sector can be organized to permit social considerations rather than private costs and benefit considerations to guide decisions. All public sector work is included in the GNP. While no international database contains data on the size of total public sector employment, data is available from the World Bank World Development Indicators Database for employment in state enterprises as a percentage of total employment for a very limited range of countries. In the period 1985-96, it ranged from a low of around 1 per cent to a high around 30 per cent. But these figures do not cover employment in public services, such as public administration, defence, health and education.

The non-governmental organization (NGO) sector has some similarities to the public sector, in the sense that it is not for profit, but unlike the public sector, it makes use of unpaid volunteers as well as paid workers and frequently engages in advocacy for change in public policy as well as service provision. Its income comes from payments from the public sector, which increasingly subcontracts service provision to large NGOs; from donations and grants from businesses, philanthropic foundations and the general public; and, increasingly, fees for their services.

A 1995 study of the NGO sector in 22 countries in North America, South America, Europe and Asia found that in total, the sector accounted for 10 per cent

**Table 1.1: Size of the Informal Sector**

Informal Sector	LAC (%)	AFRICA (%)	ASIA (%)
Total employment (excl. ag.)	45	31	19
(incl. ag.)	66	90	90
Non-agricultural employment	57	75	63
Urban employment	25	61	40-60
New jobs	83	93	na

na = not available

Source: Charmes 1998 (updated February 2000).



of employment in services in those countries, and was just over a quarter of the size of the public sector in terms of paid employment. Adding in volunteers raised the share of employment in services to almost 14 per cent. Taking both paid and volunteer labour into account, the size of the NGO sector was equivalent to just over 40 per cent of public sector employment (Salaman et al. 1999).

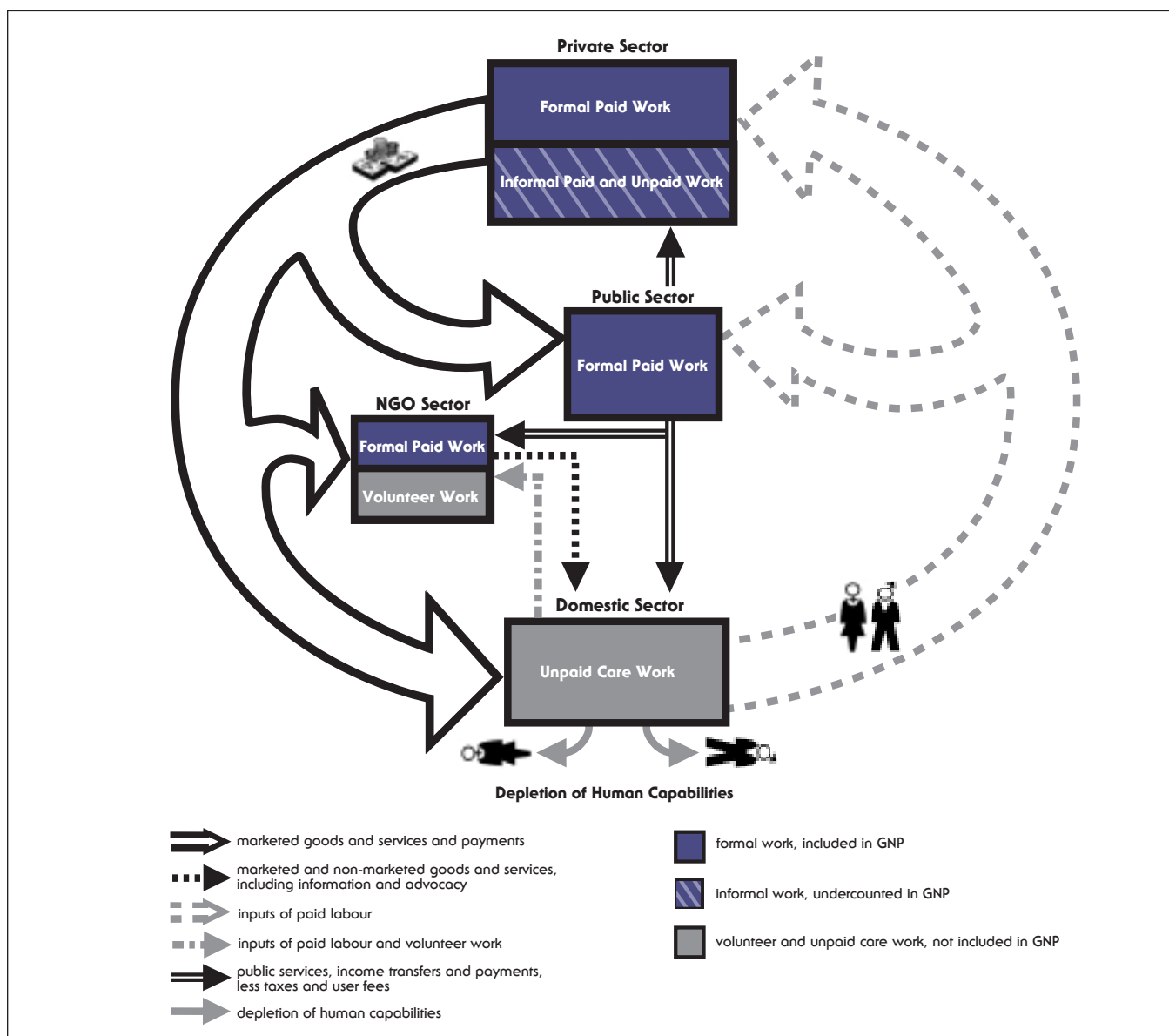
The domestic sector of unpaid care work is not appropriately measured in terms of numbers of people employed in it, since the majority of people engage in some work (paid or unpaid) in the other three sectors, in addition to the work they do caring for family and neighbours. The full-time housewife who works at nothing else besides providing care for her family seems to be very much in a minority.

