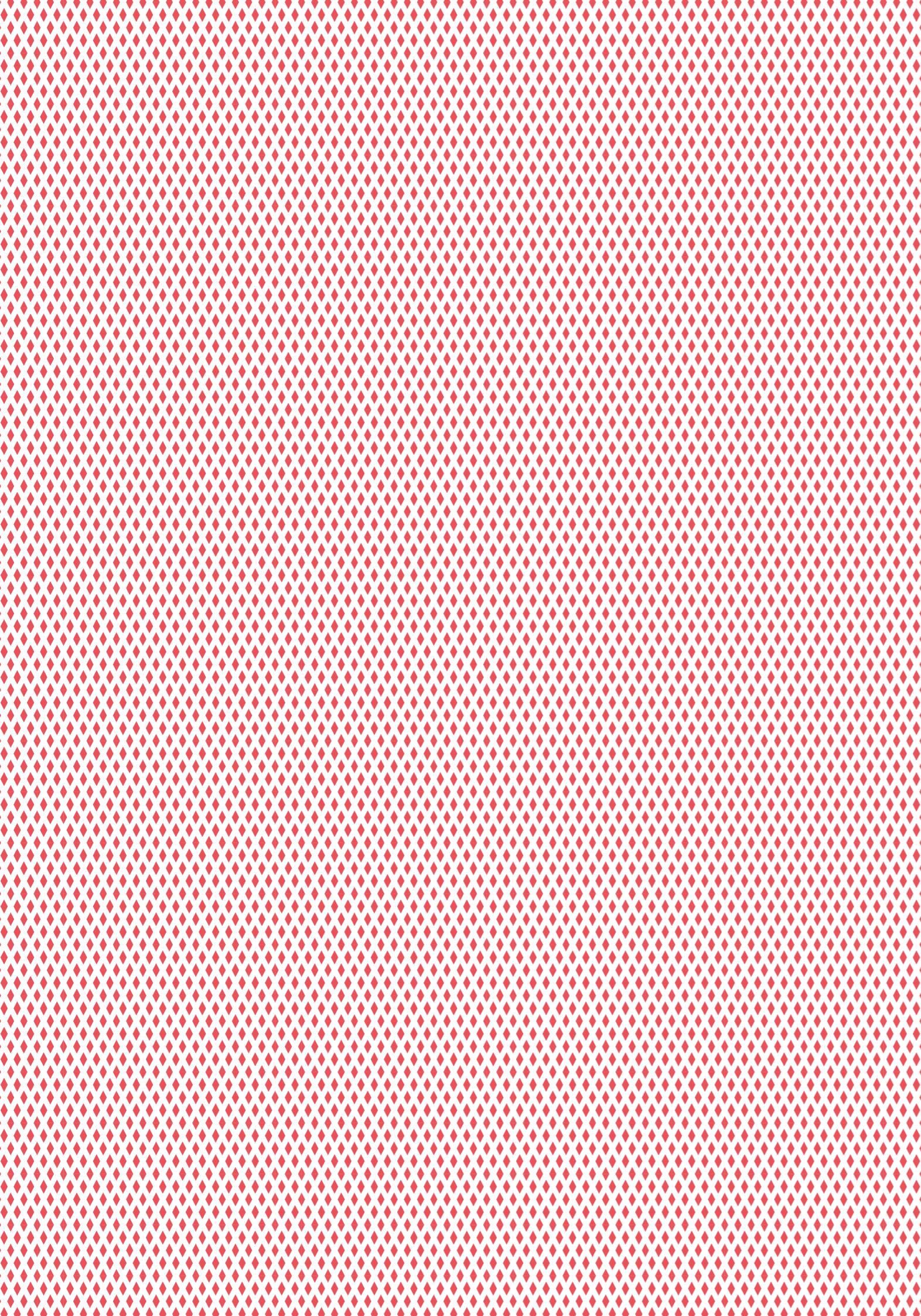


# UNEQUAL NATION

The case for social innovation to work for a gender equal future

Freya Johnson Ross & Ceri Goddard





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for a gender equal future  
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## **ABOUT THE YOUNG FOUNDATION**

The Young Foundation takes its name from the social entrepreneur, activist and pioneer, Michael Young. For over 60 years, Michael brought together collaborations of the brightest, the best and the most innovative to solve social problems.

Today we harness the power of social innovation to address the structural causes of inequality. We believe that current levels of inequality are not inevitable and that we collectively have the power to shape the societies and communities we want to live in. Our work is based on research, partnerships and practical problem solving. We work with civil society organisations, business and the state to achieve change.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We are grateful to our funders The Barrow Cadbury Trust and The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation without whom this work would not have been possible. We also owe huge thanks to all of the staff at the Young Foundation who have shared their ideas, insights and expertise generously throughout the process of developing this report. This is also true of the many organisations and individuals who we have spoken to in the course of this work - their input has been invaluable. We'd also like to thank the Gender Futures Advisory Group for their time and contributions to shaping the project.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sometimes it can be hard to imagine that it was less than a hundred years ago that women were finally allowed to vote on equal terms with men. Since then major social changes have transformed the lives of women and men in many ways. Our choices and opportunities are greater than those of previous generations; whether in our relationships with each other, in education, in the workplace and in public life. Because of this we know that gender inequality is neither 'natural' nor inevitable, and as a society we have the choice and the means to change.

Yet we are still a long way from the gender equal future we need to realise our full human potential. On a day to day basis gender inequality and discrimination still pervades peoples' lives; a colleague tells you she got the first job when she took off her wedding ring after many interviews; your daughter in primary school tells you she wants to go on diet as she thinks she's fat; your friend tells you the pressure he felt to be strong stopped him seeking help for his profound depression. While these can seem like isolated incidents, if we step back and look at the evidence on a larger scale we can see they are linked and reflect a deep rooted and systemic problem.

The pay gap between men and women is still 19% in favour of men. An incident of domestic abuse and violence is reported to the police every minute, largely perpetrated against women by men. Social and financial pressures limit the amount of time many fathers can spend caring for their children. Decision-making in the powerhouses of politics, business, media and civil society organisations is still overwhelming dominated by white men. These are just some of the major challenges set out in section one of this report. This gathers together evidence of a wide range of remaining inequalities between women and men in terms of access to and control of resources, attitudes and power.

In doing so we highlight the interconnected nature of these inequalities, and so the need for interconnected action to tackle them. Our synthesis illustrates the impact on individuals but also on society as a whole: inequalities in employment waste valuable human resources vital to a strong economy; discrimination and prejudice affects social cohesion; unrepresentative parliaments make less effective legislation. It also makes clear if we are to accelerate and embed change we must find more effective ways of bringing together the contributions of the state, business and civil society.

In section two we consider the untapped potential of social innovation to address this challenge. The gender equality and social innovation movements have yet to come together systematically. Although gender equality actors have been incredibly innovative, and social innovation actors have sought to solve social problems – so far the connections between the two have been limited. This means the tools and techniques of social innovation have not been systematically applied to gender inequality, and nor have the ideas and understandings of gender equality been grasped fully by the mainstream of social innovation. Both are less effective and less sustainable as a result.

In the final section we set out recommendations intended to stimulate further discussion and action from those who have means and foresight to fully unlock the potential of gender innovation.

Our cross cutting recommendations include:

- increasing awareness and understanding of the structural nature of gender inequality
- creating space for dialogue and joint working between the gender equality and social innovation sectors
- further research to understand more fully where and how gender innovation will be most effective and useful

We have also produced recommendations specifically targeted at policy makers, social investors and funders, innovation support bodies, gender equality organisations, and social ventures. They reflect the key elements we think will be needed to create a gender innovation eco-system able to bring together gender equality and social innovation actors to affect change.

These include:

- ensuring social innovation and gender equality policies reflect and inform each other
- increasing access to and levels of gender innovation investment
- providing greater targeted support to existing and emerging gender innovators
- mainstream social ventures and gender equality organisations increasing efforts to engage with and inform each other

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender and gender inequalities shape all our lives - from how we live and love, to what we do and earn. Gender inequality remains one of the greatest barriers to creating an equal and just society, limiting the experience and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Yet gender inequality as we know it today is not inevitable. What do we mean when we talk about gender inequality? Unlike fixed biological sex differences, gender norms are socially constructed and vary in different times and different places. The position of women in the workplace and public life today would have been unimaginable a century ago. Such major change shows us that more is possible. Nevertheless, differences remain in what women and men are expected and able to be and do across the world and amongst the diverse communities of the UK.

**Social innovations** are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act.<sup>1</sup>

**Gender inequality** refers to the unequal treatment or perceptions of people based on their sex or gender, resulting in unequal outcomes in areas such as employment, education, wealth and wellbeing, amongst others.

## Some examples of sex differences:

- Women menstruate and men do not.
- Men have testicles while women do not.
- Women have developed breasts that are usually capable of lactating, while men have not.

## Some examples of gender differences:

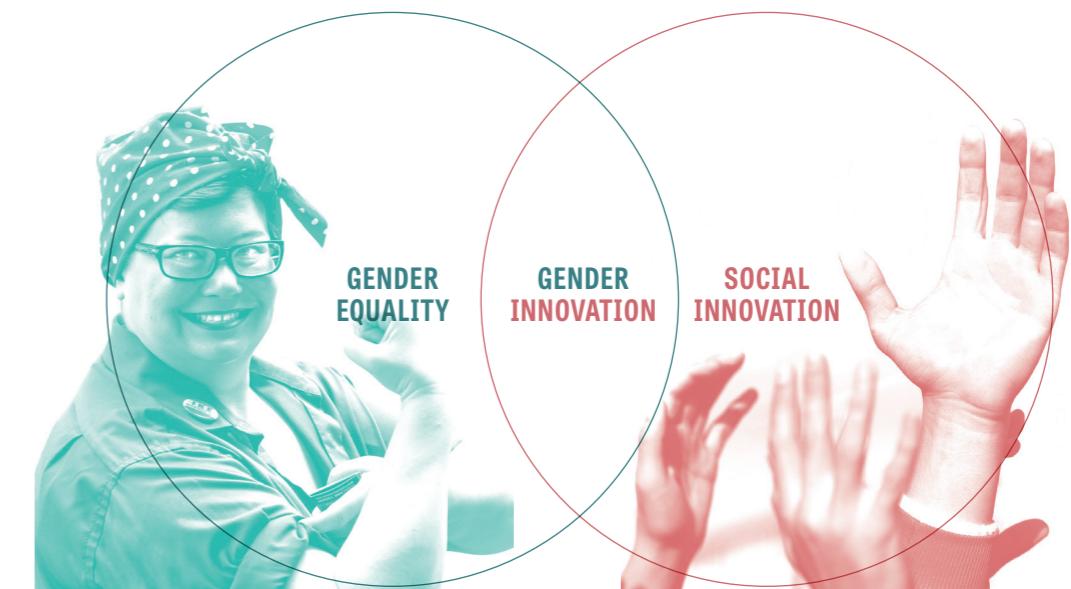
- In most countries women earn significantly less money than men for work of equal value.
- In most countries women do more housework than men and are more likely to live in poverty.
- On average men spend far less time than women caring for their children.
- In most countries men dominate in corporate and public decision making.

