

In Rabat, Morocco, unemployed college graduates gather daily in front of government buildings to protest the lack of jobs.⁵¹ In Juba, South Sudan, the fledgling government faces the challenge of demobilizing 150,000 combatants and reintegrating large numbers of internally displaced persons after conflict.⁵² For policy makers in countries with high youth unemployment and in countries affected by conflict, expanding job opportunities has urgency for social and political reasons, as well as for economic reasons.

In industrial and developing countries alike, the conventional wisdom is that having a job is what matters for social cohesion—how societies peacefully manage collective decision making. The idea that jobs can build identity, or might be associated with trust or more participation in society, is often seen as relevant only for a narrow set of occupations in rich countries. Those jobs are perceived as a luxury that developing countries cannot afford. Even those who concede that some jobs can do more for social cohesion in developing countries are skeptical that policies can do much beyond supporting job creation. Given that most employment is in the private sector, it is unclear how or whether the government could influence the nature of the jobs. Some even doubt that jobs on their own lead to greater social cohesion. They view jobs as only one element that can contribute to changing values, attitudes, and behaviors within a complex web of institutional, historical, political, and social factors. Given this multiplicity of influences, engineering social cohesion through jobs is not an option.

Negative experiences with publicly funded employment programs give some justification to this skepticism. Temporary employment programs that place people into dead-end jobs with no hope for future employment may do more harm than good.⁵³ Similarly, demobilization programs in post-conflict environments risk exacerbating tensions between former opponents through divisive targeting.⁵⁴ Social cohesion is actually undermined when jobs in publicly funded programs are allocated to friends and relatives of government officials, or when the

programs themselves are subject to corruption and governance risks. These negative experiences may reveal poor program design, however, rather than prove the impossibility for jobs policies to contribute to social cohesion.

Access to information, rights, and voice

Policies can take social cohesion into account by expanding opportunities for groups who face barriers to getting jobs and increasing access to voice and rights. People may feel frustrated if they perceive that jobs are allocated on the basis of privilege and connections rather than merit and achievement. Increasing fairness and equality of opportunity for jobs involves informing the public about jobs and how to get them, and about the existence of legal mechanisms, such as antidiscrimination laws and affirmative action programs to reduce discrimination and support the inclusion of groups who lack access. But having laws on the books is not enough. Increasing fairness involves institutions for enforcement, and redress mechanisms for accountability. Although such measures can be motivated by multiple objectives, including poverty reduction, they can also be considered from a social cohesion perspective.

Transparency and access to information about jobs can increase fairness and equality of opportunity by ensuring that vacancies are widely publicized, together with information about accessing public employment programs. Access to information about rights is similarly important for ensuring that labor practices are fair. Farmers, self-employed workers, and workers without formal labor contracts are often not knowledgeable about their rights in relation to land owners, traders, local authorities, and employers, or about their options for appeals. Civil society organizations such as cooperatives, associations of informal workers, and trade unions can disseminate information about rights and the channels to voice grievances.⁵⁵

A related challenge is the extension of effective legal protection to those who work outside of legal frameworks. At the international level,

the passage of ILO conventions on domestic and home workers has extended coverage for these groups (box 4.8). At the national level, countries such as Zambia and the Philippines include legal protections of informal workers in domestic legislation. Brazil recognizes domestic workers within its constitution and has extended social protection, including leave and maternity benefits to them. The country's National Social Security Institute provides incentives for employers who register domestic workers. Although difficult to enforce in practice, Brazil, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, and South Africa have established minimum wages for domestic workers.⁵⁶

Similarly, migrant workers tend to fall outside legal frameworks. Both sending and receiving countries can adopt measures to extend legal protection. The government of the Philippines has a mechanism to protect its overseas workers. The government provides them with pre-departure information and support services; it has also signed bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding recognizing migrant workers' rights with receiving countries. The government has also promoted voluntary social security schemes for overseas workers.⁵⁷

The existence and quality of institutions for accountability can influence the extent to which rights are enforced in practice.⁵⁸ Legal frameworks rely on the ability of labor ministries, inspectorates, and courts to handle disputes and hold the parties accountable. Most countries allow labor disputes to be heard in special labor courts or civil courts. But court proceedings can be lengthy, costly, and cumbersome. In response, some countries have established alternative procedures for dispute resolution, including conciliation, mediation, and arbitration before court hearings.⁵⁹ Cambodia introduced an Arbitration Council in 2003 to help manage labor grievances and improve industrial relations in the growing garment sector (box 4.9).