The comparative size of the domestic sector, plus the volunteer part of the NGO sector in the

late 1980s has been measured in terms of labour time for 12 developed countries. On average, adults spend just over 26 hours a week in unpaid domestic care work and voluntary work, compared to 24 hours per week in paid work. This means that the total volume of work each week is just over twice the work covered by the official employment statistics (Ironmonger 1996).

The four sectors are linked by both market and non-market channels. The domestic sector supplies people to work in all other sectors. The private sector sells goods to all the other sectors (see chart 1.1). The public sector levies taxes and user fees and makes income transfers to the other sectors, as well as providing them with public services. The NGO sector provides services, such as health, education, social services and cultural and recreational services to the domestic sector, sometimes free of charge, sometimes for a fee.

**Chart 1.1: Revisioning the Economy Through Women's Eyes**



UNICEF/Jane Taylor



These channels are cultural as well as financial, carrying messages and values as well as goods, money and people. Commercial values flow from the private sector, emphasizing the importance of making money and creating a kind of equality - but only for those with sufficient money. Regulatory values flow from the public sector, emphasizing the importance of citizenship, rules and laws, but often failing to ensure the rules and laws are democratic rather than autocratic or bureaucratic. Provisioning values flow from the domestic sector, emphasizing the importance of meeting people's needs, but often meaning that adult able-bodied women meet everyone else's needs while remaining needy themselves. Values of mutuality and cooperation flow from the NGO sector but often in ways that remain hierarchical and exclusionary.

### *Division of Labour*

Men and women work in all four sectors, but there are systematic variations in the gender division of labour. Unpaid care work, volunteer work and informal paid and unpaid work tend to be more female-intensive (with women having a relatively high share of employment) while formal paid work in private, public and NGO sectors tends to be more male-intensive (with men having a relatively high share of employment).

International databases are not organized to show these differences. However, it is reported that two-thirds to three-quarters of work in the domestic sector is done by women in developed countries (UN 1995a). The upper figure is likely to obtain in most countries in other regions, though there is little quantitative data. The female-intensive nature of the domestic sector is rivaled only by that of the informal sector, as shown in Table 1.2 for selected African countries, while by contrast, the formal sector is highly male-intensive, as shown by public sector employment in these countries.

An alternative way to look at the gender division of labour is to compare the ways that women and men allocate their working time between the sectors. The study of work in 12 developed countries referred to above found that while adult

women on average work for just over 35 unpaid hours in the domestic and NGO sectors, men contribute only half that time. In paid work in the public, private and NGO sectors, the position is reversed, with men spending on average just over 31 hours a week in paid work, and women spending just over half that time (Ironmonger 1996). Within paid work, women also allocate more time to the public sector than do men. In the European Union, for instance, the share of women's paid employment in the public sector is double that of men's: almost 44 per cent compared to almost 22 per cent (Rubery and Fagan 1998).

In the developing countries, the gender differences may be even greater. Information on the proportion of working time that men and women spend on market and non-market work for a group of nine developing countries indicates that men spend on average 76 per cent of their time in market work and 24 per cent in non-market work, while women spend 34 per cent of their time on market work and 66 per cent of their time on non-market work (UNDP 1999, table 27). In addition, research conducted as part of the WIEGO network found that the majority of women in employment in Asia and Africa are in the informal sector. In all developing regions, a larger share of economically active women than of men are in informal employment, and women's share of informal sector employment is higher than their representation in the total labour force in most countries.

