



**WORLDCONNECTORS THE ROUND TABLE FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET**

## **WORLDCONNECTORS QUICK SCAN**

### **GENDER & DIVERSITY**

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*1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1:*

*'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'*

*Earth Charter, Principles 11 and 12:*

*'Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development'*

*'Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin'*

*Graça Machel: 'None of the MDGs will be achieved without gender equality. To discriminate on the basis of sex and gender is morally indefensible; economically, politically and socially unsupportable.'*

## INTRODUCTION

International declarations and conventions provide for equal rights and justice for men and women, young and old, worldwide. However, in East and West, North and South, millions of people do not enjoy their rights, let alone benefit from equal outcomes. Injustice particularly affects women and minorities:

- 1) In *no* country in the world do women enjoy equal rights and outcomes
- 2) Everywhere in the world, men and women from ethnic, religious and cultural minority groups – immigrants and refugees in particular – are often rated and treated as second-class citizens, who cannot avail themselves of the rights they are legally entitled to.

Some causes of this injustice are individual, but most are due to structural political, social and economic inequalities for women and for various minority groups.

We hope that anyone reading this quick scan will take to heart the levels of inequality, poverty and injustice that still exist – yet will be encouraged by the energy and achievements of the many change agents world wide of whom just a few examples are given below.

### *The impact of the crisis*

Today's global economic crisis impacts negatively on gender justice and equal rights for everyone. It will take its toll more than anything on societies and individuals in the South. UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon has warned that the crisis jeopardises everything the UN has done to help the world's poor: "It threatens to undermine all our achievements and all our progress." Women across Africa, Asia and Latin-America are bound to bear the brunt of this fall-out. In the North, people from minority backgrounds, immigrants and refugees will be hit hardest by the effects of the financial crisis. They are the first to lose their jobs and homes.

The one positive result of the current crisis - which is closely linked to crises of livelihood, environment and energy – is the growing groundswell of people at all levels of society and in all countries that demand fundamental change. They demand change in how we organize individual, local, national and global relationships in order to achieve a truly sustainable and equitable world for all.

### *Cyclical nature of inequality*

The subordinate position of women and minorities is often cumulatively reinforced throughout their life cycle. In many countries, girls are more likely to drop out of school and to receive less education than boys because the economic value of their work at home exceeds the perceived value of schooling. Women's inequality is thus increased by the continuing cycle of illiteracy and poverty. Inequality influences women in all phases of their lives. The extent to which women are affected by structural injustices differs between countries and regions.

It is evident, though, that any positive intervention will have its impact on following life phases as well as on future generations. When a country educates both its girls and boys economic productivity tends to rise, maternal and infant mortality rates usually fall, fertility rates decline and the health and education prospects of the next generation improve.<sup>1</sup> Well-educated girls will get better paid jobs, which will enhance independence, freedom and dignity throughout their lives. Furthermore investment in education, health, local agriculture, micro-credit, local enterprise leading to fair regional trade, green jobs and infrastructure as well as social security are all building blocks laying a foundation for a local-to-global economy. That is, a balanced economy with sustainable economic

growth because it brings in the talents of a billion women, men and children now wasting their talents because of abject poverty, lack of opportunity, and investment in them as people.

### *Life phases*

The extent to which equal rights are/aren't ensured as well as the impact hereof on people's lives can be traced through a person's life cycle. Different key moments or phases in life reveal different threats to and opportunities for gender justice and equality. Life phases do not have the same demarcation points for societies across the globe, but we believe that the broad categories distinguished below will resonate with the life experiences of women and men anywhere.

The life phase approach provides us with a window on the world *and* a reflection of ourselves. It uncovers the worst and intolerable incidences of structural injustice worldwide, and also reveals where the Netherlands stand. We may be pleased about some of our achievement in terms of women's equal rights, but there are certainly countries that do surprise and surpass us.

The Gender Equity Index (GEI) developed by Social Watch classifies countries according to 12 indicators relevant to gender equity in three dimensions: education, participation in the economy and empowerment – which is measured as participation in decision making. A 100% score means no gender gap at all.<sup>2</sup> Sweden heads the list with 89%, Rwanda comes fifth. The Netherlands have improved by 7% over the past four years and are now number ten with 78%. Levels of education are fairly equal for girls and boys in the Netherlands, but women's participation in the economy is still low due to much part-time work. As for decision making, local and national government are up to a third women, but the corporate sector and universities have been stuck for decades at a level of around 10% women, or less.

We emphasize that this Quick Scan is not exhaustive in its comparisons. The facts and figures provided merely serve as illustration. We also note that it was easier to find telling figures about gender than about diversity. For every life phase we have added some illustrations of inspiring initiatives and movements through which people everywhere are working for equal rights and outcomes for women and minorities around the world.

## 1. EARLY CHILDHOOD

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

#### **Article 25**

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

### *Earth Charter*

**Principle 11c:** Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members

**Principle 12c:** Honour and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfil their essential role in creating sustainable societies

### *Millennium Development Goals*

#### **MDG 4: Reduce child mortality.**

Target 1: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

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**Girls are discriminated against in the womb**, before birth.

- The practice of female foeticide and sex selective abortion is growing in some parts of the world.
- It is estimated that in India and China, **2.7 million female fetuses are aborted each year**. In China there are already 32 million more boys than girls under age 20.<sup>3</sup>
- In China and India the practice of female infanticide, **killing new-born girls**, was noted already a century ago and is still happening.<sup>4</sup>

Every year nearly **10 million infants and children die before they reach the age of five**.