Antidiscrimination policies

Legal mechanisms such as antidiscrimination laws and provisions for affirmative action can facilitate access to jobs for groups who are excluded from opportunities or suffer from stigma. Most countries have equality guarantees within their constitutions, generally covering

BOX 4.8 *Domestic workers: The journey to an ILO convention*

Domestic work includes cleaning, cooking, gardening, child care, and elder care. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 52.6 million domestic workers worldwide; other estimates are nearly twice as high. Women, generally from the poorest sections of society, make up over 80 percent of domestic workers.^a Many are migrants, and child labor is common, especially for girls. Domestic workers, and especially migrants, are excluded from labor and social protection laws in most countries.

Domestic workers have long tried to be recognized and included in the labor laws of their respective countries. In 2006, domestic worker organizations began to organize internationally with the support of international trade unions and nongovernmental organizations representing informal workers. Their main demand was recognition and access to rights, including a campaign for an ILO convention on labor rights for domestic workers.

The campaign involved extensive coordination at the country level to mobilize workers and gain support from labor ministries, trade unions, and employers' associations. As a result of this campaign, the minimum wage for domestic workers was raised by 10 percent in Jamaica, and a memorandum of understanding was signed to improve the conditions of Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia.

In 2011, the ILO adopted the Domestic Workers Convention and the Domestic Workers Recommendation. The convention states that domestic workers are to be covered under national labor laws and regulations, including those related to social protection programs.

The process of securing an ILO convention contributed to building the capacity of organizations and individual leaders and gained domestic workers associations status with trade unions. It also created better conditions for recognition and enforcement of rights. In March 2012, the government of Singapore announced that it would require employers to give one day a week off to the country's 206,000 domestic workers, most of whom come from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India.^b

Source: Chen and others 2012 for the World Development Report 2013.

a. ILO 2011a.

b. Kennedy 2012.

the obligations of the state. Guarantees are often complemented by laws addressing job segregation, unequal pay, prejudice in recruitment, harassment at work, and lack of education and training.⁶⁰ Affirmative action programs involve proactive measures for hiring women, minorities, and other groups subject to exclusion.⁶¹ Such programs can be mandatory or voluntary and apply to the public or private sectors.

Affirmative action programs can work, but pitfalls are many. Evaluations yield mixed results.⁶² The most extensive research is from the United States; it finds that programs are most effective when they are temporary and combined with improvements in recruitment, train-

BOX 4.9 *From laws on the books to laws in action in Cambodia's garment sector*

The garment industry is Cambodia's largest formal sector employer. By mid-2008, the sector had more than 300 factories, with nearly 340,000 workers, 90 percent of whom were women. Labor conditions including low wages, excessive overtime, poor occupational health and safety, child labor, and antiunion practices emerged as a major issue as the sector expanded. The initial response was passage of a new labor law in 1997. Enforcement was poor, however. The Labor Inspectorate lacked credibility; inspectors were underpaid and under-resourced, and were seen as subject to influence. The courts were perceived as corrupt and unresponsive to the needs of workers or employers. As a result, strikes and demonstrations increased, and major international brands raised concerns about the viability of operating in Cambodia.

In this context, Cambodia concluded a 1999 bilateral trade agreement with the United States. Building on a similar clause in other trade deals, the United States agreed to increase Cambodia's import quota for garments if a semiannual review showed that progress had been achieved in adherence to core international labor standards and standards set in Cambodian law. Following the agreement, the United States funded two International Labour Organization (ILO) projects to support the implementation of this clause. The first, which became known as Better Factories Cambodia, involved monitoring working conditions in garment factories.