The gender divisions in the patterns of work between the four sectors of the economy are a key factor in the relative weakness of women's entitlements as compared to men, which in turn perpetuates gender gaps in capabilities.

**Table 1.2: Women's Share of Employment in Informal Sector, Industry and Services and the Public Sector, Selected Sub-Saharan African Countries**

Country	Informal sector early 1990s (%)	Public sector 1986 (%)
Benin	61	na
Botswana	na	36
Burkina Faso	na	21
Burundi	na	38
Chad	53	na
Ethiopia	na	23
Malawi	na	13
Mali	59	na
Morocco	na	29
Swaziland	na	34

Sources: informal sector: Charnes 1998 (updated February 2000); public sector: Standing 1999.

### *Economic Restructuring*

In all countries, the balance between the amount of work done in the four sectors has been changing since the early 1980s as a result of neo-liberal economic reforms. Public-sector employment has been shrinking as a result of privatization, efforts to increase “efficiency” in the public sector and cuts in public expenditure. The private sector has been expanding – but through a process of “informalization,” by which more and more jobs are low-paid, part-time, temporary, casual and lacking social protection. The NGO sector has also been expanding. In eight countries for which time series data are available, NGO paid employment grew by 24 per cent between 1990 and 1995, while overall paid employment in the same countries grew by 8 per cent (Salaman et al. 1999).

Concern has been expressed that this changing balance between the sectors adds to women’s overall workload, especially that of poor women in poor countries. Women’s rate of participation in the labour force has been increasing with their entry into the public, private and NGO (paid) sectors in greater numbers. But women still have overwhelming responsibility for the provision of care to family members. Better-off women with well-paid jobs are employing poorer women to work in the home, caring for their children or elderly relatives, cooking and cleaning for the household. But poorer women have to cope with a double burden of paid work and unpaid care work. There is pressure on the health of poor women and children; there is pressure on the education of daughters who may have to drop out of school to substitute for their mothers (see Box 7). But these pressures are slow to show up in the calculus of economic policy-makers.

The conventional sets of indicators considered by economic policy-makers may signal that progress is being made. More women are getting paid for the work they do and the efficiency of the public sector seems to be increasing. But there may be a hidden transfer of costs from the public sector, where costs are monetized, and therefore visible, to the domestic sector, where costs are not monetized and therefore not visible. For instance, health services are reorganized to improve efficiency by increasing the “throughput” of patients, discharging them more quickly to care in the community than would formerly have been the case. This increases health service efficiency by reducing its financial costs, but transfers costs of caring for convalescent patients to the domestic sector, where it is largely women who pick up the bill, in terms of demands on their time.

If too much pressure is put upon the domestic sector to provide unpaid care work to make up for deficiencies elsewhere, the result may be a depletion of human capabilities, as shown in Chart 1.1 (p. 26). To maintain and enhance human

capabilities, the domestic sector needs adequate inputs from all other sectors. It cannot be treated as a bottomless well, able to provide the care needed regardless of the resources it gets from the other sectors. Lack of attention to the domestic sector in economic policy-making is particularly harmful to women, since they currently have the responsibility for managing this sector.

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“Women’s love in the family is expressed and demanded in terms of work. The difference in gender is related to this enormous mass of energy which women pour into others, to make them feel like human beings in a system that treats them like commodities.”

— Anronella Picchio (1992)

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#### **Box 7: Economic Reform and Women’s Work**

The government of India took steps to try to protect expenditure on education when it introduced economic reforms in the early 1990s. But the impact of the reforms pushed some poor women to take on more paid work, which meant some poor girls had to drop out of school to substitute for their mothers.

Research in a village in Raisen District in Madhya Pradesh revealed that poor women had to do more work as casual wage labourers to keep up with rapidly rising prices of food, which had resulted in part from a reduction in subsidies and other reform measures. Many said:

“I do whatever work is available, whenever it is available.”

In order to be available for work at a moment’s notice, women had to keep their daughters at home. Women said:

“She goes to school but the days I go out of the house for wage work, she stays at home to do the domestic work and look after her brothers and sisters”;

“If she goes to school, then who is going to do the housework?”

Their daughters agreed:

“Who would cook the food and look after the house and my younger brothers and sisters?”

Source: Senapaty 1997.



UNICEF/John Isaac



In managing the sector to meet the social needs for unpaid care, women frequently find themselves in a position with more responsibilities than resources. Their entitlements to inputs from the other sectors are frequently weak and ambiguous. Their entitlements to commodities acquired via markets are weak because their own earnings typically are low and irregular, and their access to men's earnings depends on how well they can negotiate the conflicts as well as the cooperation of household life. Their entitlement to the services of NGOs may depend on giving up their leisure time to participate in meetings or contribute their labour to the construction of community facilities.