Achieving gender equality would not mean denying our differences or making men and women identical. Achieving gender equality would mean that women and men, girls and boys would have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

So what is the problem with gender when we value individual differences? When we look at women and men as groups, the answer becomes more obvious. The opportunities and outcomes for men and women are starkly different in many areas. Employment, education, wealth and wellbeing outcomes all demonstrate that the economy and labour market, institutions of representation and our education system are all gendered. This results in long-standing and entrenched inequalities which interact with other forms of inequality, for example class and ethnicity, to create deep and complex forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

It has been a huge achievement of the gender equality movement to gain recognition that change is needed and the importance of this change to us all. Gender equality is now recognized as a precondition for sustainable, people-centred development.

Below: What is Gender Innovation?



However, in the face of a deep-rooted and complex set of challenges, change itself has been slow paced, and in some areas subject to roll-back. Positively, the gender equality movement continues to gain prominence and support, buoyed by a new generation of activists. If this momentum is to be harnessed to deliver faster and lasting change, we need to engage a wider set of actors and resources.

At the same time we are witnessing the rapid growth of the social innovation movement. The principles of social innovation combine the ideas and resources of the market, state and civil society in new ways to affect systemic and sustainable social change. In this context the potential for social innovation to be harnessed to advance gender equality - and vice versa - is significant. However, as there has been little cross-fertilization between the gender equality and social innovation movements to date, this potential remains largely untapped.

The Young Foundation's Gender Futures initiative aims to change this by bringing together these two movements to better tackle the root causes of gender inequality and accelerate progress towards a gender equal future.

We are doing this by:

- increasing awareness and understanding of structural gender inequality
- investigating how social innovation can be harnessed to address this
- providing practical gender innovation support to gender equality and social innovation actors

This report provides the foundation for this work by:

- setting out the current picture and impact of gender inequality in the UK
- exploring the extent to which social innovation and gender equality actors have interacted thus far
- presenting recommendations for developing the synergy between gender equality and social innovation movements

The report is based on literature gathered from a range of sources and includes: national and international statistics, academic and other research, as well as our own consultations with both social innovation and gender equality actors. We have tried to cover a wide breadth of information to illustrate the current state of gender inequality in the UK. However it must be noted that due to limitations of time and space, what is presented here is by no means an exhaustive picture.

We believe the report will be of interest to both social innovation and gender equality actors, as well as social innovation intermediary bodies, funders and policy makers.

## 2. GENDER PRESENT — STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

This section sets out evidence on gender inequality in the UK today, situated in a global context. It highlights its impact on individuals and on society as a whole.

Measuring gender equality is not an easy or straightforward task.<sup>2</sup> Despite significant steps have been made. In order to assess change, both positive and negative, researchers have developed a range of approaches to examining gender which this report draws on. The sources include published research and data from non-governmental organisations, academics, and official statistics.

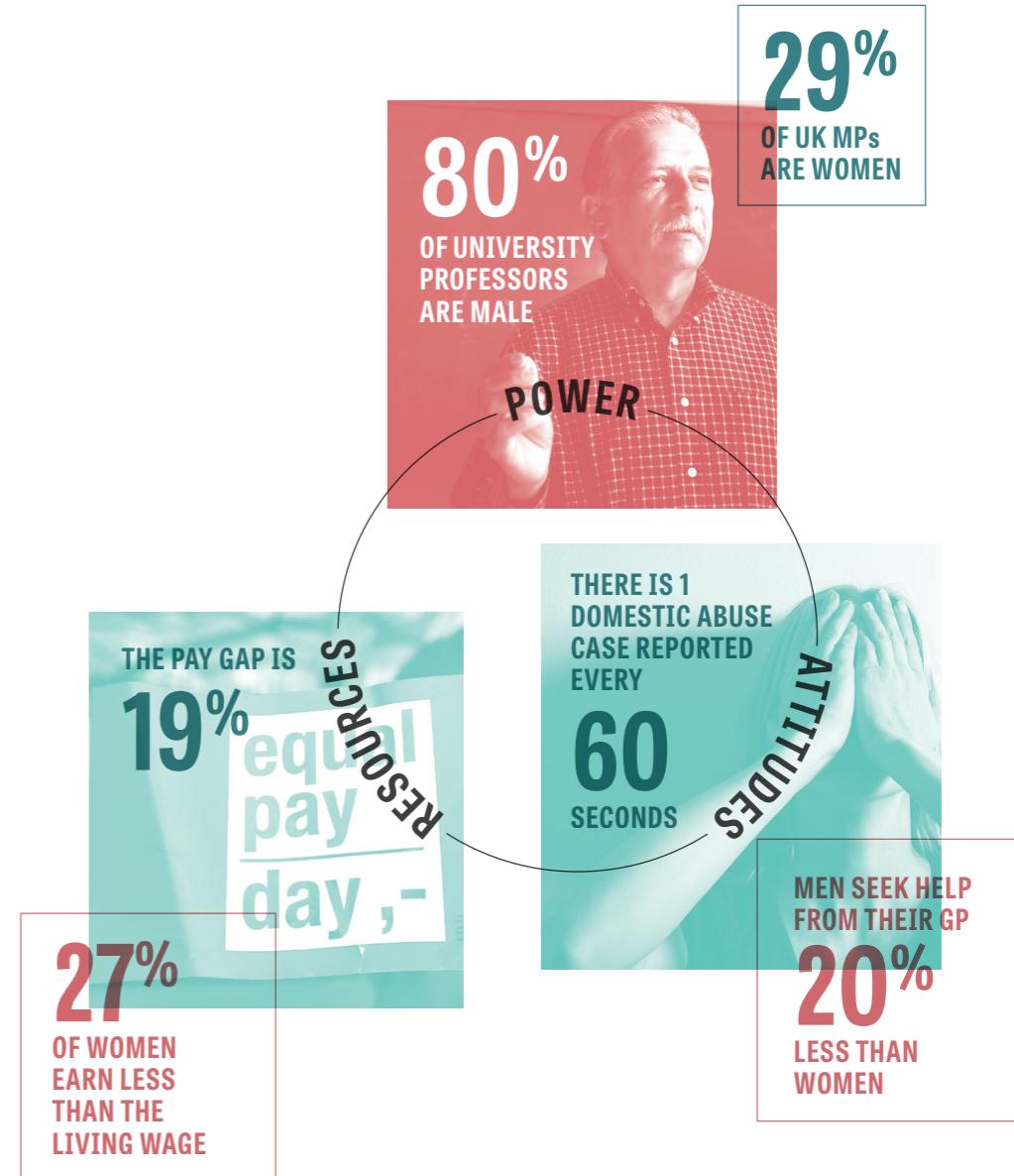
We searched for and prioritised work that:

- explicitly considered sex or gender inequalities
- considered the UK
- was published most recently

We have synthesised this range of sources to create an overarching picture of gender inequality today, including where the UK ranks internationally.

This section of the report is divided into three main areas. The first addresses **resources**, in relation to work and public services. It discusses education, health, welfare, labour, wealth, and crime and justice. The second section, **attitudes**, details social and cultural norms and their impact, including sexuality, gender identity, body image and gender violence and abuse (GVA). The third section, **power**, examines the distribution of men and women in government and other positions of influence.

It is important to note that we understand achieving gender equality to be concerned with and benefitting both women and men – it is fundamentally relational. For example, enabling a better balance of work and family life would be positive for men and women, as would a reduction in stereotyped attitudes in relation to gender, and having a legislature and corporate sector that are more reflective of society. However, a considerable amount of the research included does focus on women, as they are in many cases more disadvantaged by current gender inequalities than men.



# RESOURCES

## Key Findings and Impact

The economic opportunities and public services available to women and men are gendered, and their outcomes in terms of education, health and economic wellbeing are unequal.

Reviewing the evidence across education, health, welfare, work and time, wealth and, crime and justice we found:

- evidence for the role of early years care and education in shaping gender inequalities in childhood and into adulthood
- unequal opportunities and pay in relation to paid work
- unequal balance of responsibility and time spent on unpaid work - with women doing more
- lack of consideration or mitigating strategies for the disproportionate impact on women of reductions in public spending, in particular changes to the welfare regime
- inadequate attention to gender in relation to crime and justice issues

The impact of this results in:

- unequal choices and results in relation to education for young women and men
- the gender pay gap – with women paid considerably less than men
- lost productivity and wasted human resources in relation to the economy
- lack of choice in relation to the balancing of work and family life for men and women
- women, especially single parents, BAME and disabled women are more likely to live in poverty
- wasted resources and damage to female victims and offenders as well as their families

On a basic level the range, size and quality of resources available to men and women impacts on their life chances. We define resources as the things that all people need to participate fully in society and flourish. Resources include things like time, money, education, and health. Gender shapes both the resources themselves, how they are delivered, and the extent to which they are used by men and women. For example, the types of work done and pay received by men and women remains unequal - leading to a waste of human resources, limitations on choices, and unfairly unequal incomes. The different types of resource are also interconnected – education shapes later employment, time spent on unpaid work limits the time available for paid work or leisure, income, work and family life all affect health and wellbeing.

Looking across the life-course, this section considers how gender inequality exists as a central part of education, health, welfare, the labour market, wealth, and crime and justice.