- Child mortality figures show huge discrepancies between regions: in Africa, 86 children under five die per 1000 live births; in the Netherlands that figure is 5 per 1000.
- In certain regions, more girls than boys die. This '**excess female child mortality**' is particularly evident in South and East Asia.
- Numbers of malnourished children are still very high (33% in Afghanistan, 38% in Sudan, 44% in India<sup>5</sup>), yet neglect of the girl child and **preferential feeding of boys** leads to worse malnutrition for girls, with lasting physical and mental effects. An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted as a result of childhood malnutrition.

Worldwide, it is estimated that around **15 million children under 18 have been orphaned as a result of AIDS**. Around 11.6 million of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>6</sup> In some of the worst affected areas up to 20% of the total child population are Aids orphans. This has created a new social category: **child headed households**. For orphaned children who have sole responsibility for the survival of younger siblings, sex work can seem an 'attractive' way to make money. This makes **young girls prone to trafficking**.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the clear language of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all countries in the world except the US and Somalia,<sup>8</sup> **one in every six children in the world aged 5-14 are engaged in child labour.**

- In least developed countries, 28% of girls and 31% of boys are engaged in child labour.<sup>9</sup>
- Millions of girls who work as domestic servants are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
- The MV Foundation in India argues that any child out of school is a child labourer. Thanks to the efforts of 86.000 volunteers, 260.000 children in Andhra Pradesh are now going to school.<sup>10</sup>

### Gender roles and role models

- By age five, most girls and boys have already internalised the gender role expectations communicated to them by their families, schools, the media and society as a whole. The family is where children first learn about their potential. It is here that **millions of girls are socialised to believe that they have a lower social status than boys** and vice versa.<sup>11</sup> The privileging of boys results in a lack of discipline at school and at home, which will ultimately be to their disadvantage.
- In many parts of the world, young boys' upbringing is affected due to fathers being absent as labour migrants or soldiers. This absence also leaves girls without a better understanding of their fathers, which will affect their future relations with men.
- In the Netherlands, **about 70% of the characters in children's programmes are male.**<sup>12</sup>
- A growing problem within migrant communities in the Netherlands is that **young boys lack positive role models** as a result of the effect that the migration history has had on the professional and social development of their fathers.<sup>13</sup>
- Huge problems can be expected with a surplus of young men in China who have grown up in one-child families, with huge expectations and responsibilities – and unable to find a marriage partner.
- In the Netherlands there are particularly high suicide numbers amongst certain groups of girls, for instance Hindu girls.

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### Examples of change-agents:

- **Child Helpline International** ([www.childhelplineinternational.org](http://www.childhelplineinternational.org)) is a global network of child help lines operating in more than 150 countries, working together with children's networks, governments, UN bodies and the private sector. CHI has recently been involved in workshops on child trafficking in countries belonging to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) due to concern that, in the build up to the World Cup 2010 in South Africa, incidences of child trafficking will increase considerably.<sup>14</sup>
- Particularly in Scandinavian countries, infant- and pre-school care is working consciously with boys and girls on the skills of cooperation instead of competition. Some child-care centres in the Netherlands are beginning to experiment with such vision and methods.
- In a number of Latin American countries (Mexico, Columbia) feminist educationalists have developed teaching methods and programmes for primary school children about life skills which include dealing with conflict, understanding gender-roles including care-giving, and developing transformative male role-models.

## 2. HEALTH

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

#### Article 25

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family

### *Earth Charter*

**Principle 9a:** Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required

### *Millennium Development Goals*

#### **MDG 6: Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases**

Target 1: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 2: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

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Around the world, 1.2 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water. Yet **access to safe drinking water and sanitation** is indispensable for a life in dignity.<sup>15</sup>

- Every eight seconds, somewhere in the world, a child dies of water-borne disease.
- Around the world, women and girls bear the prime responsibility for collecting water for washing, cooking, cleaning, drinking and sanitation. In rural areas, **up to one-third of a woman's time can be spent fetching water.**
- On average, girls will walk 6 kilometres a day to fetch water. Women and young girls are often subject to (sexual) violence when walking to and from water sources through isolated areas.
- In Africa, up to 10% of girls drop out of school once they begin menstruating due to lack of appropriate sanitation facilities.

Worldwide 2.5 billion people are dependent on firewood, dung and charcoal for their daily energy needs. The use of cooking stoves is particularly detrimental to women's health. In fact, as many as **1.3 million people, mainly women and children, die every year as a result of diseases induced by indoor air pollution.**<sup>16</sup>

In rich countries fast foods and obesity are causes of ill-health. This combines badly with fashion magazines and the wider media presenting the ideal woman as a (very) thin person, **encouraging girls and women to take up as little space as possible.** Eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia) are a common psychological and physical disorder of teenage girls – which can lead to death.

### **HIV/Aids**

- In sub-Saharan Africa, almost **60% of adults living with HIV are women.**
- 21% of women in sub-Saharan Africa in need of treatment receive antiretroviral therapy, as opposed to 30% of men. In southern Asia these figures are 10 and 16%. Worst access to

antiretroviral treatment is in the former Soviet Republics (CIS): 9% of women receive treatment, 14% of men.