Unpaid care work is the foundation of human existence, but it is overshadowed by the power of the state and increasingly, by the power of market forces. The NGO sector may offer opportunities to share responsibilities for care more widely in self-governing associations, but many NGOs themselves are under pressure to be competitive with private businesses (Ryan 1999). This may compromise their mission to act as advocates for social change as well as service providers. Globalization intensifies the pressure on the domestic, NGO and public sectors and increases the power of the private sector, even as it concentrates power in fewer private sector hands.

## Globalization

International trade, investment and migration are not new phenomena. What is new is the accelerating speed and scope of movements of real and financial capital in the last two decades of the twentieth century, primarily due to:

- removal of state controls on trade and investment;
- new information and communications technologies.

These twin enabling processes have put businesses of all kinds in a position to treat the whole world as their field of operations and to redeploy their capital and move the location of their production at will. The private sectors of each national economy are well on the way to merging to create the global private



sector (see Chart 1.2, p. 30). Countries in every part of the globe have experienced greatly expanded markets and the commercialization of more and more aspects of life. The result has been the rapid growth of output and employment in some parts of the world, but at the cost of growing inequality within and between countries (see Box 8, p. 30), shattering financial crises in South East Asia and the collapse of the average standard of living in many parts of the former USSR and Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP 1999b). There are MacDonaldis hamburger restaurants in large cities all around the globe – but there is persistent malnutrition for millions of people, some of them in the very same cities.

The domestic, public and NGO sectors remain grounded in national economies. International links among them exist and they are increasingly using new information and communication technologies to share experiences and strategies. But their access to the “tools” of globalization is weak and fragmented compared to those among businesses. In particular, states retain detailed control over international migration. Moving a household to New York requires state-recognized documents (visas, work permits), while moving money to Wall Street does not. The private sector is the hub of the global economy; the other sectors remain distinct, though interlinked, national peripheries, differentiated by the fact that some states are much more powerful than others in setting the global rules for the private sector.

