



Beyond Moral Justification

From The Just Jobs Report Series

Isha Vij and Sabina Dewan December 2010

Introduction to the series by John Podesta and Sabina Dewan

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Center for American Progress



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Introduction to the series

The case for just jobs

The global economy today is inexorably intertwined— sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. This fact was driven home anew to workers worldwide by the recent global financial crisis, the ensuing global economic slump, and the subsequent efforts by governments to recharge their economies. But facing political pressures to “do something” about the widespread job losses, governments are tending to inward-looking policies that impede economic integration and trade. This is cause for deep concern because economic globalization has come with benefits, as unevenly spread among workers as they are.

Just Jobs, a new program at the Center for American Progress, seeks to extend the benefits of economic integration and trade to all of the workers who power the global economy. The moral reasons for providing workers with “just jobs,” including labor rights, appropriate compensation, social protections such as health care and pensions, and opportunities for economic mobility, are well understood. Less understood is how promoting these policies in developing countries alongside developed ones benefits both in a world that is closely connected through technology, flows of people, goods, services, and capital.

Just jobs policies would:

- Allow the gains from global economic integration and trade to be spread more widely among workers worldwide by raising living standards and therefore generating new, sorely needed sources of aggregate economic demand.
- Level the playing field in labor markets worldwide, thereby preventing any one country from leveraging poor labor practices for economic gain.
- Enhance global economic and national security by building a basis for greater confidence within a more integrated global economy.

People need jobs that are just. They need to be able to work in acceptable working conditions, with appropriate protections and compensation, and with the right to organize and bargain collectively.

In essence, just jobs policies are critical for doing economic integration and trade right.

Increasing economic integration and free and unrestricted trade in goods and services contributes to worldwide economic growth, but it is also blatantly clear that tighter economic integration and increased trade leads to a restructuring of economic activity that leaves some workers better off and others worse off. Today the world knows all too well that when workers are out of work they tighten their belts, consuming less so businesses earn less, leading to more layoffs—creating a vicious downward spiral. These shocks transmit across the globe through changes in trade and investment flows, capital flows, and migratory trends.

To have a well-functioning economy, people need jobs that are just. They need to be able to work in acceptable working conditions, with appropriate protections and compensation, and with the right to organize and bargain collectively. In the event that people do lose their jobs, as in times of economic crisis, there is a need for government institutions, policies, and programs that help people adjust to changes in the labor market. These social protections include access to unemployment insurance and pensions to ensure workers are able to maintain a certain level of consumption if they lose their income. And they include access to health care so workers can maintain a basic level of wellbeing to continue to be contributing members of the economy.

All of these facets together help raise living standards. Better standards of living mean that workers in other countries can afford to buy more goods and services, creating global demand and invigorating the global economy. But to be effective, policies have to be implemented. It is not enough for countries to just have these policies and laws on their books. Ensuring the enforcement of labor standards and social protection helps create a more even playing field so that countries with lower levels of development than other countries cannot leverage poor labor standards as a competitive strategy.

Simply put, higher standards of living in developed and developing economies alike cannot be achieved without an appropriate strategy for creating and implementing just jobs around the globe.

Just jobs would in turn help alleviate problems that lead to economic insecurity and global instability. Poverty and economic underdevelopment provide fertile ground for pollution, unsafe working conditions, and for disease, lawlessness, and

violent conflict to spread—to the benefit of international crime and global terrorists. By helping to raise living standards, just jobs serve as instruments for promoting global stability and security.

The Center for American Progress's Just Jobs program seeks to demonstrate that supporting an increase in just jobs in developing countries is a win-win for developed countries as well. Standards of living converge on an upward trajectory. Rules and regulations ensure this happens across the globe. And the resulting economic and political stability rebounds to benefit developed and developing countries alike. Our Just Jobs program will help policymakers develop pragmatic and specific steps to power forward a virtuous circle for workers worldwide.

Introduction and summary

Creating “just jobs” for women in addition to men is about more than morality and rights—it is fundamental to broad-based economic growth. Harnessing women’s power is critical to generating new sources of aggregate economic demand to power the global recovery. Ensuring just jobs for women is essential to creating a level playing field in labor markets worldwide to prevent countries from leveraging poor labor practices for economic gain. And if done well, it will play a vital, long-term role in enhancing global economic and political stability.