- The fact that girls have less control of sexual decisions means that, in **Sub-Saharan Africa, two-thirds of 15 -19 year olds newly infected with HIV are girls.**

**Women are about twice as likely as men to develop depression** and depression-related disorders during their lifetime. Depression occurs among women from all educational, economic and racial and ethnic groups.<sup>17</sup> For their subjective well-being, women are **less dependent than men on being married** or involved in a stable relationship.<sup>18</sup>

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#### **Examples of change-agents:**

- There are very many small and large-scale development programmes around the world; from international NGOs like Oxfam to UN organisations (UNDP, Unicef) to World Bank and government programmes on water and sanitation, malaria nets, alternative energy such as bio, solar and wind energy, water preservation methods, safe-cooking stoves, tree-planting schemes, alternative and formal and non-formal health attendants.
- Women's groups around the world campaign with some measure of success against the too-thin beauty ideal of women. Increasingly fashion models and magazines agree to use 'real women' of all shapes and sizes in their work. **The mainstream media is encouraged to diversify the people they depict in terms of gender as well as ethnic background and lifestyle.** Apart from the health issue this is also sign of how inclusive or excluding the workings of democracy are.
- The **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)** in South Africa has been a pioneer in expanding access to AIDS inhibitors (ARVs) in Africa. TAC has grown into a national movement with thousands of volunteers and has played a key role in the fight against international pharmaceutical companies.
- Daksha Patel of Gujarat State Network for People living with HIV/Aids set up India's **first marriage bureau for HIV positive people** to help them lead a normal social life without stigma.
- Citizen networks such as the Global Call to Action against Poverty have successfully advocated in a number of countries (such as India) for a significant increase in government spending on health and education.

### 3. EDUCATION

#### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

##### **Article 26**

- (1) Everyone has the right to education.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### *Earth Charter*

**Principle 9b:** Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood

**Principle 14a:** Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development

#### *Millennium Development Goals*

##### **MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education**

Target 1: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

##### **MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

Target 1: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

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**Worldwide, 75 million children, the majority of them girls, do not go to school.**

- The target of gender parity in primary and secondary education was far from achieved in 2005 and will not be achieved by 2015.
- Between 1991 and 2006, girls' primary school enrolment in relation to boys (girls per 100 boys) **improved everywhere** except in Oceania. In Sub-Saharan Africa from 83 to 89; in Southern Asia from 77 to 95.
- Eliminating school fees, providing school meals, constructing separate sanitation facilities, ensuring a safe school environment and promoting later marriage have boosted girls' attendance in school.
- The secondary school enrolment rate is lowest in West and Central Africa: 26% for boys, 20% for girls.
- Still, in developing regions as a whole, **girls still account for 55% of the out-of-school population.**
- Where gender gaps in primary schools have closed, more girls than boys continue on to secondary school. Boys' under-achievement is a particular concern in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Where girls' primary education enrolment lags behind boys', the gender gap widens in secondary and tertiary education.

The effect of girls' unequal access to education on literacy rates is captured in the **literacy ratio gap:** the female literacy ratio (15-25 years old) to the male literacy ratio of a country.



- Worst performers are Afghanistan with 0.29; Yemen with 0.30; Chad with 0.31; and Niger with 0.35.
- Most Sub-Saharan African countries have ratios of 0.40 to 0.50. In other words, **twice as many men in Sub-Saharan Africa are literate as women.**
- In a few countries the literacy ratio gap is > 1. In Botswana, Costa Rica, Honduras, Malta, Philippines, Seychelles and Uruguay female literacy is higher than male literacy.

**The most common reason for girls not to go to school is related to poverty:** they have to help with work at home or in economic activities to support the household. There is no money for their school fees or uniforms. Girls are also kept home due to (fear of) sexual intimidation at school.

**Cultural and religious beliefs** can be also the cause of **girls being denied access to education.**

- What is now known as the Swat valley in Pakistan, until 1969 was a princely state belonging to India. Its last ruler considered education for girls essential for socioeconomic development and introduced co-education in all state schools. Since the valley has become a haven for the Taliban, more than 100 girls' schools have been attacked and destroyed.<sup>19</sup>
- In Turkey, despite long-term government support for mass education, many children, especially girls, do not attend school. Research suggests that the government ban on headscarves in public schools contributes to this gender inequity in schooling. Daughters who live in patriarchal families and whose fathers expect them to wear a headscarf in public, have lower educational attainment. Parental religiosity, however, is *unrelated* to daughters' education.<sup>20</sup>

Tens of thousands of **children forego formal education because they are actively involved in war.** Africa has the highest number of child soldiers. **There are about 100,000 girls among the estimated 300,000 child soldiers** in the world today. In addition to being used for military and domestic tasks, **girl soldiers are often sexually exploited.**

**Refugee children are at risk of missing out on education** in many parts of the world.<sup>21</sup>

- In 2007, only 4% of the Iraqi refugee children in Jordan (10,000 of 250,000) were going to school.<sup>22</sup>
- In refugee settlements in Uganda, (orphaned) girls often miss out on school at least a week every month simply because they lack sanitary napkins and have only one pair of knickers.<sup>23</sup>
- In the Netherlands, children of asylum seekers are sometimes kept in detention centres for more than 2 months awaiting progress in their asylum procedures.<sup>24</sup>

There is an enormous **digital divide** between the rich and poor countries in the world: access to internet – and thus to information and connectivity - is dramatically higher in the US than in Africa and some Asian countries. This gap is however fast closing thanks to rapidly increasing use of internet cafés and mobile phones.

- A huge digital divide remains (obviously) between the literate and the illiterate, many more of whom are women
- A (smaller) digital divide persists between girls and boys in rich countries and higher classes. Reasons are that girls have less spare time (more time spent on domestic work) and boys have a greater interest in computer games.

Research shows that the **achievements of pupils at so-called 'black schools'** in the Netherlands are **lower than those of children in mixed or 'white' schools**.