## Education

From a very early age, children learn and are socialized into gender roles and associations.<sup>3</sup> The broader social environment and parents play a role in children's developing sense of gender identity and equality, however, so does the teaching and learning environment.<sup>4,5</sup> Indeed there is evidence that shows that early years and school care are a key point of influence, as is the careers advice provided to young people.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately and if well harnessed, education can play an important role in challenging gender-based discrimination.<sup>7</sup>

However, the education system is currently gendered at all levels of teaching and learning, from pre-school through to university. Prevalent stereotypes about what boys and girls are and should be continue to define and limit how children understand gender and difference.

**"At my school our dress code dictates everything about a girls outfit: knee length shorts or skirts only, no cleavage, no bra straps, no tank tops. We can't even wear flip flops, and girls will be given detentions and sent home for breaking any one of these rules. There's no dress code for men, and the reasoning? Girls can't dress 'provocatively' [sic] because it could distract and excite the boys."**<sup>8</sup>

There has been some positive work developed to address gender stereotypes in schools in Wales and Sweden,<sup>9,10</sup> however it is far from being mainstream.

## Case Study – Fair Foundations

'We received an email from Chwarae Teg asking if we would be interested in looking at this element [gender equality] of our provision, in relation to pupils. So, the first thing I did, having had time to read the email, was to go outside and look at the yard to see how the children were mixing, and what proportion of sharing was taking place between the boys and girls. What I realised was that the majority of the space available to the pupils was being dominated by the boys, with the girls using the periphery and retreating to the peripheries most of the time so that they didn't cut across the boys playing football and so on. I felt it was something we should look at and improve – so that's how I saw the situation.'

Arwel Jones, Headteacher, Ysgol yr Hendre participant in Fair Foundations<sup>11</sup>

Another way in which gender affects education is in subject choice both at A level or equivalent, and in higher education. In terms of the take up of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) in relation to school, apprenticeships and university, young women are behind young men.<sup>12,13,14</sup> For example the male to female ratio of STEM students and graduates is 70:30.<sup>15</sup> This division in terms of subject choice impacts on career options and income for young women and men, as we can see in relation to apprenticeships, those with a STEM basis tend to be better paid.

The relationship between education and the labour market is also apparent if we consider the teaching workforce. School teaching is a markedly feminized and sex segregated profession.<sup>16</sup> While 75% of teachers are female, just 65% of head teachers are.<sup>17</sup> Similar patterns of vertical segregation (where men and women are concentrated at different levels of seniority) can be seen if we look at university teaching where 80% of professors are male.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to note that there are other factors, including socioeconomic and cultural ones, which interplay with gender. In practice, teachers use stereotypes, assumptions and prejudices to inform their understandings of pupil's identities and their practice in relation to them.<sup>19,20</sup> This is particularly relevant when we consider the results for different groups of young people. For example, the Young Women's Trust has highlighted the dramatically poorer than average results of Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils at GCSE level.<sup>21</sup>

There has been considerable coverage in the media of the fact that generally, in assessments, girls do better than boys<sup>22</sup> – from early years<sup>23</sup> to secondary.<sup>24</sup> However this varies between the four nations of the UK<sup>25</sup> and internationally,<sup>26</sup> and at A level, the number of young men and women achieving top grades is extremely close (12.7% of young men and 11.4% of young women), suggesting that the difference between boys' and girls' achievements has been over-emphasised given that both girls and boys are improving overall.<sup>27,28,29</sup>

Further education has been an important way in which women develop their skills and employment prospects post-16, with recent figures showing 54% of adult learners are female.<sup>30</sup> This is also the case in relation to those from minority ethnic backgrounds, as 19% are BAME, higher than the general population as a whole.<sup>31</sup> This means recent reductions in the funding of further education<sup>32</sup> will impact disproportionately on women and those from BAME backgrounds.

Research on university experience also provides a good illustration of the way in which institutions shape gender relations and inequality – for example in terms of sexism<sup>33</sup> and homophobia,<sup>34</sup> but also the ways in which inequalities of gender, race and class may not be recognized.<sup>35</sup> Research commissioned by the National Union of Students about the culture on university campuses found striking evidence in relation to a dominant sexist culture. One research participant reported:

**"The boys in my halls used to sing a drinking song about rape, which obviously was just disgusting. I think there are a lot of jokes about women and a lot of 'innocent' groping that goes on, which actually serves to make you feel very embarrassed, nervous and uncomfortable."**<sup>36</sup>

So overall we can see the way in which gender plays out throughout the educational landscape – from early years to university, spanning the experience of learners, staff and results and outcomes. Although there have been marked areas of progress in relation to the measured educational attainment of young women and men, disadvantages remain. The experience of early years care and education is important not just in and of itself, but also because of the influence it has on career aspirations, prospects and outlook on life. As we will discuss later, this is a significant source of gender inequality in relation to income and the labour market.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

Women live on average longer than men (women's life expectancy is 83 and men's 79.<sup>37</sup>), but men live a higher proportion of their lives disability-free than women.<sup>38</sup> This is increasingly relevant in the context of the aging population, and increased need for and cost of social care for the elderly. It means women are more likely both to live to an age requiring care, and to themselves be carers of elderly relatives.

There is a great deal of research considering the different experiences, needs and outcomes of men and women in relation to health and wellbeing. This includes the main causes of death for men (heart disease) and women (Alzheimers),<sup>39</sup> and their differential incidences for a range of illnesses and behaviours, such as sexually transmitted infections,<sup>40</sup> smoking,<sup>41</sup> or suicide.<sup>42</sup> It also includes their experience of healthcare services and treatments, for example, research looking at the experience of cancer patients found that female, non-white, and younger patients were less likely to rate their care highly. Other research has illustrated the way in which socio-economic inequality interacts with gender: young women living in deprived areas were six times more likely to be diagnosed with heart disease following chest pain.<sup>43</sup>

The differences between men and women's experience and outcomes in health and wellbeing are only in part the result of biological differences. Socially constructed gender differences – in terms of roles and responsibilities, status and power – interact with these to contribute to the differences and inequality which we see.

## **Mental Health**

Mental health and wellbeing is a particular area where the prevalence, onset and course of disorders is shaped by the social construction of gender.<sup>44</sup> This includes the likelihood of men and women to recognize and seek help.<sup>45</sup>

**"It's a ludicrously hard thing to admit to feeling depressed, especially when I have no way of quantifying it. Am I depressed enough, or am I simply dealing with feelings and anxiety that everyone experiences? They don't complain, so what gives me the right to feel self-pity? I don't know the answers to those questions, but I do know that it feels like a weakness to admit it."**

Andy Baddeley, two-time Olympian and Britain's number one 1,500m runner.<sup>46</sup>

In the UK, looking across the life-course, women are more likely to suffer poor mental health.<sup>47</sup> Women and girls are almost twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.<sup>48</sup> And 1 in 4 women, compared with 1 in 10 men, will require treatment for depression in their lifetime. Women are also more likely to suffer from a long-term mental health condition.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, men are more likely to have drug or alcohol problems, and the vast majority of those with dependencies are male.<sup>50</sup>

The social and environmental influence of gender roles and expectations also affects people's wellbeing.<sup>51</sup> For example, research recently found that girls fare worse than boys on wellbeing measures including emotional, self-esteem, resilience, and satisfaction with friends, community, school and family.<sup>52</sup> Girls are more likely to eat better than boys,<sup>53</sup> yet boys are more likely to exercise, less likely to smoke and have higher self-esteem.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the different health issues and outcomes faced by women and men, there are specific ways in which women's needs are not met by health services. This is particularly the case with female offenders,<sup>55</sup> and victims of gender violence and abuse.<sup>56</sup> Women with learning disabilities, who are BAME, refugees or LGBT face multiple disadvantages accessing primary care.<sup>57</sup>

**"Making my first GP appointment after transferring from another area, the receptionist told me I had to book a BSL interpreter myself. They had my records and knew I needed one. But I pushed it back on them. When I checked up the day before, nothing had been booked. So I took a friend. I asked the receptionist if I could see what was written on the computer for my appointment and the screen said 'Maybe it would be a good idea to book an interpreter'. Maybe? What's that about? The appointment was terrible. I was embarrassed with my friend in the room. They just weren't deaf aware."**

Respondent to Healthwatch Kirklees<sup>58</sup>

Considering health and wellbeing from the perspective of gender not only reveals particular issues and inequalities, but also the interconnections with other dimensions of inequality. As well as requiring gender to be a consideration in the development and delivery of future healthcare, we can see how the benefits to individuals and wider society would be accrued if gender norms and stereotypes were reduced. For example, increased wellbeing in young people and adults under less pressure to conform, or improved health outcomes leading to less workplace absence and higher productivity.

## **Welfare**

Extensive research has shown how welfare regimes shape and influence gender relations and inequality,<sup>59, 60, 61, 62, 63</sup> and the UK is no exception. This has been powerfully highlighted by analysis over the past five years during the cuts and restructuring of benefits and public services in the context of the global recession.<sup>64</sup> This has shown they have disproportionately impacted on women because they are more likely to have low pay, have caring responsibilities, and rely on local services than men.

The volume and impact of cuts has fallen disproportionately on women.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup> They lose more than men in terms of both direct taxation and changes to welfare.<sup>68</sup> This is evidenced in the specific changes that are more likely to adversely affect women – the

removal of universal child benefit (largely paid to women), and the introduction of Universal Credit (to be paid to one person per household), and those which are more likely to benefit men - for example the rise in personal tax allowance in the 2015 budget will benefit more men than women because women are more likely to be low earners: at present 66% of those low earners below the income tax threshold who will not benefit are women.<sup>69</sup> The intersectional nature of inequality also means that other factors will interact with the cuts: disabled women are facing the disadvantage of the changes to disability benefits, along with the fact they are less likely to be in full-time employment than men. Female refugees in the UK, even those with children, are eligible for just £43.95 per week to live on, making cuts to local services and amenities even more punishing.

Research has also shown the impact and experience of austerity measures and their lack of mitigation by relevant organisations at a local level. Women in particular are experiencing the cuts at the level of local government where spending between 2010 and 2015 has been cut by £11.3 billion.<sup>70</sup> For example, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Fawcett Society found local councils in Scotland and England respectively weren't taking into consideration how their cuts would impact on existing inequality or working to address this.<sup>71, 72</sup> Voluntary and community-based women's organisations have also faced significant challenges to maintain services or even survive at all.<sup>73</sup>

## **Work**

Labour, both paid and unpaid, is a key area where gender inequality remains. Although there have been points of progress, women and men continue to be paid unequally, have different types and patterns of work, and undertake very different amounts of unpaid work - at home and caring for children, the sick and the elderly.

