

# Women's Employment in the Textile Manufacturing Sectors of Bangladesh and Morocco

edited by Carol Miller  
and Jessica Vivian

United Nations  
Research Institute  
for Social Development



United Nations  
Development Programme



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The national research team in Bangladesh included Rita Afsar, Debapriya Bhattacharya, Samsul Khan, Nasreen Khundker (leader), Nazli Kibria, Simeen Mahmud and Mustafizur Rahman. In Morocco, the team included Hajji Abderrahim, Saad Belghazi, Rahma Bourqia, and Rabea Naciri (leader). Special thanks are due to Susan Joeke who provided advice and support throughout the implementation of the research programme. Yusuf Bangura, Krishna Ghimire, Dharam Ghai, Swasti Mitter and David Westendorff provided comments on the chapters at various stages. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Vicky Bawtree in translating Rahma Bourqia's paper from the original French, and to thank Françoise Jaffré for copy-editing and designing the final publication.

Carol Miller, Jessica Vivian



# Foreword

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), carried out an action research programme on Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives from 1992 to 1998. The objective was to facilitate a substantive dialogue between gender researchers, economists and policy makers, and to encourage the involvement of national research teams and civil society organizations in national policy debates. In Bangladesh and Morocco, the research focused on the feminization of the labour force in the context of increasing export manufacturing and trade liberalization. This book is based on the research carried out by national research teams in those two countries.

The current emphasis on trade liberalization and economic restructuring will affect many countries that have a large female workforce in labour-intensive industries. Given the limits imposed on productivity by low-skill, labour-intensive strategies, increasing competitiveness must come in large part from technological upgrading and increasing labour productivity. Such a strategy is likely to result in a workforce both better trained and better compensated, although, at least in the short term, it may also result in overall job losses. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that women will be the first to lose their jobs, and the last to receive the education and training

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