- An important reason is that these children often come from families with parents with little formal education and that they begin their school career with arrears in especially language skills.<sup>25</sup>

**The educational levels of non-native youth in the Netherlands are going up.**

- Girls perform better in school than boys, but not better than their native classmates.
- Non-native girls who get their secondary school diploma more often opt for continuing their education at the highest possible level than native Dutch girls. They also tend to choose more often for an education that offers good job perspectives.<sup>26</sup>
- Schooling advice given to non-native Dutch pupils and students often underestimates their actual academic abilities.

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**Examples of change-agents:**

- The **Global March against Child Labour** ([www.globalmarch.org](http://www.globalmarch.org)) is born out of the urgent desire felt by thousands of people across the globe to set children free from servitude. It began with a worldwide march, which started in January 1998 and touched every corner of the globe, to culminate at the ILO Conference in Geneva. The following year, the ILO Convention against the worst forms of child labour was unanimously adopted. Today, with 150 countries having ratified the convention so far, it has become the fastest ratified convention in the history of ILO.
- The **Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers** ([www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org)) promotes the adoption and adherence to national, regional and international legal standards (including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict) prohibiting the military recruitment and use in hostilities of girls and boys younger than eighteen. The Coalition also lobbies for the demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers.
- The **Global Campaign for Education for All** is a coalition of trade unions and International NGOs, which puts pressure governments to honour the millennium goals. Education International, the largest trade union in the world, works on concepts like 'safe schools', quality education and educators for all, and teacher competency profiles and life-skill curriculum which includes gender equity. It also advocates for bilingual education and indigenous knowledge to be included in curriculum development.

## 4. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### *Millennium Development Goals*

#### **MDG 5: Improve maternal health**

Target 1: Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Target 2: Achieve universal access to reproductive health

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Not everywhere do women and men have the right to choose whether or not to have children. People's **access to contraception** depends on income and access to health facilities, as well as on cultural and social norms and the **ethics of birth control** as upheld by different religions.<sup>27</sup>

- The fact that various strands of Christianity (evangelism, Pentecostal churches, orthodox Catholics) actively discourage the use of contraception, including condoms, acerbates the HIV/Aids pandemic in Africa.
- Girls and women are more vulnerable than men to the risk of STIs including HIV, as they are less likely than men to have control over when and how they have sex.
- The percentage of teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands has slightly decreased from 1.04% in 2004 to 0.66% in 2007.

**Unwanted pregnancies** can have detrimental effects on women and their babies.

- In Latin America rape leads to many teenage pregnancies and deaths through illegal abortions (called 'appendicitis').
- In India, unmarried women often feel forced to give up their babies for adoption because of the stigma and discrimination linked to their status.<sup>28</sup>

**Births attended by skilled health staff** as percentage of total: 14% in Chad, 95% in Algeria; 27% in Yemen, 96% in Saudi Arabia; 14% in Afghanistan, 100% in Turkmenistan; 42% in Papua New Guinea, 98% in Malaysia.<sup>29</sup>

Water, sanitation and sufficient food are key factors to ensure maternal health. **Anaemia** through lack of food, vitamins and iodine is a major and solvable cause of death and health complications during pregnancy and after birth.

More than **half a million women die during or shortly after pregnancy every year**. Less than 1% of such deaths occur in the developed world.

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#### **Examples of change-agents:**

- In all development programmes the availability of primary health care close to the homes of people is recognised as a must. In developing countries where public spending is too low to provide such services, many civil society organisations train non-formal birth attendants. This is a major support to 'normal' though not to complex births.

- Sometimes simple measures help to prevent deaths. In Tabakoro village in southern Mali, a **solar-powered light was installed in the maternity ward** of the local hospital (where solar power is also used to cool medicine and pump water). This helped convince women not to give birth in darkness at home (the circumstances in which 60% of children are born), which highly reduced the number of mothers and children dying during childbirth.<sup>30</sup>
- In many countries **feminist groups continue to fight for the right of women to take control of their own reproductive rights**, which includes the availability of contraceptives including the female condom, the morning-after pill and the right to safe abortions.

## 5. SEXUAL RIGHTS & VIOLENCE

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

**Article 3** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude

### *Earth Charter*

**Principle 11a:** Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them

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Annually, approximately **800,000 people are trafficked across national borders**. Approximately 80 percent of them are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors. **The majority of transnational victims are females trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation.**<sup>31</sup>

- In Asia, Japan is the major destination country for trafficked women, especially from the Philippines and Thailand. Trafficking is mostly about exploitation of migrant women – so it is about gender as well as about racism.
- Nepali girls are sold into the sex industry in India, where they are favoured because of their light skin. Current numbers for girls trafficked out of the country are 10,000 to 15,000 yearly.<sup>32</sup>
- In the Netherlands, there were 809 registered victims of human trafficking in 2008 (up from 716 in 2007). Some 763 were women and at least 60% of them were forced to work in the sex industry.

Many women worldwide experience **sexual or physical violence** at some point in their lives.

- **In the Netherlands, this figure is 40%**; in Bangladesh it is 60%. South Africa has the highest incidence of reported rape in the world.
- Less information is available about **men who are victims of domestic violence**. The British Crime Survey revealed that 19% of domestic violence incidents were reported to be male victims, with just under half of these having a female abuser.

**Early child marriage** is common in rural parts of India and Africa.

- Freedom to choose one's sexual partner (male or female) is mostly a privilege of the economic and cultural elite.
- Being ready for marriage in many countries is linked with the ability of a man to provide. Men are judged on economic merit only (by the family and parents of the girl or by the girl herself).