The gender pay gap is currently 19%,<sup>74</sup> and it is enduring and present throughout the labour market.<sup>75, 76</sup> There are various ways in which different patterns of work between men and women contribute to the pay gap. More men than women are in work,<sup>77</sup> and BAME women are more likely to be unemployed than white women.<sup>78</sup>

When women are in work they are more likely to be employed part-time.<sup>79</sup> The areas and occupations in which women are more likely to work also tend to be lower paid. This horizontal occupational segregation (where men and women are concentrated in different areas of work that are not equally remunerated) explains a considerable portion of the gap.<sup>80</sup> This does not mean that the important, demanding work of care is lower

skilled, but it is still undervalued and paid.<sup>81</sup> If we look at low pay, evidence shows that 27% of women (compared to 16% of men) are paid less than the living wage.<sup>82</sup> In addition, as highlighted in earlier sections, the vertical segregation within different sectors of employment, such as education, also affects pay - with women disproportionately concentrated at the bottom of hierarchies.

Although it is illegal to discriminate on the grounds of sex in relation to employment this does not mean it does not happen, particularly when conscious action is not taken to address inequality. In processes of recruitment and workplace culture and attitudes, discrimination can be both conscious and unconscious. So for example, despite progress,<sup>83</sup> the manner in which executive searches are carried out contributes to the lack of women in senior roles and directorships.<sup>84</sup> This is despite the growing evidence that balanced boards are more effective.<sup>85, 86</sup>

There is also evidence of significant barriers for women who want to progress into<sup>87</sup> or who do already work in non-traditional industries such as engineering.<sup>88</sup> This shows it takes much more than individual efforts to change the workplace cultures.

Discrimination in relation to pregnancy and maternity is an area where as recently as 2014, evidence shows the disadvantage faced by women despite being illegal.<sup>89, 90</sup> For example, research by the TUC found that during the recent recession the number of tribunal claims for unfair dismissal and suffering a detriment because of pregnancy rose by a fifth.

**“When I was off for maternity leave, I was faced with terms like ‘show commitment’ and ‘re-establish your behaviour’ and ‘re-evaluate your behaviour.’ When I was off work, and when I returned I was supported, but career progression is not something I am now expected to want.”**

Respondent from Project 28-40, Opportunity Now<sup>91</sup>

Following from this, the relationship between care responsibilities and the labour market also disproportionately impacts on women, and limits the extent men contribute to care responsibilities.

The gender pay gap widens when women become mothers<sup>92</sup> and this is partly due to the lack of choice and even availability of high-quality and affordable childcare, as well as the lack of high-quality jobs also enabling caring responsibilities to be balanced with paid work.<sup>93, 94</sup>

Lack of high quality flexible working options, childcare, and limited parental leave sharing limits the ability of men and women to arrange their family lives as they would like, to balance paid work and care responsibilities.

### Unpaid Work and Time

Evidence shows that women continue to work a ‘second shift’ in comparison to men – undertaking more unpaid labour in the home such as housework,<sup>95, 96</sup> and caring for children and family members.<sup>97</sup> As discussed above this limits their ability to engage successfully in paid work, as well as affecting their wellbeing in terms of having less personal free time and being more stressed.<sup>98</sup>

**“Twenty-first century policy has developed on the basis that women as well as men are expected to support themselves through paid work. However, less attention has been paid to the other side of the division of labour embodied in the male breadwinner/female carer model. Elevating financial ‘independence’ as an aspiration for all obscures the interdependence of all members of society, devalues care and imposes severe economic costs on the (mostly) women who provide it.”<sup>99</sup>**

It is also an area where inequalities in gender and ethnicity interact – with discrimination being a key barrier preventing low-income BAME people from balancing work and care.<sup>100</sup> Evidence shows that a more balanced sharing of domestic responsibilities benefits both men and women in terms of their quality of life, health and wellbeing and relationships.<sup>101</sup>

Childcare in particular represents a significant barrier to women’s equal participation in the paid labour market, and conversely to men’s engagement with caring for their children and families. Evidence shows that there are significant sex differences in employment for parents of young children, and that the provision of high-quality and affordable childcare is the way to address this.<sup>102, 103, 104</sup>

In addition to the financial wellbeing of the individuals and households involved, the business case for gender equality in the workplace has also been clearly evidenced.<sup>105</sup> Addressing gender inequality in the labour market also has positive impacts on child poverty and skill shortages and under-utilisation – saving billions annually<sup>106, 107</sup>

### Wealth and Financial Wellbeing

Men and women hold different types and amounts of assets,<sup>108, 109</sup> and when we look at the contributions and distribution of wealth within households we can also see the way in which this is gendered, rather than being neutral,<sup>110</sup> and has an impact on satisfaction and wellbeing.<sup>111</sup> When we look at the burden of savings and investments within couples, there is a complex relationship between wellbeing, debts and investments.<sup>112</sup> It is important to note that although people may report believing a total pooling of household resources to be the ideal, this is not as commonly practiced. Additionally, the amount in financial terms people contribute to a partnership impacts on what people are entitled to<sup>113</sup> – which in the context of the gendered nature of the labour market and caring responsibilities means women are more likely to be disadvantaged in financial terms.

Pensions are a significant way in which financial wellbeing, labour, gender and age interact. On a UK and European level there is a significant gap between men and women in terms of pension provisions.<sup>114, 115</sup> This is the result in part of men and women’s different incomes and working patterns throughout the life-course.<sup>116</sup> Men are more likely at all ages to be contributing to a pension scheme,<sup>117</sup> and later in life this results in older women being less financially secure than men in later life.<sup>118</sup>

The combined results of differences in employment, income and welfare, coupled with the factors such as household sharing of income leads to particular gendered patterns of poverty. Women in general are more likely to live in poverty than men, but this becomes far more likely for ethnic minority women.<sup>119</sup> When we look at different dimensions of poverty the gender dynamic is clearer still. For example, almost two thirds of those with severe debt problems are women, and they are more likely to be poor across the different dimensions of poverty. Gender affects how people experience poverty too – with women more likely to have the stress of managing limited finances and going without to support others, while men in poverty are more likely to be socially isolated.

## Crime and Criminal Justice

Whether as offenders or victims the experience of the criminal justice system is different for men and women. Women make up a small proportion of the prison population, are more likely to be there for petty and non-violent crimes (over 80%), and are also likely to also have been victims of crime and abuse (over 50% having experienced domestic abuse).<sup>120</sup>

Women are more likely to be responsible for children (meaning their imprisonment has a wider impact), and their offending is more likely to be prompted by relationship or financial concerns.<sup>121</sup> These are just some of the factors which contribute to the fact that prison works much less well in reducing women’s reoffending than multi agency units in the community.<sup>122</sup>

The Corsten report of women with vulnerabilities and the criminal justice system highlighted many areas in which changes to the treatment of women had to be made. In particular it highlighted the need for holistic and integrated strategic approaches.<sup>123</sup> Although there has been some action taken to progress this in the intervening years, the majority of issues have not been addressed.<sup>124</sup> The fact that prison does not work for women, combined with the still increasing female prison population, is a stark reminder of this.<sup>125, 126</sup>

In addition to the particular problems with the sentencing, experience and efficacy of prison for women, there are further specific experiences relating to gender violence and abuse, care and immigration which women face. For example, there are barriers to accessing adequate legal support for victims of domestic abuse,<sup>127, 128</sup> and the legal process of child contact proceedings can be used as a means to control and victimise women further.<sup>129</sup>

Research into the experience of female asylum seekers in the UK has additionally highlighted the frequency with which women who have experienced persecution, torture, rape and violence, are then subject to detention and an absence of support.<sup>130, 131</sup>

## ATTITUDES

### Key Findings and Impact

Stereotyped representations of men, women and gender relations continue to dominate across multiple areas of mainstream society. This contributes to the limitations placed on men and women of all ages in terms of their gender identity, sexual orientation and ability to be healthy and free from violence and abuse.

Reviewing the evidence across culture and media, sexual orientation and identity, body image, and gender violence and abuse we found:

- unequal and limited representation of women in relation to sport and culture
- ongoing bullying and discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation
- growing prevalence of serious illnesses in relation to body image, particularly among women
- ongoing high levels of violence and abuse predominantly perpetrated by men against women

The impact of this upon individuals and wider society is serious and damaging:

- perpetuating stereotyped attitudes and views about women, men and gender that undermine attempts to bring about change
- personal and public costs to address the physical and mental ill health resulting from bullying and self-harm of different kinds
- personal and public costs to supporting the victims of violence and abuse, as well as dealing with the perpetrators

Social and cultural understandings of gender and what it means to be a man or woman are central to the operation and reproduction of gender inequality. The attitudes and opinions of individuals, groups and institutions reflect what society does and does not value and shape how people behave. Following from this they also impact how people experience the world around them. Attitudes and values are thus intertwined with resources (discussed above) and power (discussed in the next section). For example, the attitudes (conscious and unconscious) of people in recruitment affect how they select candidates. This contributes to the inequality we then see in relation to wealth and the labour market. The understandings of young men and women about what is 'normal' for them affects their actions and choices at school. This contributes to the inequalities we then see in relation to education and employment. Having said this, it is important to note that attitudes

in themselves are difficult to measure, and, particularly in the case of individuals, may not be conscious or openly expressed.

Negative and limited portrayals and understandings of masculinity and femininity can be found across different areas of life in the UK today. In this section we discuss cultural and media representations, sexuality and gender identity, body image, and gender based violence and abuse (GVA).

### Public Attitudes to Gender Equality

There have been some government surveys considering public attitudes to gender equality, though not routine enough to enable comparison over time. In 2014 the Department for Media, Culture and Sport published research on attitudes to equality at work.<sup>132</sup> This found that two thirds of the population believed that sexism is still a problem in the workplace. Discussing part-time and flexible working, the survey also showed that it still remains the case that they are seen to signify less dedication to the workplace. People's attitudes and experience varies across locations – in 2012 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland published research on attitudes and experience of discrimination. 27% of respondents felt that gender was the most important equality issue (after religion (42%) and age (39%)).<sup>133</sup> There was also clear support for action to address gender inequality –two thirds of respondents said they wanted to see more women as managers, and 91% agreed on the need for equality laws.