Women today constitute 40 percent of the 3 billion employed people around the world.¹ What’s more, “nearly half (48.4 percent) of the productive potential of the female population remains unutilized (compared to 22.3 percent for men).”² Our global economy cannot be viable without harnessing the productive capacity of such a significant share of the world’s population.

Unfortunately, the recent economic crisis makes it even more challenging for developing countries to achieve gender parity—when men and women have equal access to economic opportunity and outcomes in education, in the transition from school to work, and in the labor market. Export sectors such as apparel suffered large cuts in employment as the economic contagion spread, which hit women particularly hard because they constitute a major part of the workforce in developing countries.

When women get laid off from formal employment they are more likely to enter informal employment as domestic workers or in family businesses. But when the informal economy is then flooded with displaced workers, this leads to overcrowding in an already competitive informal market. This exacerbates the susceptibility of women to seek employment in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, participate in riskier informal migration, or fall victim to other forms of exploitation including sex trafficking.

Policy makers at the international and national levels must recognize that the global recovery cannot be powered without ensuring that women in developing nations, in addition to men, enjoy better living standards that ultimately rebound to benefit other countries as well. The world needs these women to ensure the well being of their children, families and communities, to be protected against labor exploitation, and to serve as consumers helping to promote global aggregate demand.

To move forward national governments in the developing world, advanced economies that provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries and multilateral financial institutions must take active measures to rectify the gender imbalances and empower women through:

- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Social safety nets that are targeted to protect women
- Better education and skills development for girls, especially in new growth sectors such as the green economy
- Technical and financial assistance to establish better gender disaggregated data for developing country labor markets

In the pages that follow, we will examine the economic conditions that require global leaders to rally around these recommendations to deliver just jobs to women, focusing on the efforts that should be taken in particular by the leaders of the Group of 20 developed and developing nations. We then examine more closely the gender imbalances that threaten the livelihoods and future prosperity of so many women in the developing world, contrasting these trends with those in the developed world. We then explore the consequences of these imbalances and present a set of policy recommendations that will help address these imbalances, promoting tangible progress on the aims articulated by the international community.

Women amid the current global economy

The continuing fallout from the recent global financial and economic crisis continues to have devastating effects on workers around the globe. What started as a sub-prime home loan crisis within the United States eventually swept through the global economy, leading to unparalleled job losses across the globe and causing chaos in global markets. Global unemployment rates spiked for both men and women—to 7 percent in 2009 for women from 6 percent in 2007, and to 6.3 percent for men from 5.5 percent over the same period—but the nature and impact of job losses differs tremendously between the men and women in both developed and developing economies.³

In the developed economies, job losses are significantly concentrated in manufacturing and construction sectors, which typically employ a larger share of men than women. The world's developed economies also boast some programs to protect workers amid economic downturns, such as unemployment insurance. In the developing world, however, the crisis hit export-oriented industries such as apparel, where the workforce is composed predominately of women, often in low-wage work and without access to appropriate worker protections.

In short, women in the developing world are more vulnerable to the exploitative consequences of the recent economic crisis. A young girl in Burkina Faso yanked from primary school to work on a farm. A mother who shows up to work at a textile factory in Pakistan only to find it closed. A laid-off migrant worker in China who cannot fathom returning to her hometown without an income. These and hundreds of millions of other women in the developing world face similar challenges when economic crises such as the Great Recession hit.

The moral reasons for caring about these consequences for women in the developing world are often well understood. But the economic reasons are often less well understood. When it comes to generating new, sorely needed, sources of aggregate economic demand to power the global recovery, or to promoting fair competition in global labor markets so no single country can leverage poor labor practices for

economic gain, or to enhancing global economic and political stability, the role of gender is often neglected. Yet creating just jobs for women in addition to men is a fundamental part of the solution. Women constitute 40 percent of the 3 billion employed people around the world.⁴ Simply put, no economy can be viable without harnessing the productive capacity of such a significant share of its population.

Achieving gender parity in the aftermath of the economic crisis is key to sustained and broad-based global economic growth. This means ensuring that men and women have equal access to economic opportunity and outcomes in education, in the transition from school to work, and in the labor market. This is particularly challenging in developing countries.

In the developing world, the recent economic crisis hit export sectors especially hard.