### **Sexual violence and conflict**

- Thousands of girls and young women – no-one knows exactly how many – have suffered rape and sexual abuse in times of war. Today, **rape is used as a deliberate tactic in ethnic or religious conflict**.
- UNIFEM: 'The extreme violence that women suffer during conflict does not arise solely out of the conditions of war; it is directly related to the violence that exists in women's lives during peace time.'

**Female genital mutilation**, a human rights violation and extreme form of discrimination against women, is still prevalent in parts of Africa and the Middle East.

- In Africa, around 3 million girls are at risk for FGM annually.
- In some communities, increasing numbers of women and men declare their support to end this practice.

**Many boys struggle with their sexual identity.** They have more problems talking to peers in a serious matter (instead of boasting, which has negative effects), while girls discuss problems with peers much more easily.

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**Examples of change-agents:**

- In all countries in the world there are women- and increasingly mixed groups - working with victims of physical and sexual violence, domestic and communal conflict – finding ways to break the complex repetitive victim/abuser patterns. These services are partly professional but mostly underfunded voluntary efforts.
- The South Asian Campaign to End All Violence against Women - or the **‘We Can’** campaign – is an inspiring example of a campaign that successfully involves and engages whole communities and up to 40% men in its struggle. It asks every person involved to commit to stopping all aspects of discrimination and violence in their own families and communities – in direct and structural ways. This campaign is now ‘jumping across’ continents, and has taken off in the Netherlands also.
- There are numerous other examples around the world of ‘men against violence against women’ such as **MenEngage** ([www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org))
- The sexual violence that has been part of the war in eastern Congo has made the region arguably the worst place in the world to be a woman. The Congolese organization **Synergie des Femmes pour les Victimes des Violences Sexuelles (SFVS)** supports women and girls who have been raped and subsequently rejected by their communities. SFVS provides medical care and counseling to victims of sexual violence; raises community awareness of the destructive effects of sexual violence against women; provides legal support; and gives victims opportunities to participate in income-generating activities. Founder of SFVS, Justine Masika Bihamba, received the first Human Rights Defenders Tulip from the Dutch government in 2008.
- **Behind the Mask** ([www.mask.org.za](http://www.mask.org.za)) is an organisation run by brave young South Africans, who innovatively use the internet and journalistic activism to change negative attitudes towards homosexuals and lesbians who are frequently faced with discrimination and violence in many African countries.

## 6. WORK, INCOME AND CARE

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

#### **Article 17**

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others

#### **Article 23**

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work

### *Millennium Development Goals*

#### **MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Target 2: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

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#### **Seventy per cent of the 1.5 billion people living on \$1 a day or less are female.**

- Where programmes were introduced for the poorest and most vulnerable families to benefit from a small injection of extra, regular and predictable resources directly into the hands of mothers or grandmothers, this has impacted positively on the welfare of girls. The Mexican government's Oportunidades programme has had a greater impact on girls' school enrolment than boys.
- **Women farmers are responsible for 60 tot 80% of food production in poor countries.**
- **Lack of land rights** affects many women's security of livelihood around the world. In parts of southern and eastern Africa women's already fragile land rights are further eroded in a global context of privatisation, World Bank-sponsored land reforms, HIV/AIDS, and changing employment and international trade patterns.<sup>33</sup>
- Examples of good practice of **actively including women in rural development** (such as BRAC in Bangladesh) show not only economic results, but also equally important achievements in terms of empowerment and the increased political participation of women.
- In the United States, **single women with children have one of the highest poverty rates.**

Worldwide for every 100 men, 68 women are employed in formal jobs. Their wages are on average 52% of what men get paid.

- In the Netherlands, 80 women are employed (full and part-time) for every 100 men. Their wages are 60% of men's wages. This is partly due to part-time work, but more relevant, on average **women in the Netherlands get paid 30% less for doing the same work.**

#### **In many professions, women and men are not equally represented.**

- Female professional and technical workers (as % of total positions): 64% in Ukraine; 50% in the Netherlands; 15% in Yemen.

- Female legislators, senior officials and managers (as % of total positions): **26% in Netherlands**; 38% in Colombia; 58% in Philippines.
- **The Netherlands have** – after Botswana – the **lowest percentage of female university professors** in the world: 10%. The European average is 15%.<sup>34</sup>
- An evaluation of the **World Bank's internal gender policy showed very poor results**. Diversity goals were more easily met than gender goals.

The possibilities for men and women to work part-time – in order to **share the care for children and household and to keep women in the formal economy** – vary a great deal between different countries.

- The Netherlands are champion in part-time work: 76% of the women work part-time and 23% of the men. As a result, however, fewer women in the Netherlands are economically independent. In Sweden women work an average of 34 hours a week; for Dutch women that is 25%. Moreover, **women in the Netherlands hardly climb up to higher positions**.
- In the Netherlands, 70% of women at age 27 are financially independent. This figure then drops fast to 44% at age 37. A short-lived revival around age 48: half of the women are independent. Then the figure plummets: **at age 65, less than 25% of all women are economically independent**.<sup>35</sup>
- Women in the Netherlands would want to work 5 hours per week more if better (division of) work and care arrangements and flexible work hours would allow this.
- **Six out of ten men in the Netherlands say they want to work less to spend more time with their children**, but they do not or cannot do this due to inflexible employers.<sup>36</sup>
- Nearly half of all men working part-time in the Netherlands are older than 39 and do not, or no longer, have minors living at home. **Men mostly work part-time towards the end of their career**. Only 27% of men working part-time have a youngest child in the age range of 0 to 11 years.
- **Paternal leave**: in the Netherlands, fathers get 2 days paid leave immediately after their baby is born. In the Philippines this is 7 days, in Kenya 2 weeks, in Finland 18 days, in Lithuania 1 month. Australia and the United States do not offer any form of *paid* parental leave for mothers or fathers.