### Cultural and Media Representation

Research attention has focused both on the outputs of the cultural and media industries, and the inequality in these areas as workplaces. Media portrayals of gender and gender relations contribute to the production of damaging stereotypes. In 2014 UNESCO research highlighted amongst other things the relationship between the media and gender violence and abuse, and the lack of women in senior and decision making positions in media organisations despite their high numbers in journalism education.<sup>134</sup> In the UK context the under-representation of women in different areas of the media has been highlighted by Women in Journalism,<sup>135</sup> Directors UK,<sup>136</sup> and organisations such as UK Feminista<sup>137</sup> and the Fawcett Society.<sup>138</sup>

Women and girl's engagement in sports and fitness activities is far lower than men's – with a detrimental impact on their health and wellbeing across different age groups.<sup>139, 140</sup> Interestingly, this is also an area where there is an interrelationship between different types of inequality: research suggests that the relationship

between sporting success at a high level, for women and men, is related to the level of economic equality in a country.<sup>141</sup>

The coverage of women's sports demonstrates the interplay between the media, attitudes and resources. Research shows that between 2011 and 2013 the percentage of the total value of reported sponsorship deals was 85.5% for men's and a tiny 0.4% for women's sports.<sup>142</sup> Analysis of a month of coverage across different channels found that women's sport accounted for just 7% of sport we could read, watch or listen to. In recent years there have been some improvements in terms of the sponsorship income and media coverage provided to women's sport in the UK. For example, increased television coverage, the launch of Sport England's campaign This Girl Can, and milestones like the first ever joint hosting of the men and women's boat races in 2015.

Cultural outputs such as film or television also contribute to shaping ideas and attitudes to gender and equality. The Bechdel test is designed to measure women's representation and characterisation in film releases. To pass the test a film must have at least two female characters, who talk to each other, about something other than a man. Although far from comprehensive internationally in 2014 the percentage of films passing the test fell from 68% to 55%.<sup>143</sup> A more detailed recent study showed that both the number of female characters, and their roles within films were not equal. For example, just thirty percent of films had female leads or co-leads. Female characters were more than twice as likely to be shown as sexualized than male ones, and less likely to be shown as employed.<sup>144</sup>

### Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sexual orientation and gender identity are both connected to gender, and to each other, but are also distinct. Sexual orientation depends on a person's gender, and the gender of those they are sexually attracted to. Gender identity is a person's subjective experience of their gender, and this may or not match with the gender they were assigned at birth or biological sex.

There are clear signs of progress in enabling men and women to love and form relationships with who they chose, regardless of sex and gender. The enactment of legislation allowing homosexual as well as heterosexual couples to marry in 2014 marked a significant milestone in the acceptance of and rights for people of all sexual orientations. However, there are also clear indicators which reveal ongoing inequality and discrimination in relation to sexual orientation. For example, research based on the long-standing National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles

(Natsal) found that between 41-45% of respondents believe same-sex relationships are not wrong at all. This number has increased since the survey was last carried out, which is positive, although it remains that this still leaves a considerable percentage who do believe same-sex relationships are wrong to some extent. This finding is also reflected in research showing how prevalent homophobic attitudes and bullying are in the UK, including at work,<sup>145, 146</sup> and in school.<sup>147</sup> The same is also the case in relation to transgender people, with research showing their experiences of discrimination and harassment at work.<sup>148</sup> In addition to this, transgender people face particular disadvantage and discrimination across a range of areas – from education and healthcare to media representation and influence.<sup>149, 150</sup>

The detrimental impact of the wide accessibility of highly gendered sexually explicit material, particularly on young people, has also been examined.<sup>151, 152</sup> This also sits in the context where the sexualisation of women in the media and public life is normalized, and where children and young people don't receive statutory and holistic education about sex and relationships.

**"Young people in Britain deserve honest, useful information about sex and relationships but SRE in UK schools is failing them. Standards vary so widely that all too often young people miss out on the information they need to stay safe, healthy and happy. Worse, we know that the void is not being filled by reliable information from elsewhere - like parents - but from the playground and, even more worrying, internet porn."**<sup>153</sup>

Jules Hillier, Brook

### Body Image

In 2014 the Government Equalities Office hosted a range of experts to consider the connection between gender roles and the body and their impact on women and men, girls and boys. It highlighted longstanding and serious ways in which gender stereotyping continues to impact negatively on men and women and body image, gender identity and sexuality.<sup>154</sup> Distress and illness with relation to appearance is worryingly prevalent amongst young women and also growing amongst young men. Recent research has

found that 87% of young women aged 11-21 think that women are judged more on their appearance than their ability, and 71% say they would like to lose weight.<sup>155</sup>

**"I have never been confident with my weight and lack confidence with how I look. I have spent half my life on diets or trying to lose weight. The media creates an unhealthy and unrealistic body figure that we should attain. In reality, we are all different and we should celebrate our differences, not shy away from them."**

Girlguiding Advocate

The psychological impact of particular gendered body norms have additional physical implications, for example in relation to cosmetic surgery.<sup>156</sup> Self-harm is another manifestation of the connection between gender and physical and mental wellbeing. Rates of self-harm and eating disorders are high in the UK, and disproportionately affect women and girls. Recent research suggests that more than 725,000 people in the UK are affected by an eating disorder, and that this is rising over time.<sup>157</sup> Women make up around 90% of reported sufferers. The UK has one of the highest rates of self-harm in Europe<sup>158</sup>, and young women are more likely than young men to self-harm.<sup>159</sup>

## Gender based Violence and Abuse

Gender based violence and abuse is endemic in the UK today. Harassment, sexual violence, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation (FGM), represent a very particular manifestation of gender inequality; largely experienced by women and perpetrated by men. The available statistics on prevalence are likely to under-estimate the problem but are nonetheless shocking:

- Around 2.1m people each year suffer some form of domestic abuse - 1.4 million women (8.5% of the population) and 700,000 men (4.5% of the population).<sup>160</sup>
- Women are more likely than men to be the victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse - 95% of those going to marac (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) or accessing an idva (independent domestic violence advocate services are women).<sup>161, 162</sup>
- Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.<sup>163</sup>
- 20% of women have experienced sexual assault at some point since the age of 16,<sup>164</sup> approximately 85,000 women are raped on average each year in England and Wales.<sup>165</sup>
- An estimated 137,000 women and girls with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), born in countries where FGM is practiced, were permanently resident in England and Wales in 2011.<sup>166</sup>
- An inquiry by the Children's Commissioner found 2,409 cases of child sexual exploitation in gangs or groups in a 14 month period, but also suggested that this figure would in reality be far higher. The majority of victims are female and perpetrators male, although young men are also victims in some cases.<sup>167</sup>

As well as the prevalence of such crimes, the inadequacy of responses to them is testament to gender discrimination and inequality. For example, although rising, the reporting and conviction rates for sexual offences and domestic abuse remain low, with just 7% of reported rape offenders convicted, and only 10% of sexual offences.<sup>168</sup> The police response in particular has been highlighted as extremely problematic as evidenced in the 2014 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report on the police response to domestic abuse. Although there have been efforts made for example through the Home Office's This is Abuse campaign, as recently as February 2015 the Joint Committee on Human Rights pointed to the limitations in the coordination of the government's efforts to address violence against women and girls.

## POWER

### Key Findings and Impact

Reviewing the evidence in relation to gender, representation and authority across the political and public sphere we have found:

- women continue to be under-represented in positions of authority and influence across the political, business and cultural spheres
- some positive progress, particularly in relation to members of elected bodies

The impact of this upon individuals and wider society is significant:

- An insufficiently diverse range of views and approaches skews the social and political agenda and direction of the UK on a local, regional, national and international level.
- Non diverse representative bodies are less effective in legislating to meet the needs of their entire populations.
- Businesses and charities are less effective in reaching their financial and social goals.

The power to shape and change social and political life is predominantly held by men, and this has only relatively recently been challenged – e.g. it is less than 100 years since women have been allowed to vote. This means the representation of women, and women as a diverse group, is central to the project of gender equality as a whole. This means that different women as well as men can participate in and inform the decision making which shapes the economic and social direction of the UK as a whole. When the needs of particular groups aren't understood they are not addressed fairly.

Representation is a complex and much-researched area,<sup>169</sup> to help us understand it we think of it in two ways - descriptive and substantive:

**Descriptive representation** means that those in positions of power and influence share the same characteristics of those they are representing.

**Substantive representation** means that those in positions of power and influence advocate in the interests of those they are representing.

The two are interconnected, which is why when we refer to and consider representation and influence in relation to gender equality we care about the numbers and relative percentages of women and men in power, as it provides a useful way of measuring it. For example, although there was a recent positive increase in the number of women in the UK parliament in the 2015 election, women continue to be significantly under-represented in local, regional and national government.

- 31% of local authority councillors are women
- 40% of the Welsh Assembly are women
- 35% of the Scottish Parliament are women
- 19% of the Northern Ireland Assembly are women
- 29% of MPs are women
- 23% of those sitting in the House of Lords are women
- 41% of UK MEPs women<sup>170</sup>

There are several important points to draw out further from these figures. When we look at the women who hold these positions, the extent to which they represent a diverse cohort is limited. For example, there are only 20 female MPs who are BAME, and 16 members of the House of Lords. Secondly when we review the sites of government which are closest to achieving parity between men and women, we are able to evidence the potential impact that action to address inequality can have.

For example, the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly have been designed to incorporate formal commitments to gender equality, and their proportional electoral systems make it easier for parties to take action to improve the representation of women. In addition to this, some parties have adopted methods such as all-women shortlists or 'twinning' which work to ensure parity between men and women. The organisation and atmosphere of elected institutions also affects their make-up. Some attempts to reform the way in which the House of Commons works in order to make it more compatible with the responsibilities of home and family life have taken place, for example with some changes to its sitting hours.<sup>171</sup> But these have been limited and continue to be contested.

Alongside influential elected bodies, there are numerous other significant institutions and positions responsible for shaping the social and economic landscape of the UK. These range from official appointments to private directorships and charity sector trusteeships. A look across different industries and areas – from law to filmmaking – demonstrates that women remain significantly underrepresented in positions of power and leadership.