In the developing world, the recent economic crisis hit export sectors especially hard as consumers across the globe tightened their belts, with layoffs among women especially high since women tend to constitute a larger share of the workforce in these sectors.⁵ Shrinking formal employment is fueling a rise in the informal economies of the developing world. What's more, as layoffs rise in female-dominated sectors, women's opportunities to migrate for a job are also limited, which contributes to a fall in remittances.⁶ The decline in remittances, which reached an estimated \$305 billion in 2008 but began falling sharply in the second half of that year,⁷ leads to a further decrease in consumption and further reduces global aggregate demand necessary for a robust and sustainable global economic recovery.

Fortunately, the international community recognizes the importance of addressing the labor-market challenges facing women in the developing world. There is consensus that gender equality is catalytic to development as a whole. And the international community recently renewed its commitment in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (see box), which are slated to be met by 2015, include ending poverty and hunger, instituting universal education, and establishing gender equality—none of which can be achieved without addressing the plight of women in developing countries as the global economy tries to recover from the economic crisis.

Unfortunately, today's volatile economic conditions are significantly slowing many countries' progress toward reaching these goals.

Instituting appropriate worker protections, safety nets, and employment policies that take gender parity into account is central in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and should be a top priority for the heads of government participating in the Group of 20, Group of 8 and Group of 8+5 meetings. (see box)

After the Toronto G-8 summit concluded in June 2010, leaders from the G-8 nations noted that “action is required on all factors that affect the health of women and children. This includes addressing gender inequality, ensuring women’s and children’s rights, and improving education for women and girls.”⁸

The G-20 leaders also reaffirmed their “commitment to achieving strong job growth and providing social protection to [our] most vulnerable citizens. An effective employment policy should place quality jobs at the heart of the recovery.” Yet commitments abound, but action is slow to come.⁹

The United Nations notes that even though gender parity and women’s empowerment is “at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals,” progress in this effort has “been sluggish on all fronts—from education to access to political decision-making.”¹⁰ Indeed, the translation from rhetoric to policies that are actually implemented is even slower. There is ad hoc assistance for women, such as projects to disseminate information on HIV or maternal health, which are obviously valuable, but unless labor-market policies are made more sensitive to gender imbalances it will be difficult to bring about lasting change in gender parity.

Delivering on the Millennium Development Goals

How the funds are supposed to be disbursed

- End poverty and hunger: Halve the share of those suffering from hunger and earning less than \$1 a day. Achieve decent work for all, including full and productive employment.
- Universal education: Make sure that males and females alike are able to obtain a full course of primary schooling.
- Gender equality: Remove gender disparity in education.
- Child health: Work to reduce the under-five child mortality rate by two-thirds.
- Maternal health: Decrease the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters and attain access to reproductive health for all.
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases: Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. By 2010, attain universal access for HIV/AIDS treatment. Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- Environmental sustainability: Country policies and programs should integrate the principles of sustainable development. The loss of environmental resources must be reversed. Achieve a decrease in rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. Half the share of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- The number of people without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation must be cut in half by 2015. Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
- Global partnership: The particular needs of least developed, landlocked, and small island developing countries should be addressed. Cultivate an open, rules-based, predictable financial and trading system that is nondiscriminatory. Deal with the debt in developing countries. Work with the private sector to increase access to the benefits of new technology, especially information communications technology. Work with pharmaceutical companies to increase access to necessary, affordable medications for developing countries.

For this to happen in earnest, national governments in the developing world alongside developed countries that provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries as well as multilateral financial institutions must be aware of the gender imbalances that the recent economic crisis exacerbated in developing countries. They must understand the consequences of these imbalances, and they must each take active measures to rectify them and then act on this information by:

- Conducting gender-responsive budgeting
- Ensuring social safety nets are targeted to protect women
- Developing better educational opportunities and skills training for girls, especially in new growth sectors such as the green economy
- Enabling technical and financial assistance to establish better gender disaggregated data for developing country labor markets

The challenge now is to figure out how national governments around the world alongside multilateral financial institutions can, with more limited fiscal resources, preserve existing worker and social protections and still find additional resources