The second program established an Arbitration Council to prevent and resolve labor disputes. The council's 30 part-time members were nominated through a process facilitated by the ILO and endorsed by unions, employers' organizations, and government. The council conducts mandatory but (generally) nonbinding arbitration of collective labor disputes that cannot be resolved through mediation by the Ministry of Labor. Most disputes handled by the council involve compliance with labor law related to wages, bonuses, benefits, and working conditions. Some cases also relate to rights, including antiunion practices, gender equality, freedom of association, and collective bargaining.

Since its establishment in 2003, the council has heard more than 1,200 disputes, 70 percent of which are reported as successfully resolved. Opinion surveys indicate a high level of confidence in the council's independence and effectiveness. In 2010, the Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia and major union federations agreed to switch to the council's arbitration procedures for disputes over existing labor rights. The result has been an upsurge in the rate of awards issued by the council and a decrease in the rate at which parties are filing objections. Strikes per factory have fallen to their lowest level in 10 years.

gram might have assisted individuals who were already higher up on the skills ladder but not the average previously disadvantaged individual.⁶⁴

Hiring quotas for underrepresented groups can be enshrined in constitutions, as is the case for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in India and for Bumiputras in Malaysia. Both countries have shown that quotas work well but can become politicized.⁶⁵ Quotas supported through specific programs have been successful. In Bangladesh, for instance, where women's employment rates were extremely low, the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest put in place a 30 percent quota for women. This doubled women's participation in the program within a year, with participants reporting a high level of satisfaction.⁶⁶

Jobs policies can shape social identity and connect people

Access to jobs can bolster self-esteem and produce benefits for societies beyond incomes. Programs that support employment for at-risk populations, including youth, can take into account the ways in which jobs affect peoples' attitudes, values, and behaviors and contribute to improved relations between groups. Arguably, in countries with high youth unemployment, targeted training programs have the potential to be designed to strengthen self-esteem, which can lead to greater community involvement and reduced crime and violence. The evidence remains limited and tentative, but emerging findings from some training programs targeted to youth, including those in post-conflict settings are somewhat encouraging.

The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund suggests that combining vocational training, life skills, and counseling can increase community involvement and reduce aggression among youth in a post-conflict setting (box 4.10).⁶⁷ A reintegration and agricultural livelihoods program for high-risk Liberian youth led to a modest increase in social engagement and a reduction in illegal activities. Participants were also less interested in recruitment into violent activities in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire. The program had no clear impact on reducing aggression and violence, however.⁶⁸ An evaluation of the Juventud y Empleo program in the Dominican Republic found that a combination of voca-

ing, and on-the-job training.⁶³ Evidence from developing countries is more limited. In South Africa, affirmative action supporting blacks, women, and people with disabilities was complemented with incentives for firms, including access to licenses and contracts. An evaluation found that programs had limited impact on reducing gaps in employment and wages but narrowed differentials at the top of the wage distribution. This finding suggests that the pro-

Source: Adler and Hwang 2012 for the World Development Report 2013.

tional and life-skills training for unemployed youth can reduce involvement in gangs and delay teen pregnancy.⁶⁹ This is an area for further research; evidence is thin, and few evaluations of employment and training programs incorporate social cohesion outcome measures such as community participation and conflict resolution.

Temporary employment programs can provide skills training and access to employment for youth at risk and vulnerable populations, particularly during crises and after conflicts.⁷⁰ These programs have a mixed record in supporting employability, because they generally involve jobs with low status that rarely lead to future earnings opportunities. But there are indications that programs can be designed to invest in skills with benefits for social cohesion. El Salvador's Temporary Income Assistance Program targets women and youth in areas with high rates of violence. Early results suggest that the program has increased the self-esteem of beneficiaries and reduced the recurrence of violence.⁷¹