There have been efforts in some areas to address this, for example:

- Last year 39.3% of public appointments were made to female candidates.<sup>172</sup>
- Women currently make up 36% of senior civil servants.<sup>173</sup>

There are also other areas such as the charity and voluntary sector, where women have made some progress at a higher level:

- 46% of voluntary sector Chief Executives are women, and 43% of charity leaders are women.<sup>174</sup>

However, when we consider that women make up 68% of the paid and voluntary workforce in this area, we can see there is still some way to go. In addition to this, the picture becomes much more uneven when we consider the types and size of organisations led by men and women, and the sex of trustees and directors. For example:

- The majority of board seats in the charities with the largest incomes or assets are held by men (68% and 73%).<sup>175</sup>

It becomes even more unequal when we consider other important and influential areas of public life including business, law, policing and the media:

- Although the number of women on boards of FTSE100 companies is growing, it remains just 23.5%, and only 8.6% of executive directorships.<sup>176</sup>
- Just 19.5% of senior police ranks (i.e. chief inspector and above) are women, compared with 30.1% at constable rank.<sup>177</sup>
- Just 19% of high court judges are women,<sup>178</sup> and just 12% of QCs.<sup>179</sup>
- In terms of media ownership and editorship, just 5% of national newspaper editors are women,<sup>180</sup> and just 7 women in total across the boards of the companies which control 70% of national newspaper circulation.

The lack of representation and diversity among the ranks of these influential institutions has serious implications for the way politics, law and justice, media and public opinion are carried out and shaped. Although there has been some progress over time, its pace is slow and unsteady. It is clear that areas where constructive action has been taken are those with the most consistent progress – for example in terms of the parties with the most female MPs or the devolved parliaments.

#### **The UK in Global Context**

Despite progress in the UK towards gender equality, international research highlights not only the problems which remain, but in some cases the regression on previous progress. This is recognised at

the highest levels internationally if we consider that the UNs proposed sustainable development goals include one specifically to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. These goals replace the millennium development goals at the end of 2015, and will act as the targets and indicators that member states (including the UK) must use to shape their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years.

The World Economic Forum's research taking a quantitative approach in 2014 found that the UK had fallen to 26 in its global ranking of countries.<sup>182</sup> This represents a considerable regression from its position at number nine when the research was first carried out in 2006. The most recent recommendations from the UN CEDAW (Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women) Committee to the UK government were made in 2013.<sup>183</sup> These highlighted areas in need of action by government, including the legal framework for equality, physical security, education and employment, standards of living and health, and power and decision making. For example, the low level of women, and particularly ethnic minority and disabled women in parliament and other decision making bodies. 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action - a powerful international agenda for progressing women's empowerment. The UK NGO Commission on the Status of Women Alliance produced a response to the latest government report on its work on the Beijing declaration.<sup>184</sup> This welcomes some of the developments which have brought improvements in gender equality - including the development of equalities strategies in the four nations, changes to flexible working and parental leave, and the voluntary scheme to increase the numbers of women on the boards of UK companies. However, it also clearly highlights the limitations to the changes made, and the slow pace of the change they have been able to create. Alongside the observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, it makes recommendations for the further action needed. These include both the legal framework and infrastructure for gender equality work, and substantive topics requiring attention. For example, the need to ensure that organisations working on gender equality are supported sustainably through commissioning and funding; the need to go beyond voluntary action where progress is limited; and the need for statutory and comprehensive sex and relationship education for young people on topics including consent and gender equality.

## **GENDER INEQUALITY — APPROACHES TO CHANGE**

### **The Nature of the Challenge**

When we take resources, attitudes, and power together we are provided with a potent snapshot of how far we have to go to reach equality in the UK. The picture is not universally bleak – some progress can be seen in relation to gender and educational achievement, legislative equality, attitudes towards sexual orientation, and representation in politics or in the charity sector. However, progress in these areas remains slow and incremental, rather than reflecting changes to the underlying structural roots of inequality. There are also areas where inequality between women and men is worsening and being exacerbated, such as the recent changes to the welfare regime.

Looking across the different domains – resources, attitudes and power - also makes clear the interconnection between them which is not always visible. For example, we can see the disjuncture between young women's educational achievements in school and their later careers and earnings – partly the result of attitudes and power imbalance. We can see the way in which attitudes about what it is acceptable for women and men to be and do shape violence and abuse, and the way in which the police and judiciary respond to this. Therein lies the difficulty in challenging the structural roots of gender inequality: there are many fronts to address, and they are interlocking and mutually reinforcing. Gender inequality is also entangled with other serious inequalities such as ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Historically and today a wide range of approaches have been pursued to advance gender equality. Below we set out, in very broad terms, some key ways they can be categorised.

### **Sameness, Difference and Transformation**

One way to distinguish different approaches to bringing about gender equality is to categorise them into sameness, difference or transformation approaches.

- **Sameness** - focusing on treating all people identically, regardless of sex or gender.
- **Difference** - treating people differently to reflect observed gender inequalities or sex differences in terms of needs.
- **Transformation** – seeking to change or provide alternatives to unequal gender norms and relations.

The attempts to tackle the gender pay gap provides an illustration of all three of these approaches in practice.

#### **Sameness**

In 1970 the Equal Pay Act made it illegal to treat men or women less favourably in terms of pay or conditions of employment. This meant women and men doing the same job should be treated identically. However, many employers avoided this by re-grading or re-titling jobs and the law was later amended to capture the fact that jobs of equal value (rather than simply identical) should be remunerated the same.

#### **Difference**

Much later (coverage only extended to all women in 1993), legislation allowed women to take paid maternity leave and return to their job, but without allowance for men to take paternity leave. This accommodated the physical difference (women give birth and need time to recover) and social differences (women did the vast majority of childcare) between women and men as parents.

#### **Transformation**

As of 2015 legislation in the UK gives parents the option to choose how they share an amount of parental leave between them during the first year after their child is born. The intention is to enable families to decide how they want to care for children – rather than enforcing a traditional approach. This legislation allows changes in traditional gender roles by allowing some mothers and fathers to take time out from their jobs to look after their children.

**"Current workplace arrangements have not kept up with the times. The Children and Families Act will bring the way new parents balance their working and home lives into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."**

Jenny Willott, Employment Relations Minister 2014

These three main approaches have also characterised attempts to change practice or systems in institutions and organisations. There has been an attempt to standardise recruitment practices to ensure men and women are judged in the same way, focusing on their skills and experience to do the job at hand. There has also been acknowledgement that existing and historical inequalities mean men and women may require different treatment in order to achieve equal outcomes for them, such as leadership programmes or training specifically for women.

Additionally more transformative approaches have been attempted, for example the introduction of flexible and remote working, and a focus on results, as opposed to requiring a culture of presenteeism and a focus on hours spent in the office.

In all of the different areas discussed earlier – from the curriculum to caring responsibilities – different combinations and iterations of these approaches have been attempted with varied outcomes. Achieving a more equal process and outcome will depend on the specific context and combination of approaches.

For example, in seeking to address the differences in educational choices and attainment of girls and boys, the discussion has often been focused on either the fundamental sameness or fundamental difference between the two sexes. This may lead to the neglect of the range of needs of pupils, or actually reinforce existing inequality. Arguably an approach recognizing the diversity within and overlap between the needs and dreams of girls and boys can more constructively address the roots of gender inequality in relation to education.

In relation to inequality in caring responsibilities, enabling choice for both men and women has proved effective in other countries. Action to actively facilitate the sharing of parental leave at a collective level has been shown to have an impact.<sup>185</sup> These actions enable men and women to find the balance which suits their family, as opposed to being forced to resort to a traditional model.

The representation of women in legislative assemblies in the UK has also seen considerable positive change as a result of targeted action. In the UK and internationally, evidence shows that targeted action from a difference approach such as all women shortlists, twinning, or quotas, coupled with the reform of the working practices of the assemblies, is the most effective way to reach gender parity.

These examples illustrate the need to combine different approaches to achieving equality. However, more effort is needed to examine how to make this successful on a practical basis, rather than which approach is best. There are a broad range of views and actors working on different areas of gender. Bringing them together to create the most profound impact requires going beyond traditional lines of argument and distinctions between approaches. Recognising where different approaches can be mutually reinforcing is a positive step.

### **Legislative, Practical, and Attitudinal**

Approaches to change can also be described as focused on legislative, practical or attitudinal levers.

- **Legislative change** focuses on legislation or policy and would include the development of anti-discrimination legislation.
- **Practical change** focuses on developing new practices, for example flexible working arrangements for all employees or gender sensitive public services.
- **Attitudinal change** focuses on social and cultural beliefs, for example developing school workshops for young people or public campaigns that challenge the social acceptability of gender based violence.

Debates about which of these approaches is the most appropriate are ongoing, despite growing recognition that all three are often needed in conjunction. For example, work in the area of gender-based violence has included legislative measures and practice changes, in the form of efforts to improve police responses, the creation of specialist service provision and support for survivors. Despite this violence remains endemic with levels showing no significant decrease. Gender equality actors working at on the ground and on national policy argue that levels are unlikely to change without greater efforts to tackle the social norms that underpin and cause violence in the first place. But these efforts must be additional to and cannot be at the expense of vital ongoing work.

Resourcing for this vital work (generally from the state, charitable trusts and donations) has been minimal, and current reductions in the funding available means there is increased pressure. For example voluntary sector organisations working to tackle violence report having no alternative but to forgo work to influence policy or attitudinal change in order to be able to afford to provide basic services to victims of violence.<sup>186</sup>

### **State, Business and Civil Society**

Interventions to promote gender equality are often characterized by where they originate from or are led by - the state, business or civil society.

- **State led** approaches are often associated with the development of legislation, but can also include measures such as publicly funded services or programmes that address gender inequality. For example state childcare provision, or gender mainstreaming within local government.
- **Business or market led** approaches can include the development of new recruitment and employment practices, or the development and delivery of services or products that reflect or address inequality. Business led approaches can also include corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- **Civil society led** approaches span a broad range of activity (from campaigning to service provision) and include different actors (from charities and community activists to trade unions). Civil society approaches can play a key role in securing change as political citizens and market consumers, making this a valuable area.