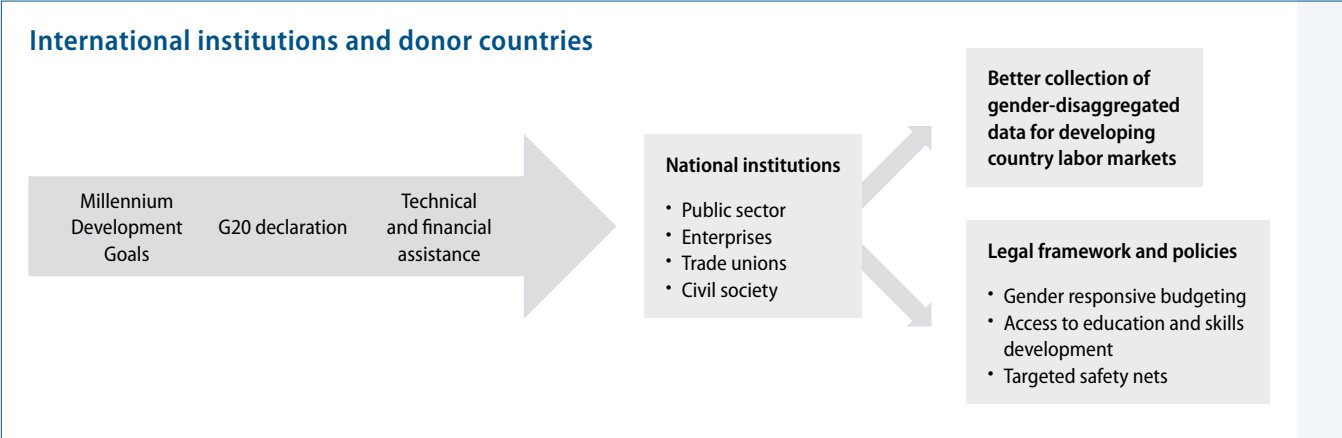
The global groups

Group of 20: The G20 consists of the heads of state, the finance ministers, and the central bank governors from 20 leading economies, including 19 countries plus the European Union (EU) that together comprise about 90 percent of global gross national product and two thirds of the world population. The members include the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada, China, Russia, India, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Turkey, and Australia. The G20 now meets every year.

Group of 8: The G8 consists of the eight heads of governments (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Each year, one member country is responsible for hosting a series of ministerial meetings, and a mid-year summit to discuss issues of global importance.

Group of 8+5: The G8+5 consists of the heads of state from the G8 nations plus the heads of state of the five leading emerging economies—Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa.

that will be necessary to rectify these gender imbalances. But that challenge must be met since it is not just the health of one particular country or economy that depends on harnessing the productive potential of women in addition to that of men, but rather the health of the global economy—developed and developing countries alike—that depends on it as well.



Gender imbalances

The aftershocks of the recent economic crisis continue to reverberate across the globe. The regions where women are more likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts are also where women face tremendous gender barriers to entry into the labor market. Consider that at the onset of the crisis, women were nearly 60 percent more likely to be unemployed than men in Latin America and the Caribbean, and over 40 percent more likely to be unemployed than men in the Middle East. In North Africa, they were an astounding 90 percent more likely to be unemployed than men.¹¹

Harnessing the productive potential of women is critical for all countries. Women everywhere have a major bearing on the health and development of their children, families, and communities.

But the consequences of the economic crisis for women in the developed world differed from the consequences for women in the developing world. Understanding these trends is fundamental to addressing the labor market challenges that women face.