Stephenie Hollyman



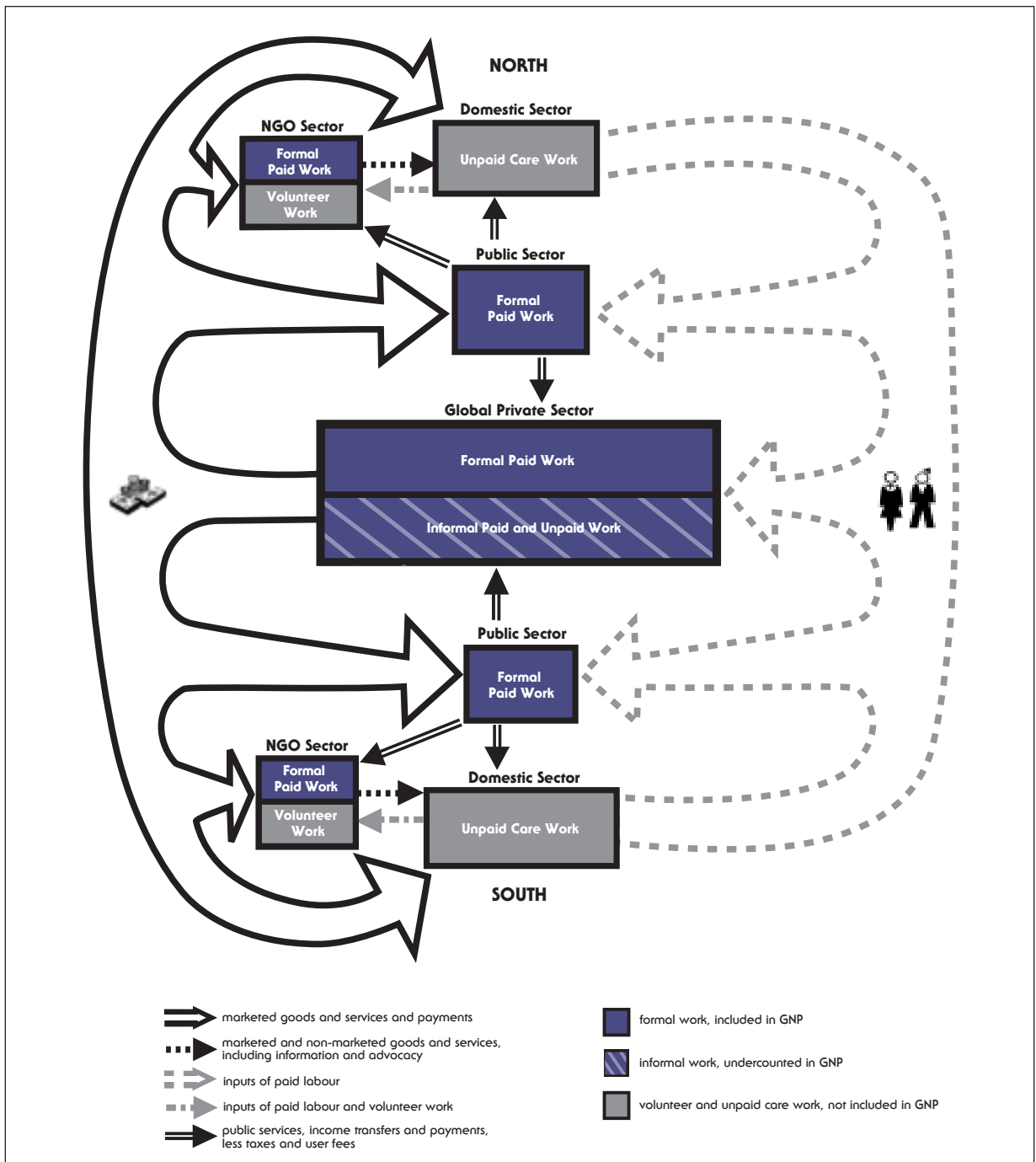
**Box 8: Increasing Inequality**

Income inequalities between countries have been accelerating since the early 1970s. An analysis of trends in world income distribution shows that the distance between the richest and the poorest country was about 44 to 1 in 1973, and 72 to 1 in 1992. In 1999, per capita incomes in East Asia had grown to three times what they were in 1980, while in Sub-Saharan African and other least-developed countries per capita incomes had fallen to below their levels in 1970.

Income inequality has been increasing among individuals as well. The world's 200 richest people are getting richer. The net worth of the world's 200 wealthiest people moved from \$440 billion in 1994 to \$1,402 billion in 1998. Their assets are now more than the combined income of 41% of the world's people.

Source: UNDP 1999b.

**Chart 1.2: Globalization**



In addition to removing national controls on capital, states have endeavoured in a series of UN conferences and trade negotiations to agree on guidelines, rules and targets for economic, social and environmental policies (see Chapter 2). But these have lacked clear mechanisms of implementation and accountability, or have been tilted in favour of powerful countries and powerful companies. A case in point is the trade liberalization rules of the World Trade Organization, which are often applied asymmetrically, requiring developing countries to open up to imports from developed countries, while failing to sufficiently widen the markets for their exports to developed countries. Examples are the swift application of sanitary standards to restrict exports of fish from Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda and the slow implementation of the agreement to phase out the Multifibre Agreement that protects textile and garment industries in developed countries (Williams 1999).

Information and communications technologies have at the same time sustained a parallel globalization of social movements, bringing together civil-society organizations of all kinds — women's groups, trade unions, environmental activists, farmers associations, campaigners for social justice — in global networks to contest a one-sided and unequal globalization. Sometimes the networks have met in the virtual reality of the Internet, sometimes in the NGO forums of the UN conferences, and sometimes in the streets, as at the WTO meetings in Seattle in November 1999. But civil-society organizations cannot always agree on whether they want to promote a system of locally self-sufficient economies or to transform the new global economy into a more egalitarian system.

A critique of globalization has also come from many religious organizations. From women's perspective, however, such critiques are often compromised by an association with religious fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalism is itself a global phenomenon, premised on ideas of family values that deny women's human rights instead of building families on the basis of respect for the human rights of all their members. Fundamentalism, as Gita Sen (1997) points out, is especially dangerous because "it breeds on marginalization and loss of control among young men, and often encompasses a critique of globalization even as it intensifies the subordination of women to patriarchal control."

While fundamentalist movements may be the most extreme example, it is important to recognize the inequalities that sustain all "traditional" societies. Women may not be vulnerable to workplace discrimination if they remain at home. But their exclusion from participation in international markets as employees or self-employed workers or owners of small businesses tends to reinforce gender inequality

rather than narrow gender gaps. Paradoxes abound: the spread of entertainment consumer culture via TV and film and advertising that serves the interests of big businesses and erodes community norms and values also helps many women to develop a sense of a self with choices and desires (Balakrishnan 1999).