At any given time, on a number of different gender equality issues, all these actors may play a role. However, it is too easy for their work to take place in parallel rather than in concert – at best meaning efforts to bring positive change don't reference each other, and at worst that they are in direct conflict. Debates about what can be achieved by legislation or the state, the extent of the responsibility of the private sector and what can be achieved by civil society characterize the development of responses to gender inequality at local and national levels. Whilst such debate, and even conflict, can lead to more innovative and effective action it can also result in silo working where differences act as barriers to cross sector learning and collaboration for the common cause of achieving gender equality.

An illustration of how this can manifest could begin with a council wishing to improve their support for victims of gender violence and abuse. The council might want to commission a local gender equality organisation in order to make use of their valuable knowledge and experience. However, the gender equality organisation might feel unable to meet the council's contract requirements without compromising on their core methods or principles. As a result the council would commission a traditional contractor without the special knowledge and experience, and the gender equality organisation would continue to rely on trust funding for its work, meaning there are two separate local services. From the perspective of the users both services may feel inadequate - the council service because it does not fully understand their needs, and the women's organisation service because it remains under resourced.

In the meantime the lines between the roles of state, business and civil society are becoming increasingly blurred. Examples include public-private partnerships, state support of community assets or the 'big society', and the development of social ventures and enterprises with a social as well as economic outcome. The external environment for existing and emerging gender equality interventions is changing rapidly: the needs, the solutions, the actors and critically, the funding. For gender equality organisations, these changes require new partnerships, new organisational structures, new funding and business models as well as entirely new understandings of what constitutes impact.

Gender equality actors have always worked on different fronts – from demanding state action to developing business practices – yet the links between these approaches and areas still leave room for considerable strengthening.. This makes the connection between gender equality and social innovation a potentially valuable one. As we discuss in the following section, the resources, processes and tools of social innovation have always sought to range across and facilitate effective collaboration between areas and actors such as the state, business and civil society.

# 3. GENDER FUTURES — GENDER AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

In the previous section we set out the scale and nature of the gender equality challenge. In this section we explore the potential of combining the insights and approach of social innovation with those of the gender equality movement. We start with a short explanation of the ideas, processes and actors that make up the social innovation movement. We then consider where the potential synergies lie between gender equality and social innovation, and the extent to which this has been carried out in practice. We conclude with initial recommendations on how the potential of social innovation can be better harnessed to advance gender equality, and how gender equality can add to social innovation.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SOCIAL INNOVATION?

There are many different definitions of social innovation, so we draw on our previous research in this area to present this account. Firstly, it is key to recognise that social innovation is both a means and an end. So it can refer to the process of identifying, prototyping, and scaling new social solutions to produce outcomes with social not just economic value. However, social innovation also refers to the outputs of such processes, which can range from the

concrete to the conceptual. For example, new ideas, new products or new practices. They could be a new (use of) technology, a principle, a piece of legislation, a practical tool, a hybrid organisational form or a combination of these.

The heart of social innovation acknowledges that making a difference often lies in combining different existing actions, actors, insights and methods – rather than in developing something entirely new. This includes actively seeking to combine the perspectives and resources of the state, business and civil society to achieve change.<sup>187</sup>

**Drawing on our experience of developing and shaping projects in this area, we understand social innovations as:** new approaches to addressing social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise the beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources.<sup>188</sup>

There are five key features of social innovation.<sup>189</sup>

- **Newness** - a social innovation is new to the context in which it appears. It might not be entirely new but it must be new to those involved in its implementation.
- **Meeting a social need** - social innovations are created with the intention of addressing a social need in a positive or beneficial way. They can also play a role in articulating or shaping social needs; they can help to legitimise new and emerging social needs or those which have so far gone unrecognised. Because social innovations are concerned with meeting specific social needs, we argue that social innovations are distinct from innovations which have a social impact. For example whilst the innovation that is the internet has had major social impact it was not necessarily originally conceived to meet a specific social need.
- **Being put into practice** - like innovations more generally, social innovations are ideas that have been put into practice. In this way, social innovations are distinct from social inventions (new ideas that have not been implemented).
- **Engaging and mobilising stakeholders** - a range of stakeholders are involved or engaged in the development of the social innovation or in its governance. This engagement helps to ensure that the social innovation serves legitimate goals and involves the members of the target group themselves in addressing and owning their own problems. This can, in turn, lead to better and more innovative solutions, as well as increasing their awareness, competences, and even their dignity and self-esteem.
- **Transforming social relations** - social innovations aim to transform social relations by equalising access to power and resources. As such, social innovations can empower specific groups of people and challenge unequal distribution across society. In this way, social innovations contribute to discourses about the public good and the just society.

Aside from the five criteria above there are also a number of other features which frequently but not always characterise social innovations:

- Unlike other forms of innovation, especially innovation in large scale companies, social innovation often tends to be 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' and ad hoc rather than planned. It often emerges from informal processes and the entrepreneurial actions of citizens and groups of individuals.
- At the outset, social innovation is typically marked by a high level of uncertainty, in part because it has never been implemented before. As a result of this uncertainty it is impossible to say at the outset whether the social innovation is good, more effective or better than alternatives. This can only be seen in hindsight.
- At the beginning, a social innovation will be different from widespread or mainstream practices. But, depending on the social, political and cultural context in which it appears, it may become embedded in routines, norms and structures and thereby become a widespread everyday practice. Once the innovation has become institutionalised, new needs and demands might arise, leading to fresh calls for social innovation.
- Despite good intentions, social innovations might prove to be socially divisive; have unintended consequences that have negative social effects (by excluding people who are affected by the innovation in the design and implementation stages) and; become vulnerable to co-option or mission drift.

From this perspective social innovation is a broad-church, encompassing and representing a wide range of processes and outputs. The Young Foundation's research in this area has found that we often need to go beyond using social innovation generically, and be clear about what kind or type of social innovation we're talking about. To this end, we've developed a typology of social innovations which sets out five forms or types of social innovation. Some social innovations might cut across more than one type.

Type of social innovation	Description	Example
New services and products	New interventions of new programmes to meet social needs	Car-sharing; zero energy housing developments (e.g. BedZED)
New practices	New services which require new professional roles or relationships	Dispute resolution between citizens and the state in the Netherlands (the professional civil servant role has changed dramatically and citizens' social needs are much better met)
New processes	Co-production of new services	Participatory budgeting (started in Brazil and since widely scaled; is not dependent on ICT, though ICT often used); Fair Trade
New rules and regulations	Creation of new laws or new entitlements	Personal budgets (e.g. in Denmark and the Netherlands where older people can decide themselves how to spend much of their support money)
New organisational forms	Hybrid organisational forms such as social enterprises	Belu Water, a small UK based social enterprise, which sells bottled water and donates all its profits to WaterAid and has pledged to raise £1m by 2020

## WHO CAN DO SOCIAL INNOVATION?

Social innovation doesn't refer to any particular kind of organisation, or to any particular sector of society. Social innovations can be developed anywhere, including the public and private sectors, as well as civil society organisations and groups. Frontline public services like schools, hospitals, prisons or care homes can develop social innovations.<sup>190</sup> They can also be developed at the local level by voluntary and community sector organisations, grassroots networks and associations, as well as by social entrepreneurs.

Social innovation takes place in all three sectors:

- Civil society – which includes foundations, associations, charities, community groups and organisations, is the source of many pioneering approaches to tackling social needs, through collective action, campaigns, advocacy and the provision of services.
- The state or public sector – both in terms of policies and service models. The public sector, with its access to large budgets, huge organisational and capacity resources, policy and regulatory levers for change and networks for implementation, has the tools to create the most systemic change.

- The business or private sector – this includes for example, socially responsible businesses which provide a range of goods and services such as ethical finance, Fair Trade products and renewable energy.

All of these areas contribute to the large and diverse social innovation eco-system. Within this there are also several types of role which bring different elements to the development of a new social innovation – from idea to actualisation. We outline these below.

**Social entrepreneurs and pioneers** – those individuals and groups who lead the development of the idea for a social innovation.

**Social enterprises** – are businesses driven by a social or environmental purpose. As with any business, social enterprises deliver goods and services, but their social purpose is core to what they do, and their profits are reinvested towards this.<sup>191, 192</sup> Examples of social enterprises include The Big Issue magazine, and the fairtrade company Divine Chocolate. Whilst social enterprises are often conflated with the idea of social innovation it is important to be clear that they are only one form or sub-category of social innovation. This is particularly important when considering the question of how much social innovation can contribute to tackling gender inequality and indeed inequality more generally. Whilst, as we highlight later in this section, social enterprises can and have been harnessed towards these ends, this does not mean they will always be the most effective or even appropriate tool for a given social challenge.

**Social ventures** – are organisations that tackle social problems like obesity, educational disadvantage, poverty or health. The best make a significant social impact not just in breadth – that is reaching a significant number of people – but also in depth, effecting a significant improvement in the quality of life of people who have significant needs. Social ventures have the potential to be financially sustainable thanks to revenues which come from paying customers, from governments, from charitable sources or from individual supporters. We include ventures that distribute their profits or reinvest them. The best social ventures use business models that make the most of scarce public and philanthropic money, either through using a mix of grants, donations and income from paying customers, or from using considerable pro-bono, in-kind and volunteer support. Social ventures also aim to scale what works, through the growth of an organisation or through helping others to replicate their ideas and adapt them to their surroundings. Our previous research has pointed to a range of different methods for doing so – from organisational growth, through franchising and federations, to licensing and looser diffusion. Some of these involve scaling up – a metaphor taken from manufacturing. Others are better understood as more organic, 'graft and grow', or scaling out, with ideas adapting as they spread, rather than growing in a single form.

**Social innovation intermediaries** – are individuals, organisations, networks and spaces that connect people, ideas and resources. They can take on a range of forms. For example they might incubate innovations by providing space for collaborative working. They could connect entrepreneurs with different supports they need to develop their innovations. Or they might help spread innovations by developing networks and collaborations.<sup>193</sup> Examples of social innovation intermediaries include Social Innovation Exchange, Nesta and The Young Foundation.

**Social innovation financiers** – provide the funding to develop and support innovations. This includes a range of different actors and approaches ranging from non-repayable development grants and prizes to repayable finance and social investment. Although not suitable for all innovations, the value of social investment is that the capital can be used multiple times to support social as well as financial return.