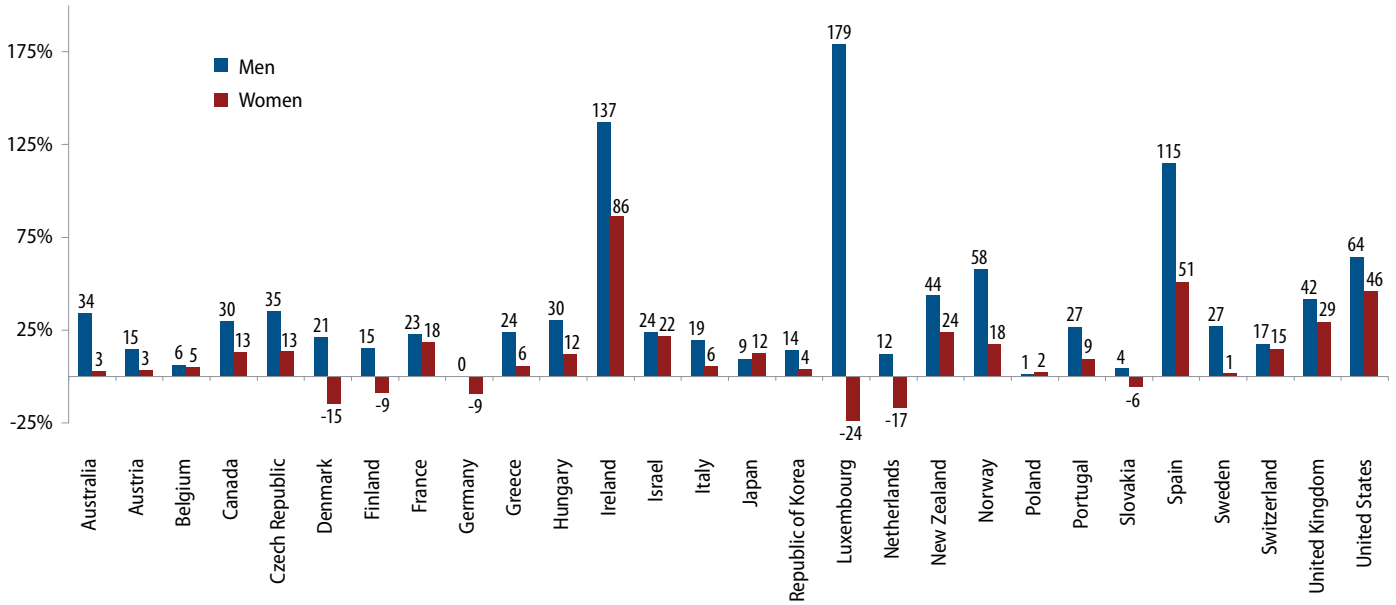
In many developed countries, women now make up a larger share of the workforce in the wake of the economic crisis while men face increasing rates of unemployment and underemployment. The increase in the unemployment rate from 2007 to 2008 for men in developed economies was 0.5 percentage points versus 0.1 percentage points for women, the last years for which comparable data are available among all developed economies.¹²

In the United States for example, between January 2008 and January 2009, men over 16 experienced a 66.7 percent net increase in unemployment compared to a 46.8 percent net increase in unemployment for women.¹³ Women are increasingly becoming co-breadwinners in the U.S. economy, and as a growing number of men lose their jobs, women are increasingly becoming their family's sole income earner—a trend that has accelerated as a result of the economic crisis. Today, this is true in nearly two-thirds of American families.¹⁴

FIGURE 2

Men have it harder in the developed world

Changes in unemployment rates from January 2008 to January 2009 or Q1 2008 to Q2 2009 for OECD countries, percent change



Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics.

*Graph does not include Iceland due to readability issues.

These disproportionate rates of unemployment between men and women are evident across most of the developed country members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (see Figure 2) With the exception of Poland and Japan, all other 28-member countries of the OECD witnessed a greater increase in unemployment rate for men than women from January 2008 to January 2009.¹⁵

But in developing countries, gender imbalances are manifesting themselves in different ways. Severe cuts in the goods and service export sectors that are closely linked to worldwide markets hit women in many developing countries particularly hard since they tend to make up a greater share of the workforce in these sectors. When industries that have more female than male employees are hit by economic downturns, the percentage of female employment drops precipitously.

Industries that are more integrated with the global market such as garment factories were hit the hardest by the recent recession. In Malaysia, for example, 78 percent of the garment industry's workforce is composed of women; in Bangladesh,

85 percent are women. And in countries that rely on high-value agricultural exports as a major source of income, such as with floriculture in countries such as Thailand, Ecuador, and Uganda, women make up anywhere between 70 percent to 85 percent of the workforce.¹⁶

The effects

Although the industries in the developing world that were more exposed to the global market suffered the greatest impact, the negative effects rippled throughout their economies. One result is an increased employment in the informal economy in developing countries.¹⁷ The informal economy, which consists of the unregulated segment of the market economy, is large and significant in developing countries.¹⁸ The contribution of the informal economy to gross domestic product in Asia, for example, is 31 percent, and for Latin America it is 29 percent. In Northern and sub-Saharan Africa, the contributions are 27 percent and 41 percent, respectively.¹⁹

The recent economic crisis fuelled an expansion of the informal economy, taking in those who were once formal workers, the unemployed, and the underemployed alike. As displaced workers, a large proportion of which are women, enter the informal economy, the result is over-crowding of an already competitive labor market and a deterioration of working conditions. As Marty Chen from the Harvard Kennedy School notes, informal laborers are seeking “smaller-and-smaller slivers of a shrinking pie.”²⁰ The retrenchment of the labor market also means that women’s prospects for formal migration are weakened. In a competitive labor market in developing countries, women are frequently at a disadvantage and are particularly susceptible to exploitation, such as lower wages, and unsafe working conditions, including human trafficking.²¹ Researchers from the Thomas Reuters Foundation note that:

*The financial crisis would prompt more women to look abroad for jobs, making them easy prey. They are getting more desperate and traveling under more unsafe circumstances that make them terribly vulnerable to unsafe migration, HIV and exploitation such as trafficking.*²²

The International Labour Organization estimates that roughly 56 percent of all forced labor victims are women and girls. And research done by the U.S. State Department shows that the “supply and demand sides of the trade in human beings

are fed by ‘gendered’ vulnerabilities to trafficking.”²³ In Eastern Europe, for example, international organizations and local authorities have already reported a rise in victims of labor exploitation. In Belarus, more than 800,000 citizens are believed to be “missing,” presumed to be working—voluntarily or otherwise—in Russia. Workers earning low wages or losing their jobs are succumbing to offers for illegal work abroad. In Moldova, Europe’s poorest country, one-quarter of the population has migrated. In Ukraine, officials reported 53 criminal cases of labor exploitation in 2008, up from 23 cases in 2007 and just three in 2006. And the ILO’s May 2009 report on global forced labor trends notes that the number of identified victims of forced labor in Ukraine now surpasses that of sex trafficking victims.²⁴

Clearly, the consequences of these new gender imbalances in the global workforce require action by world leaders.

Recommendations

Gender imbalances across the developing world make it critical that something be done to alleviate the challenges that women in developing countries are facing so that they can realize their potential and be contributing members of the global economy. National governments, international donor nations and multilateral institutions must each play a role in addressing the gender imbalances that the economic crisis has exacerbated. Specifically, they should institute:

- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Social safety nets targeted to protect women
- Better education and skills development for girls, especially in new growth sectors such as the green economy
- Technical and financial assistance to establish better gender disaggregated data for developing country labor markets

Let's consider each of these in turn.

Gender-responsive budgeting

As the governments in the developing world that introduced economic stimulus packages continue to implement them, there needs to be sensitivity to ensuring that the elements of the package are equally targeted and relevant for women and men alike. Stimulus packages should ensure that spending is gender-equitable in job creation and does not focus only on physical infrastructure projects and other sectors that overwhelmingly employ men over women.²⁵ And after the stimulus is over, national governments should regularly review their employment situation and ensure that women have equal access to employment opportunities.

What this means in practice began in Australia in 1984, which first instituted gender-sensitive budgeting, and is now being adopted by numerous countries, including the Philippines, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. In the Philippines, for example,

the Gender and Development Budget Policy initiative requires government agencies to assign at least 5 percent of their budgets to finance the “development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender and development plans.”²⁶

South Africa’s initiative, called the Women’s Budget Initiative, is a model for other countries’ efforts for gender-neutral budgeting. The initiative encompasses efforts from actors within and outside of government to promote gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies. Through these efforts, the leaders at the Department of Finance and other government agencies have been able to make conscientious budget decisions that publicly address issues of gender inequalities.²⁷

Social safety nets targeted to protect women

Establishing social-protection systems for women workers abroad and allocating funding for social infrastructure investment in areas such as public health, education, child care, and other social services will not only affect women’s employment outcomes but will also promote better health outcomes for women and their children. Improving the well-being of women and their children will in turn help promote political stability and a lower propensity for crime and violence.

In terms of creating social safety nets for women, cases from East Asian countries highlight the need to develop social safety nets that specifically target the most vulnerable populations: women and children. In Thailand, for example, the Development and Education Program for Daughters and Communities provides scholarships, education, and accommodation for girls. Yet programs like this can be expensive,²⁸ and would require donor assistance to be set up and function effectively.

Promoting education and skills development for girls, especially in new growth sectors

In times of economic crisis, parents in developing countries will feel pressured to pull their girls out of schools as resources decline. Families may no longer be able to afford school fees or additional expenses that come with school-going children. They might also need their labor to derive extra income for the family in times of duress. Education for girls is a principal investment that needs to be made by both households and governments in developing countries.

Outreach programs
aimed at helping
families keep
their girls in
school should be
implemented.