### *Experiencing Globalization*

How have women experienced globalization? Globalization does not so much create difficulties for poor women where previously there were none as intensify some of the existing inequalities and insecurities to which poor women are subject. But for educated women with professional skills, it opens up new opportunities. For some unskilled women, it has meant loss of livelihoods, as the goods they produced were outcompeted by goods produced with cheaper labour or cheaper materials or in far less time on modern machinery. For others, it has meant loss of labour rights (such as social benefits and the right to organize) in the whirlwind of international competition. For still others, especially educated women, it has meant new, better paying employment, and opportunities previously undreamed of (UN 1999b; UNIFEM 1999b, 1998b).

For increasing numbers of women, globalization has meant international migration. Although men still outnumber women in the total number of adults who have migrated to another country, from 1985 to 1990, the number of women increased at a faster rate than the number of men (UN 1999b: table III.2). More and more women are migrating on their own, or as the primary earner in their household, but often as temporary workers in low-paid jobs. The opportunities for permanent migration and the acquisition of citizenship rights in other countries have declined since the 1970s, in large part because of increased restrictions on international mobility of unskilled people introduced by developed countries. In contrast to the dismantling of barriers to the international mobility of capital, barriers to the mobility of labour have remained strong, except for professional people with skills that are relevant to high-tech industries (UNDP 1999).



"Globalization is putting a squeeze on care and caring labour"

— Human Development Report, 1999



In an important step forward, the 1999 Human Development Report notes that globalization raises new issues about ensuring that all people preserve enough time to care for themselves, their families, neighbours and friends. Globalization demands women's time in the non-domestic sectors of the economy. It strengthens market relationships at the expense of non-market relationships. It puts pressure on paid care-givers in the non-domestic sectors to be "competitive" and judges competitiveness over a very short time span, so that the quality of paid care is likely to suffer.

But globalization does not so much create a problem in care provision where previously there were none, as change the form of the problem. Before globalization, the care deficit was more a deficit for women, who spent much time caring for other people but had little time to care for themselves. With globalization, men and children may also begin to experience a care deficit, if the "double burden" on women becomes too great. Pushing women out of paid work will not solve the problem – there will still be a care deficit, one borne largely by women themselves. Solutions will require rebalancing responsibilities among all four sectors of the economy and new ways of managing globalization.

### *Managing Globalization*

The top decision-making positions that govern globalization are still overwhelmingly occupied by men (mainly men from developed countries). Men hold about 90 per cent of the top positions in major Wall Street investment firms (New York Times, 27 October 1999). They overwhelmingly dominate the World Economic Forum (the annual meeting of global political and business leaders in Davos, Switzerland). Lists of speakers on the Website of the forum held in January 2000 indicates that out of 392 panelists, no more than 9 per cent were women.

Women are in a minority at the WTO. The World Bank does somewhat better: women constitute 36 per cent of key professional positions (such as economist) and almost 20 per cent of managerial and senior technical positions. But at the International Monetary Fund, a mere 11 per cent of economists are women and women occupy only 15 per cent of all managerial positions ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)). These are the international financial institutions charged with managing globalization so as to promote stability, growth and development. Criticism of the way in which they carry out this charge is growing dramatically everywhere, with women taking a leading role (see Chapter 6).

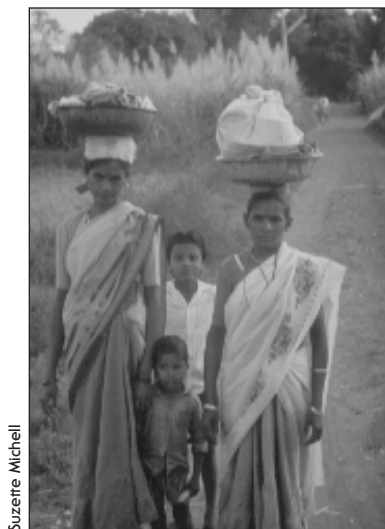
The East Asian economic crisis, which began in Thailand in July 1997 and rapidly spread to other countries in the region, gave these criticisms added weight. After a decade or more of rapid growth and improvements in human development indicators, the GNP of Korea and Malaysia fell by more than 8 per cent in 1998; in Thailand by nearly 8 per cent and in Indonesia by as much as 20 per cent. Poverty and unemployment rose substantially and real wages plummeted. According to the World Bank's own estimates, by the end of 1998, about 20 million people were added to the 30 million already below the poverty line in these countries; 18 million more people became openly unemployed in Indonesia, Thailand and Korea; real wages fell by 10 per cent in Thailand and as much as 40 to 60 per cent in Indonesia (World Bank 1998).

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"The Korean government promoted a national slogan 'Get Your Husband Energized' that called on women to help offset the impact of the crisis on men, who on becoming unemployed or bankrupt were subject to depression."