**38 percent of non-Western women in the Netherlands have paid work** (as opposed to 56 percent of native Dutch women). Differences are considerable.

- Surinam women work almost as much in paid jobs as native Dutch women. But only 10 to 15 percent of women from Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia have paid work. For Moroccan and Turkish women the figures are 27 and 31 percent.
- Half of all non-native working women in the Netherlands have a low paid job. This is also true for non-native men.

Research among Fortune 500-firms shows that **companies with both men and women in high management positions perform better financially** than those with only men at the top.<sup>37</sup>

- Dutch research among a sample of 80 companies registered at the stock exchange of various sectors (services, finances, industry and IT) similarly shows a higher shareholders value for Dutch companies with both women and men in top management.<sup>38</sup>



Men are expected to provide for the family but with rising unemployment and limited education, men often find themselves incapable of providing adequate financial support to their families, leaving them feeling '**inept and unmanly**', which often leads to frustration, abuse and alcoholism (of which wives and children often suffer the direct consequence).

Men are discouraged by society at large (including women) to play an active part in the lives and education of both their sons and daughters. As a consequence they often 'miss out' on this important and rewarding part of family life.

The current global recession leads to widespread unemployment and will cause the erosion of the rights and the standard of living of workers everywhere.

- In the Netherlands the **impact of the financial crisis on non-native citizens** is already evident: they are hit by relatively more dismissals than Dutch-born residents.

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#### Examples of change-agents:

- **Micro-finance programmes** have 'jumped' from Bangladesh (Grameen, Brac) to many developing countries. Groups of mostly women organise themselves into loan- and saving schemes, and build small agricultural and local enterprises. These become a foundation to their economic survival – and a grassroots sustainable economy, including trade.
- The ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) is working on the '**decent work**' agenda and is planning to spend the next years particularly on improving the rights of informal workers with a focus on domestic work and migrant rights.
- The ILO has developed the '**green job deal**' in 2009, which is about combining the agenda's of poverty and climate change – to be solved by sustainable economic growth through investments in green infrastructure and green jobs.
- The **Self Employed Women's Association** (SEWA) is an Indian union for poor women working in the informal sector (bidi rollers, incense stick rollers, street vendors, construction workers, cleaners etc). The number of members has grown tremendously: in the city Ahmedabad alone from 79.000 in 2000 to over 800.000 in 2007. SEWA is the first union for informal sector workers that gained official status in India.
- There are numerous examples of organisations of socially excluded groups organising for their (workers-) rights, such as the enormous Dalits movement in India, the Landless Labourers in Asia and Latin America, and many migrant movements around the world.
- In June 2009, Papa Plus and FNV Jong presented their manifest **Papa Plus** (<http://www.fnv.nl/superpapa/>) to the social partners in the Netherlands. This manifest calls for a better and fairer division of work and care among men and women.
- There are commercial employment and head-hunting agencies in many western countries focusing their services on women, and/or migrants, and/or lesbians and gays or other specific minorities. They often provide supportive training services to both potential candidates and 'receiving' organisations.

## 7. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

### *Universal Declaration of Human Rights:*

#### **Article 21**

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

#### **Article 27**

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

### *Earth Charter*

**Principle 11b:** Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders and beneficiaries

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**Universal suffrage** (the right to vote and to be eligible for election) was first introduced in New Zealand in 1893.

- In the Netherlands, women were allowed to vote for the first time in 1922. In France, women could not vote until 1944. In Switzerland women did not receive the right to vote until 1971.
- In the Netherlands, female members of the SGP cannot fulfil positions in public politics.
- In South Africa, blacks and coloureds were denied the right to vote during Apartheid (until 1994)
- In Saudi Arabia and in Vatican City there is no suffrage for women.

### **Women's active formal participation in national politics:**

- Women in decision-making positions in government at ministerial level: 2,6% in Sudan, 5.3% in Albania, 23% in Canada, 35% in Rwanda, 36% in Netherlands, 37,5% in Guinea-Bissau, 47% in Finland.
- Seats in parliament held by women (as % of seats available): Bhutan 2.7%, Albania 7.1%, Burundi 30.5%, Netherlands 36.7%, Costa Rica 38.6%, Sweden 47%, Rwanda 48.8%.

### **Not all social groups in the Netherlands participate equitably in civil society.**

- Among the under-represented groups are the low-educated, immigrants and housewives.
- In 2003, women occupied 41% of all *voluntary* leadership positions. The share of women in *paid* leadership positions in NGOs with more than 50.000 members is considerably lower: 26%.<sup>39</sup>

**Women often take the lead in processes of local or national reconciliation.** Holding on to their own identities, they are able to open themselves to others, crossing all kinds of cultural, ethic or political barriers.

It has been proven that **diversity in any leadership situation** (government, corporate or civil society) **improves the quality of decision making and performance of an organisation.** The opposite is also proven: patriarchal hierarchy leads to monopolies of power and dominance and thus to a mono-culture in decision making.

- At the local level this mono-culture (sometimes called feudalism or a monopoly of power) is increasingly transformed into more vibrant democratic models.
- At the national level democracy is improving in many countries, and regressing in some.
- At the global level democratic transformation beyond an elitist monoculture still has a long way to go.
- The **interconnectivity between gender and other minority issues**: when the voices of women, children and youth, indigenous people, migrants, lesbians and gays, ethnic and religious minorities are not heard, decision making serves a specific elite group of society, and not the common good.

