

# Can Economic Growth Include Women in the Global South?

## Speaker Biographies

**Madiha Ahmed** leads the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women program at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which generates new evidence on women's economic empowerment and economic growth. Over the past 12 years, Ahmed has designed and implemented innovative economic interventions that link poor women and households to markets and social services. Before joining IDRC, she was an economic adviser with the UK Department for International Development, where she provided economic expertise on the £120 million national cash transfer program in Pakistan. She has also worked with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank. Ahmed holds a BS with honors in economics from Lahore University of Management Sciences and an MPhil in economics from the University of Cambridge.

**Sonalde Desai**, professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park, is a demographer whose work deals primarily with social inequalities in developing countries, with a particular focus on gender and class inequalities. She studies inequalities in education, employment, and maternal and child health outcomes by locating them within the political economy of the region. While much of her research focuses on South Asia, she has also engaged in comparative studies across Asia, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa. Desai has published articles in several sociological and demographic journals, including *American Sociological Review*, *Demography*, *Population and Development Review*, and *Feminist Studies*.

**Nan Marie Astone**, coprincipal investigator, is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. She is a social demographer with a strong interest in adolescent health in the United States and in low- and middle-income countries. While at Johns Hopkins University, she was an investigator on a project that collected and analyzed data from youth in vulnerable environments in Baltimore, Ibadan, Johannesburg, New Delhi, and Shanghai. She led an associated project that assembled existing data on adolescent health and has been a consultant to the World Health Organization on tabulating data on adolescent health. She also supervised several dissertation projects on low- and middle-income countries. She served in the United States Peace Corps in the Philippines.

**Hina Lotia** is program director at Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Pakistan. She has 10 years of hands-on experience in developing programs, strategies, and policy incentives as part of various interventions at LEAD. Other than developing LEAD's overall framework document and the public policy program, she spearheaded the team of experts and staff that developed LEAD's program on climate change, a five-year initiative to promote climate-compatible development in the country. To advance the climate change program, Lotia developed and operated various online and community-based networks, including National Alliance on Climate Action, Knowledge Network on Climate Change, and Climate Leaders Action Network. She is developing programmatic areas for LEAD on health and water. She has publications in national and international forums and extensive social and political economy analyses for new programs, as well as policy briefs for government officials. Lotia has an MS in economics from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. She has also undergone a yearlong training on sustainable development as part of the global leadership development program at LEAD.

**Damaris Seleina Parsitau** is a senior lecturer in and director of Institute of Women, Gender, and Development Studies at Egerton University. She has over 17 years of extensive international experience in training, research, and publishing on issues of women and gender in development. Parsitau has over 15 years of experience in research, teaching, and graduate and postgraduate supervision. Her work has appeared in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. She is also the author of two forthcoming monographs titled *Cursed by the Elders: Which Way for Pastoralist Women Contesting Public Life in Kenya* and *Multiple Marginalities, Enslaving Culture! Maasai Women Navigating Culture, Tradition and Patriarchy in their Quest for Political Leadership in Kenya*. Parsitau has held visiting research fellowships at the University of Cambridge and Edinburgh University. She holds a BA in history with a minor in sociology from Egerton University, an MA from the University of Nairobi, and a PhD in religion, gender, and public life from Kenyatta University. She also holds a diploma on transformational leadership.

**H. Elizabeth Peters**, coprincipal investigator, is a labor economist and demographer with over 30 years of experience in social and family policy-related research. Her work focuses on family and social investments in children; the impacts of public policies on women, men, and children; family risk factors; and work-family interactions. Her research has been widely published in journals of economics, demography, and sociology. She is coeditor of several books, including *Marriage and Family: Perspectives and Complexities*, published by Columbia University Press in 2009. Peters is coprincipal investigator on a project exploring promising practices for involving fathers in home visiting programs. For over 10 years, Peters was a partner in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Family and Child Well-Being Network. She directed the network's fatherhood efforts, and she was a member of the steering committee that guided the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics's Nurturing Fatherhood initiative. She recently completed an NICHD Program Project Grant on the Transition to Fatherhood, a collaboration across four research institutions analyzing the timing, circumstances, and consequences of the transition to fatherhood.

**Jennifer Obado-Joel**, subprincipal investigator for the International Development Research Centre's Grow Project, is the research manager at the Centre for Public Policy Alternatives and has 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and academia, focusing on policy research. Her expertise includes governance, energy, climate adaptation, urbanization, and the use of mobile and digital technology for researching and designing innovations that support development outcomes. Obado-Joel has experience working on projects for Habitat for Humanity, the Open Society Foundations, and other organizations. In 2013, she was a visiting faculty member on African informal politics at the University of Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic). She was also the headline speaker for the 2014 fall speaker series at the School of International Studies at American University. She was awarded a certificate of appreciation by the National Intelligence University for her research support. Obado-Joel holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) and a master's degree from Central European University (Hungary). She also has a master's in international law and diplomacy from the University of Lagos and a certificate in health law and policy and ethics from the University of Latvia. She is a former Atlas Corps fellow at the Center on International Development and Governance at the Urban Institute.