— Ajit Singh and Ann Zammir (2000)

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Suzette Michell



UNICEF/Carolyn Watson

The public sector provided very little in the way of income transfers to cushion the blows. Many of the economies affected descended suddenly into social and political chaos. Mass unemployment, sudden rise in poverty levels, return migration to the small towns and rural areas, food shortages and riots, cutbacks in expenditure on education and health care, the pharmaceutical shortages, rising crime rates, severely damaged the prospects for human development. Mutual support systems were eroded or stretched to the breaking point as local communities tried to adjust to the demands of a volatile global financial market (Heyzer 1999). Women were expected to absorb the shocks (see Box 9).

The origins of the financial crisis are still debated. The view of the IMF is that domestic policies and practices were mainly responsible: weak supervision of financial institutions and poor corporate governance. Others locate the origins of the crisis in the liberalization of financial and capital markets and speculation by foreign investors. The depth of the crisis is frequently attributed to the austerity measures insisted upon by the IMF as a condition for loans to deal with it, measures such as cuts in public expenditure and increased interest rates (Singh and Zammit 2000; Lim 2000). These measures have been openly criticized by the former chief economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, who says they were based on economic models that are out-of-date and out of touch with reality, and a policy process conducted in secrecy without open dialogue.

“If the people we entrust to manage the global economy – in the IMF and in the [US] Treasury Department – don’t begin a dialogue and take their criticisms to heart, things will continue to go very, very wrong. I’ve seen it happen.”

— Joseph Stiglitz, April 2000



WEDO/Reso Lizarde

### Box 9: Women, the Heroes of Everyday Life

Case studies conducted in 1998 by the United Nations Population Fund in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand show how women had to absorb the impact of the financial crisis in Asia.

In Jakarta: men get very frustrated when they lose their job. They stay around the house doing nothing instead of helping the wife with the household chores or looking after children. Expenses on cigarettes seem to increase. The burden of laid-off husbands is on the wife.

In Bangkok: women who had lost their jobs faced family conflict. Some suffered violence from their husbands and complaints about their inability to take care of their children and elderly relatives.

In the Philippines: farmers complain about the increased cost of labour and farming supplies, which oblige their wives to take jobs as domestic helpers in Metro-Manila and other urban areas and older children to drop out of school to take care of younger siblings. Husbands left behind are tempted to have extra-marital affairs.

In Malaysia: the recession has affected the lives of women who are single parents as well as those with heavy family commitments, forcing them into commercial sex, even though they know its perils. A single woman, 24 years old, supporting a sick mother said, “I earn about RM3,000 per month this way or more — I have to pay for my car, house installments [mortgage] and expensive medical treatment for my mother who suffers from chronic arthritis.” A divorced mother of one said: “My parents know about my job and depend on my income. The crisis has affected me and is making my life miserable.”

Source: UNFPA 1998.

## Dilemmas and Transformations

Globalization creates an environment that allows many women to achieve greater personal autonomy, but allocates them a lowly place in an increasingly unequal global hierarchy, thus denying them their economic, social and cultural rights (see Box 10).

*These contradictions mean that women's struggles for greater personal autonomy (including among other things control over and access to familial or community resources, a fairer share in inheritance, rights in decision making, and sexual and reproductive rights) may not mesh simply or easily with their concerns for a more just and equal economic order (Sen and Correa 2000).*

One approach to this dilemma is to promote the transformation of the values and practices of business corporations, public agencies and NGOs, to reflect the patterns not only of men's lives but also of women's lives and to support not only individual choice but also social justice. In fact, such institutional transformation is one of the primary objectives of gender mainstreaming, which the UN Economic and Social Council defines as follows:

*Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process and assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UN 1997b).*

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"Can women offer different voices as they become more integrated in the market and public life? Can 'difference' be maintained, and can it be a source of inspiration to those who work toward progressive social change?"

— Lourdes Benería (1999)

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### Box 10: Albanian Women: Change and Complexity

With the coming of democracy, Albanian people started to change their mentality, because they had the means of seeing the world and better opportunities. It is true that political change influenced changing attitudes [about] women issues. During 1992-96, Albanian women started gradually to gain control of their lives and to become economically independent, as well.

[Women had more opportunities] for better-paid jobs... which had good and bad results. On the one hand they were more independent, broadened their knowledge and started to think about themselves as having equal rights with men, but on the other hand it brought problems within Albanian families. Albanian men (in villages mostly) are not always open to letting their wives work, because [women] have to take care of the children.

Hopefully, this attitude has started to change in the main cities. [In] projects that we have dealt with, the role of men in the family, domestic violence, gender equality, etc., there is a new way of thinking, especially among the young people, but there is much to do in the villages and rural areas.