Compared to other movements and issues, **women's organisations receive very little funding** from national and multilateral agencies: at present estimated at no more than US\$ 120 million.<sup>40</sup>

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#### Examples of change-agents:

- Many women's and broader civil society groups work on improving citizens rights, human rights, and various aspects of building inclusive democracies. **The human rights agenda has broadened** from fighting for political rights, to a focus on specific human rights (children, women, LGBT rights, migrants and indigenous people and people with special abilities). Lately there is more focus on the indivisibility of human, economic, social and cultural rights, leading to campaigns for dignity of all – and against a culture of impunity.
- **Women's groups in many countries advocate for changes in family law and interpretations of local justice systems** including the Sharia: especially where it allows women fewer rights than men in terms of divorce, custody of children, inheritance, ownership of land, being involved or believed as witness, level of freedom of movement, level of punishments, etc.
- The **Global Call to Action against Poverty** is a network of networks around the world, and its first of seven areas of change is about holding governments accountable to their promises and responsibilities towards their citizens (Millennium Goals, gender justice, debt, fair trade, climate justice, peace - and thus at the same time to rule of law, open elections, facilitating civil society etc.)
- In July 2009, **The Elders** called upon all leaders to promote and protect equal rights for women and girls. They especially call on religious and traditional leaders to set an example and change all discriminatory practices within their own religions and traditions. See the video messages of Jimmy Carter, Lakhdar Brahimi and Desmond Tutu on: <http://www.theelders.org/womens-initiatives>
- The **Charter for Compassion** ([www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org)) , crafted by people all over the world and drafted by a multi-faith, multi-national council of thinkers and leaders will be unveiled on 12 November 2009. The Charter is a cry for a return to The Golden Rule, which requires that we use empathy - moral imagination- to put ourselves in other people's shoes. The Charter encourages us to act toward them as we would want them to act toward us, and to refuse, under any circumstance, to carry out actions which would cause others harm.
- Amongst other examples of women working for peace around the world, the **International Women's Commission for Just and Sustainable Peace in Palestine and Israel** is a cooperative effort of Palestinian, Israeli and international women working towards the

implementation of UN resolution 1325, a peace process to move forward in which many civil society women are involved.

## 8. THE THIRD AGE

### Women are though.

- Throughout their lives many of them face more violence than men and they are more vulnerable to certain diseases and health problems (e.g. complications of giving birth)
- Yet their **life expectancy is higher** than that of men.

### Financial dependence

- Many women are financially dependent on their male partners (who die earlier)
- In the Netherlands, only 25% of all women at age 65 are financially independent.
- In countries where women do not have the right to inheritance or land, the **financial situation of elder women is often extremely precarious.**

The role of men in western society dramatically alters at the pension age when they stop work, **leaving many men without a sense of purpose.** Men are not socially valued in a role as caregivers even if they themselves want to.

**The HIV/Aids epidemic in Africa has confronted many grandparents with new financial burdens** of looking after their grandchildren who are orphaned; and this after having taken care of their own dying children.

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### Examples of change-agents:

- Particularly in western countries people 'of age' are beginning to organise in civil society and sometimes in political pressure groups, or parties. They are particularly concerned about their civil and economic rights, and their life choices (e.g. voice and participation, quality of care and euthanasia).
- **WorldGranny** ([www.worldgranny.nl](http://www.worldgranny.nl)) strives for the empowerment of the elderly, especially older women, and for eradication of extreme poverty. Worldgranny contributes to a better living situations of old people, their families and communities in developing countries.
- There are projects based on an intergenerational philosophy, where in communities of family homes aging parents live in semi-separated units (kangaroo housing), and play certain roles in the care of their grandchildren, or in other voluntary community activities.

## A FINAL REQUEST TO OUR READERS

We as Worldconnectors hope that this quick scan will become a 'living document' in the sense that anyone reading it will add both examples of injustice, but particularly also examples of change agents: all those women and men and young people who have the courage to not accept life as it is, but who pool their energy to make their lives and our world into what is should and could be: by 'living' and embodying the principles and agreements that have been agreed to for decades already at international levels.

### Some of the sources used:

Amnesty International Yearbook

Civicus reports

Databoek Kinderen in Tel 2009

<http://www.kinderenintel.nl/index2009.html>

Earth Charter

Emacipatieweb.nl

MDG Atlas

Millennium Development Goals Report 2008

[http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2008/MDG\\_Report\\_2008\\_En.pdf#page=18](http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2008/MDG_Report_2008_En.pdf#page=18)

OESO/DAC (gender expert group)

Plan International: Because I'm a girl

<http://www.plan-uk.org/becauseiamagirl/theissues/reportdownload/>

SCP Verdeelde Tijd

Social Watch (Gender Equity Index, Basic Capabilities Index)

UNAIDS

UNDP Human Development Report (Human Development Index)

UNESCO

UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2009

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC\\_2009\\_Main\\_Report\\_03112009.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2009_Main_Report_03112009.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> MDG Atlas: <http://devdata.worldbank.org/atlas-mdg/>

<sup>2</sup> This says nothing about a country's general level of development and progress on these indicators, which may not be very high.

<sup>3</sup> New York Times, 10 April 2009, Chinese bias for baby boys creates a gap of 32 million.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/11/world/asia/11china.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=sharon%20chinese%20boys&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/11/world/asia/11china.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=sharon%20chinese%20boys&st=cse)

<sup>4</sup> Das Gupta et al 2003, Why is son preference so persistent in East and South Asia? A cross-country study of China, India and the Republic of Korea, Journal of Development Studies, December. See also:

[http://www.gendercide.org/case\\_infanticide.html](http://www.gendercide.org/case_infanticide.html)

<sup>5</sup> MDG Atlas: <http://devdata.worldbank.org/atlas-mdg/>

<sup>6</sup> UNAIDS 2008 Report on the global aids epidemic.