Public works programs frequently rely on community participation to identify local projects, providing forums for collective decision making. Community meetings can bring together people affected by conflict and crisis (box 4.10). In Rwanda, meetings for the country's public works program discussed peace building, security, community development, and reconciliation, in addition to project-related issues. In the Republic of Yemen, fuel shortages and price increases in building materials stalled public works activities in 2011. However, communities worked together to find creative solutions to these obstacles, including using local materials and finding alternative modes of transport.⁷²

Participatory aspects of programs can provide a channel for voice of excluded groups. In a survey of participants in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program—which at 7.6 million beneficiaries is one of the largest public works programs in the world—two-thirds of respondents said that the project had given them the first opportunity ever to be involved in a local meeting. Many participants had not interacted with local government officials prior to the program.⁷³

Employment programs partnering with the private sector can connect people through jobs. A program in Tunisia uses the process of writing an undergraduate thesis to teach students basic

BOX 4.10 *In post-conflict settings, well-designed programs reduce social tensions*

Opportunities for youth in Northern Uganda

Two decades of insurgency, instability, and conflict led to high rates of poverty in northern Uganda. By 2005, a measure of peace and stability had returned to the region, allowing for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and other war-affected populations. In 2006, the government launched the Youth Opportunities Program to stimulate income generation and employment growth among young adults ages 16 to 35. The program provided cash grants for vocational training and business materials to groups of participants with successful grant proposals. Groups had an average of 22 members, and most expressed interest in tailoring, carpentry, metal works, mechanics, or hairdressing.

An evaluation two years after the intervention found increased investments in skills, participation in skilled work, greater incomes, and higher savings. Grantees were 4 percent more likely to attend community meetings and 9 percent more likely to be community mobilizers. Participants also reported receiving more social support from their family and the community. Furthermore, men who received grants reported a 31 percent decline in aggressive behavior relative to the control group. This finding is consistent with theories that link aggression to stress levels, low social standing, and perceived injustice—all potentially alleviated by higher employment and incomes.

Public works in Sri Lanka's Northern Province

In Sri Lanka, a cash-for-work program initially established to resettle 100,000 returnees following internal conflict actually assisted more than 250,000 returnees and quickly evolved into one of the largest sources of employment in the Northern Province.

Participants noted that in many cases the program meetings were the first community-level gathering that they had attended after having arrived from camps for internally displaced populations. By many accounts, community meetings, shared meals, team work, and the involvement of elders and children as indirect beneficiaries of the program promoted a sense of belonging among the newly resettled families.

Sachchithananthan Subodhini, 36 years old, from Thervipuram in the Puthukkudiyiruppu Division of the Northern Province said that she was “very happy. As a result of cash for work, the whole village is working as one; for our own community and village.” Reflecting on her life journey since being displaced in 1995, she said that the program “had helped to bring the community together. . . . [T]he village seemed abandoned but the *shramadana* [volunteer work] helped to get the community back to its original state.”

Sources: Blattman, Fiala, and Martinez 2011 (Northern Uganda); Andrews and Kryeziu 2012 for the World Development Report 2013 (Sri Lanka).

entrepreneurial skills. Students are mentored by professors and private sector coaches to develop business plans. The initial results of the program show that the program motivated students and gave them confidence to take risks. A male participant from Tunisia explained, “I have become more independent. My behavior has changed. I use my new skills, I am more disciplined.” Stu-

dents also explained that the program expanded their professional networks by giving them opportunities to interact with mentors. “I now have a social network. I know whom to consult,” explained a female participant.⁷⁴

While not all jobs affect social cohesion, those that shape social identity, build networks, and increase fairness, particularly for excluded groups, can defuse tensions. Increasing fairness in the allocation of jobs and at work can also be important for social cohesion. Measures that support inclusion, extend access to voice and rights, and improve transparency and account-

ability in the labor market can improve equity. They can also increase the extent to which people perceive that they have a stake in society. This perception can be especially critical when risks of social unrest from youth unemployment and conflict are high. While policies with weak governance or divisive targeting can undermine social cohesion, well-designed programs may have positive effects. Jobs policies for youth at risk can incorporate counseling and training in conflict resolution. Public works programs can facilitate community participation and engagement between citizens and local governments.