We have given our support for social services and for the need to raise the number of women in the political life. Our women want more women to represent them in Parliament, in the government, and all other fields where men are dominant. We use our capacities to train them and make them ready to find new jobs (confidence-building projects), because ... unemployment in Albania is very high and this affects every individual....

Women face economic discrimination concerning jobs because [although] there are some women managers or directors, they win these places with more difficulty than men do. The government has a lot to do on this issue and must treat women's issues with priority, because [with] economic difficulties, social issues are left somehow behind....

Source: Olsi Devoki, Albanian Women's Federation (Lajla Pernaska), Beijing +5 online forum on women's rights <http://sdnhq.undp.org/ww/women-rights/>

A gender mainstreaming matrix applied to European Union countries shows how progress towards institutional change can be assessed (see Box 11). It should be complemented by detailed audits that show the extent to which institutions in the public, private and NGO sectors are governed by rules and norms based on men's lives only, and how these can be changed (Maddock and Parkin 1993). Such change will promote the breakdown of occupational segregation and encourage women to enter fields and occupations previously thought of as for men only, and vice versa.

A major barrier to the transformation of the public, private and NGO sectors is the expectation that major decision-makers either have no significant responsibilities for unpaid care work or can delegate them to someone else. Effective gender mainstreaming will change this expectation. A complementary transformation of the domestic sector is needed, so that men take on a larger share of the pains and pleasures of unpaid care work, and construct new masculine identities around the values of giving care and paying attention to the personal needs of others. There are men who think along those lines, with whom coalitions can be built to create a world in which diversity and difference are enriching rather than polarizing (see Box 12, p. 36).



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### Box 11: Gender Mainstreaming in European Union Employment Policy

Gender mainstreaming requires more than policy statements. It needs to be embodied in operational measures. The matrix below presents an assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming in EU employment policy, and indicates that few countries have yet proposed changes in either law or taxation and public expenditure (fiscal policy).

Country	Policy commitments	Legislation	Fiscal measures	Positive action including special training	Institutional mechanisms	Collection of baseline and monitoring data
Belgium	X					X
Denmark	X	X				
Germany	X	X		X	X	X
Greece	X			X	X	
Spain	X					X
France	X			X	X	X
Ireland	X					
Italy	X			X	X	X
Luxembourg	X					
Netherlands	X	X		X		
Austria	X			X	X	X
Portugal	X			X		X
Finland	X			X		
Sweden	X		X	X		X
UK	X		X			

Source: Joint Employment Report 1999, Part I, table 9.





“If society and particularly men do not assume with solidarity the responsibilities of caring for the family, we will be curbing the opportunities of half of humanity.”

— Jose Antonio Ocampo (2000), Executive Secretary, ECLAC

## Conclusion

Women’s diversity and the contradictory contexts in which they find themselves create great challenges for assessing and promoting the progress of women. Women have to defend their right to paid work in the private, public and NGO sectors in the face of familial and community opposition; their right to better terms and conditions of paid work in the face of global competitive pressures; and their right to more equal ways of sharing and supporting unpaid care work in the face of economic evaluations that do not recognize the costs and benefits of this work. This report is envisaged as a contribution to a global dialogue conducted in relation to the commitments made to women in human rights treaties and UN conferences and grounded in women’s organizations’ own efforts to humanize the world.

## Box 12: Men’s Support for Gender Equality

More men are speaking out more actively in favour of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The recently formed Men’s Group for Gender Equality at UNDP, New York, brought some of them together in a roundtable discussion on Violence and Masculinities at the Preparatory Commission for Beijing +5 in New York, March 2000.

Mufti Ziauddin, a human rights lawyer from Pakistan, is working to reduce men’s violence against women and girls. He explained: “I was very alone. It is a sensitive subject...I have been inspired by my mother. She taught me that I had to be a women’s rights activist.”

Captain Goran Lindberg, Chief of Police, Uppsala, Sweden, directs gender violence prevention training for police officers. He believes strongly in men’s sharing responsibility for child-rearing and domestic life: “If you want to be police officer in a high rank in my department, you must show me you have nursed children...We must support new male role models.”

Jackson Katz, American filmmaker, agreed: “We need to create a peer culture climate among men where they realize they will lose their status in their peer culture if they hit women.”

The Men’s Group for Gender Equality has established a Website to enable men around the world to strategize and discuss their efforts to secure gender equality in their own countries.

<http://www.undp.org/gender/programs/men/men-csw.htm>

Sources: Men for Gender Equality, UNDP; Miriam Zoll, American News Service, March 2000.

“A multinational feminism is likely to be stronger and certainly presents a richer tapestry than any insular version. Images of the other provide the warp and weft of dreams and possibilities.”

— Chilla Bulbeck (1998)