Governments need policies that will make girls' schooling affordable and "girl friendly."²⁹ This will not only prove advantageous for the girls but also for the nation, as research demonstrably links female educational attainment with faster per capita income growth. According to a study by the World Bank, a 1 percent increase in the share of women with secondary education leads to roughly an annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points, which is quite substantive in countries facing income declines and slow economic growth.³⁰ This income growth is experienced not only by households, but individuals and the nation.³¹

Outreach programs aimed at helping families keep their girls in school should be implemented. Focus could be placed on women's value to economic growth. Economists Barbara Herz and Gene Sperling note that "investing in girls' education delivers high returns not only for female educational attainment, but also for maternal and children's health, more sustainable families, women's empowerment, democracy, income growth, and productivity."³² Furthermore, evidence from data that covers 1.7 million births in 59 developing countries suggests that while boys and girls benefit equally from positive shocks in per capita GDP, negative shocks are much more harmful to girls than to boys.³³

There are also new sources of economic growth that emerging economies are adapting into growth strategies, such as green technologies. Schools could foster women's interest and exposure to these new industries through training and skill development, making sure that women have an equal opportunity in those sectors. As discussed by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at the conference in March 2009, training could include teaching women about renewable energy technologies and equipping them to set up microenterprises that will manufacture and install these new technologies.³⁴

In Bangladesh for example, a nonprofit group called Grameen Shakti is training women and young workers to certify them as technicians in the repair and maintenance of solar power photovoltaic systems. The installation of these systems and other technologies based on photovoltaic technology will create an estimated 100,000 jobs in renewable energy and related businesses.³⁵ Investing in the green economy in developing countries and creating opportunities for women in this sector requires greater education and training that will enable a more sustainable and healthier lifestyle as well as growth in the economy.

Technical and financial assistance to establish better gender disaggregated data for developing country labor markets

Currently, data on employment status by gender are not collected at all by some developing countries and where such information is tracked, it is not collected in a uniform way over time. Much of the gender employment data is not recent, making it difficult to adequately address the impact of the recession and progress on key development indicators.

National governments and multilateral organizations need to establish inter-agency cooperation and coherence in promoting and developing a gender-equality strategy and better data collection in developing countries. Agencies should work together to generate a set of development indicators specific to examining gender parity. By having an established set of data that is used across all agencies, organizations and governments will be able to work together to establish benchmarks and goals. International financial institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional development banks, must live up to their recent promises to make funds available to struggling developing countries for this kind of data collection.

UNICEF has spearheaded an Inter Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, or IANWGE, under the leadership of the Special Advisor on Women and Gender Equality. The network meets only once per year, although subcommittees have been formed to work on different gender-equality issues in hopes of information sharing and developing common strategies within the organizations of the United Nations, such as United Nations Development Fund for Women, The United Nations Children's Fund, and the United Nations Development Program.³⁶ These initiatives need to be expanded and become more inclusive of development agents across all agencies. It is crucial to the resilience of our markets and economies, which are built upon a foundation of strong female employment, and not just any jobs—just jobs that include labor rights, appropriate compensation, and social protections such as health care and pensions.

The role of women is paramount

The policy debate around the economic crisis and the effect on women should focus on promoting full and productive employment for women globally, and ensuring that they can be economic agents in their homes and communities in both the developed and developing worlds. But women in the developing world face particular challenges. Addressing these challenging circumstances facing women in developing countries is not just a moral imperative, it also is an economic one that has global implications.

There are many areas where efforts and funds can be focused, but priority must be given to those policies and long-term institutions that promote ongoing investment in women as capable, productive, and contributing economic agents. At the center of this agenda is focusing policy on both strengthening and creating job opportunities for women, and not just any jobs, but just jobs. Increasing women's opportunities and focusing on increasing the income for women on par with men will naturally have positive effects on household income and gender equality worldwide. As a strategy, these recommendations will help bring fruition to the Millennium Development Goals, the pledges made by the G20, and will help the global economic recovery effort.

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Prior to founding the Center in 2003, Podesta served as White House Chief of Staff to President William J. Clinton. He served in the president's cabinet and as a principal on the National Security Council. While in the White House, he also served as both an assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff, as well as staff secretary and a senior policy advisor on government information, privacy, telecommunications security, and regulatory policy.

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Additionally, Podesta has held numerous positions on Capitol Hill, including counselor to Democratic Leader Senator Thomas A. Daschle (1995-1996); chief counsel for the Senate Agriculture Committee (1987-1988); and chief minority counsel for the Senate Judiciary Subcommittees on Patents, Copyrights, and Trademarks; Security and Terrorism; and Regulatory Reform (1981-1987).

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