[http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008\\_Global\\_report.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008_Global_report.asp)

<sup>7</sup> Strengthening children's rights. Interview with Alice Kubo in *The Broker*, issue 13, pp24-25.

<http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/articles/Strengthening-children-s-rights>

<sup>8</sup> The CRC states that all children must be 'protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development'.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009:

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC\\_2009\\_Main\\_Report\\_03112009.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2009_Main_Report_03112009.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mvfindia.in/mvf/index.html>

<sup>11</sup> Plan International, Because I'm a girl. The state of the World's Girls 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in The Netherlands (IZI) -

<http://www.womeninc.nl/page/11637/nl>.

<sup>13</sup> See Dirk van Bekkum

<sup>14</sup> See: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/articles/Strengthening-children-s-rights>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.blueplanetproject.net/RightToWater/women.html>; [www.worldwater.org](http://www.worldwater.org)

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- <sup>16</sup> Slingerland, S. and Van den Heuvel, S. 2009 Energy and climate: bridging the geopolitical gaps. In J. de Zwaan, E. Bakker and S. van der Meer (eds.) *Challenges in a Changing World*. T.M.C.ASSER PRESS.
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.apa.org/releases/depressionreport.html>
- <sup>18</sup> Ernster et al., 1979; Gove et al., 1990.
- <sup>19</sup> [CHECK: [http://www.peacewomen.org/news/MiddleEast/August08/Pakist\\_GirlsEducation.html](http://www.peacewomen.org/news/MiddleEast/August08/Pakist_GirlsEducation.html)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1541561/Taliban-campaign-targets-girls-schools.html>]
- <sup>20</sup> Rankin and Aytac, The (under)education of Turkish girls: patriarchy, islam and the headscarf. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, Canada, August 11, 2006.
- <sup>21</sup> This despite the fact that the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) stipulates that 'Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.'
- <sup>22</sup> <http://www.iraqichildrentrapped.org/>
- <sup>23</sup> E. Asiku, M. De Lorenzo, B.E. Harrell-Bond, J.L. Kayiira, E. Lammers, 2000, *DanChurchAid Evaluation of TCRS Refugee Project in Kibondo District, Tanzania, 5-19 January 2000: Report and Recommendations*.
- <sup>24</sup> [http://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/nederland/article1682258.ece/\\_rsquo\\_Asielzoeker\\_veel\\_te\\_lang\\_in\\_detentie\\_rsquo\\_.html](http://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/nederland/article1682258.ece/_rsquo_Asielzoeker_veel_te_lang_in_detentie_rsquo_.html)
- <sup>25</sup> *Uit elkaars buurt: De invloed van etnische concentratie op integratie en beeldvorming*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum & Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2005). *Jaarrapport Integratie 2005*. Den Haag: SCP/WODC/CBS. Also see: Bowen Paulle, *Anxiety and intimidation in the Bronx and the Bijlmer. An ethnographic comparison of two schools*. Rozenberg Publishers 2005.
- <sup>26</sup> Source: Nederlands emancipatiebeleid 2008-2011. [www.emancipatieweb.nl](http://www.emancipatieweb.nl)
- <sup>27</sup> For instance, the Roman Catholic Church accepts only natural family planning; in Islam contraceptives are allowed provided they do not threaten health or lead to sterility, but their use is discouraged; Hindus may use both natural and artificial contraceptives; a common Buddhist view of birth control is that preventing conception is ethically acceptable, but intervening after conception has or may have occurred is not.
- <sup>28</sup> Pien Bos, *Once a Mother. Relinquishment and adoption from the perspective of unmarried mothers in South India*. Proefschrift Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2008.
- <sup>29</sup> Online atlas of the Millennium Development Goals: <http://devdata.worldbank.org/atlas-mdg/>
- <sup>30</sup> Lammers et al, The rise of solar energy, *The Broker*, issue 13, pp. 11-18.  
<http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/Dossiers/Special-Report-The-rise-of-solar-energy>
- <sup>31</sup> These numbers do not include millions of female and male victims around the world who are trafficked within their own national borders. US Department of State Trafficking in persons report 2008: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/index.htm>. See also: [www.humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org), <http://www.catwinternational.org/about/index.php>, <http://womennewsnetwork.net/2008/12/05/lostdaughternepal808/>
- <sup>32</sup> <http://womennewsnetwork.net/2008/12/05/lostdaughternepal808/>
- <sup>33</sup> Oxfam GB
- <sup>34</sup> See <http://www.ru.nl/viw/> and [http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article1158170.ece/Vrouwelijk\\_talent\\_komt\\_nog\\_steeds\\_niet\\_aan\\_bod](http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article1158170.ece/Vrouwelijk_talent_komt_nog_steeds_niet_aan_bod).
- <sup>35</sup> Cijfers van het CBS, rapport Verdeelde Tijd, dat 'economische zelfstandigheid overigens heel minimaal definieert: met 860 euro in de maand tel je al als zodanig. De meeste economisch zelfstandige mannen verdienen een stuk meer dan die karige 860 euro.
- <sup>36</sup> See [www.papaplus.nl](http://www.papaplus.nl)
- <sup>37</sup> Research carried out by Catalyst.
- <sup>38</sup> Intermediair Topvrouw winstgevend, Intermediair 9 mei, 2006.
- <sup>39</sup> Source: Civicus Civil Society Index report 2006.
- <sup>40</sup> Source: AWID