## LINKING GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Having described some of the main approaches, actors and outputs that constitute the social innovation movement, we will now examine the potential synergies between social innovation and gender equality as well as the extent to which the two have come together in practice.

Firstly, it is important to note that socially innovative outputs and indeed innovators are not limited to the social innovation sector. If we consider the gender equality movement and its actors in the UK, it is arguable that ideas, methods and practices it has developed should be recognised as social innovations. This includes the ideas of the social construction of gender and gender equality themselves.

The concept of gender has revolutionised the way in which we view others and understand ourselves as men and women. Rather than seeing particular roles, attitudes and outcomes as 'natural' and inevitable, the idea of gender as something socially constructed and shaped has enabled both men and women to question and expand the horizons of how they live.

Some of the other important and innovative developments of the equality movement over the last century include:

- new legal rights and entitlements including women's suffrage, anti-discrimination laws, and more recently the public sector equality duty which requires public bodies to take proactive steps to promote equality - rather than simply seeking to mitigate the outcome of inequality
- new institutions and organisational forms that bring women's and other marginalised voices into local and national governments or organisations, services and refuges for those experiencing gender violence and abuse
- new policy practices such as gender budgeting – that allows policy makers to assess the impact of budgetary or economic policy decisions on gender inequality and point to fairer options where existing proposals are lacking
- new movements and campaigns, like the Everyday Sexism Project, that engage women and men in altering expectations of what women and men, girls and boys can be and do
- new employment practices such as flexible working and diversity programmes, that support wider shifts and movements towards the creation of a better work-life balance for all employees

The gender equality movement has also been adept at harnessing and adapting other innovations. For example it has utilized the internet to create a global movement that links activists across the world despite their huge diversity. However, it is important to note that the internet has been used by others to perpetuate gender inequality and misogyny. We can see this in the prevalence of abuse online via social media. This ably demonstrates that innovations, including social ones, have a range of impacts, many unintended, and can be co-opted in ways which challenge positive innovations.

It is also important to recognise that some of the ideas and methods associated with social innovation – such as consciousness raising, participatory research, and community organising - have their roots in approaches and concepts originally developed by feminist and other rights movements.

So we can see that to date the gender equality movement has both been innovative and had valuable impact on society as a whole. This immediately supports the idea that gender equality and social innovation have things in common. On the one hand, social innovation is concerned with bringing about positive social change. To do this without understanding and attending to the most fundamental inequality in our society can only mean partial success. Simultaneously, although the gender equality sector has also made progress in achieving its goals, this remains painfully slow in many areas. To both accelerate and deepen change it is clear that that the kind of new approaches, broader engagement, and greater resources that social innovation can deliver are needed. We propose that developing the potential synergy between the two areas will involve two key elements: gender innovation, and gendering innovation.

**Gender Innovation** means the development of innovations which directly and deliberately focus on tackling the structural roots of gender inequality. For example, an online platform where organisations can analyze and publish their gender pay gap, or educational spaces without rigid gender norms.

**Gendering innovation** means mainstreaming the consideration of gender into the broader practice of social innovation. Although approaches to gender mainstreaming vary, broadly it means organisations applying a gender lens to their work e.g. assessing how their work impacts on gender inequality, how they could make a difference and setting and actioning gender equality goals through their work. Gender mainstreaming has been defined by the UN as 'The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels'.<sup>194</sup> As such, gender equality is the overarching and long-term goal, while gender mainstreaming is a set of specific, strategic approaches as well as technical and institutional processes adopted to achieve that goal.

An example of this in the social innovation sector is the growing use of gender lens investing. Gender lens investing is an approach being developed and applied by a growing range of economic actors interested in both economic and social return. It involves the use of gender as a category of analysis in carrying out due diligence and could mean investing in any or all of the following: enterprises led by women, enterprises that practice gender equality through their working and supply chain, or enterprises that directly address gender inequality in their products or services.

## GENDER AND SOCIAL INNOVATION IN PRACTICE

Whilst in principle the links between gender and social innovation are clear and compelling this does not mean they have been reflected in practice. As part of our scoping we undertook desk-based research, as well as consulting with actors engaged with social innovation to examine the extent to which the gender equality and social innovation movements have cross-fertilized in reality.

We found that those undertaking gender equality work have mostly not significantly engaged with the theory, methods or modes of funding associated with the contemporary social innovation sector. From the opposite perspective, the majority of social innovation practitioners, intermediaries or funders have not systematically engaged with the ideas and expertise of the gender equality sector. So they appear to mostly be operating on parallel lines, with little bridging between the two. Having said this, we did identify exiting green shoots where gender equality and social innovation are coming together in the UK and internationally. Below we give illustrative examples, spanning many of the main forms and types of social innovation:

### Women Like Us & Timewise

Women Like Us was founded in 2005 to address the problem faced by many women with children, seeking to return to skilled jobs that they could balance with caring responsibilities. Recognising the value to employers and employees alike of opportunities for skilled, flexible and part-time working, Women Like Us supports women with career advice and coaching, workshops and a platform for women to share their experiences. In 2012 Timewise Jobs and Recruitment were launched – providing online-job search and recruitment for high-quality part time and flexible opportunities for both women and men.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: Women Like Us and Timewise tackle both the roots and effects of inequality in relation to the labour market, by challenging the assumption that part-time or flexible working should be low quality, and that those with caring responsibilities (female and male!) don't have valuable things to offer in a workplace environment.

### Oguntê

Founded in 2001 Oguntê focuses on capacity building and development of female social entrepreneurs and innovators. Through coaching, events and its Make A Wave Incubator, Oguntê strengthens women's ability

to develop and grow their ideas for social good, and to connect with others doing the same.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: Oguntê tackles gender inequality by supporting women's representation within the fields of social innovation and entrepreneurship. This contributes to both the numbers of women within these fields, but also increases the diversity of innovative ideas that are being developed.

### A Band of Brothers

A Band of Brother addresses the problem of disaffected and immature young men, aiming to support individuals to develop a mature rather than damaging sense of their masculinity. Using intergenerational peer group work, A Band of Brothers runs programmes where volunteers mentor and support younger men to explore and address their difficulties and strengths.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: A Band of Brothers tackles gender inequality by working to support men to develop a constructive rather than damaging masculine gender identity. This in turn impacts upon their behavior, relationships, and wider gender relations.

### Akkar Innovations

Akkar Innovations is an Indian social enterprise training and employing women in the production and distribution of high-quality, affordable and biodegradable sanitary pads. This innovation tackles gender equality in relation to multiple points: education and employment, income, health, and attitudes.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: Akkar Innovations tackles gender inequality by supporting women to develop their skills, careers, and incomes. It also challenges norms and stereotypes about what women and men can do. Additionally it supports women's health and wellbeing through the provision of essential sanitary products.

### Lammily

The Lammily doll is a doll with realistic proportions that mirror those of young women's average body shapes. It has been hugely popular and works to challenge the normalisation of extreme thinness for women and girls while also being a fun toy.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: it challenges the prevalent unrealistic stereotypes of what women's bodies look like.

## **Public Transport in Malmo**

In the Swedish city of Malmo, the development of new public transport involved research into the gender dimensions of this. This revealed the positive benefits to be gained from an environmental and social perspective, if men were encouraged to use transport in more similar ways to women – an insight which impacted upon the future development of public transport in the city, with benefits for all.

How the innovation tackles gender inequality: it brings women to the design table, ensuring their perspectives are heard.

## **GA Tally App**

The GA Tally App allows members of the public to highlight and comment on unrepresentative panels at any event. It enables people to quickly and easily graphically represent and share the lack of women participating – challenging the acceptability of all-male panels.

How it tackles gender inequality: by whistleblowing on unrepresentative panels that have no women.

## **GENDER INNOVATION IN THE UK**

Although the examples above show that gender innovation is happening and having an impact, there remains much scope to expand their range and focus when we consider the extent of the challenge set out in the previous section.

Our scoping exercise found relatively low levels of gender innovation i.e. ventures or gender equality organisations that self-identified their work as gender innovation or were recognized as such in the social innovation sector. We did find a number of national and local initiatives that focus on increasing the numbers and impact of individual female entrepreneurs or female led social enterprise. However whilst this is valuable, it does not mean the enterprises they are leading aim to advance gender equality. However it is important to note that our scoping was limited by a lack of available data on levels of innovation related to gender equality. This was a particular problem, as we discuss below, when it came to the data available from social innovation funders, investors and intermediaries.

### **Financial and Other Support for Gender Innovation**

A critical component of a flourishing gender innovation eco-system is the availability of appropriate financial and non-financial support. Without investor demand and appropriate support that reflects the specific needs of gender innovators, supply will be suppressed and levels of gender innovation will remain low.

Our scoping research has:

- examined levels of available innovation finance and other support explicitly concerned with gender equality
- undertaken an initial survey of a sample of social finance providers
- undertaken initial consultation with a sample of social ventures and gender equality organisations working on gender innovation

It has indicated that both funding and support is in short supply, inhibiting the development and sustainable growth of gender innovation. We found there were no dedicated or targeted innovation funds aimed specifically at gender innovation. There are a small number of traditional grant funding organisations that do have dedicated gender equality programmes or explicit gender equality priorities.

However these are not necessarily linked to the same organisations' social investment departments – meaning the links between gender and social innovation are not always being made. The lack of targeted gender funds or support would be less concerning if gender equality was consciously mainstreamed throughout social investment and social intermediary organisations. However this does not appear to be the case.

We surveyed 10 of the main social investment organisations in the UK, some of whom are also social innovation support or intermediary bodies. Using telephone interviews we looked at whether the organisations 1) considered gender equality as part of their funding criteria, and 2) considered or recorded gender in relation to the beneficiaries and outcomes of the projects funded.

Although there was enthusiasm and interest from many of the participants, overall we found a low level of understanding of why gender is relevant to social innovation and funding. We found that, apart from a couple of exceptions, social finance organisations do not consider sex or gender equality in relation to their allocation of funding:

- Most organisations do not look at whether the interventions have a direct or indirect impact on women. Some organisations do believe that some of their interventions – and in particular certain intervention areas - will have an indirect impact on gender inequality.
- Some organisations do not consider the sex of beneficiaries in a systematic manner. Others note that they do so only if the project directly addresses gender inequality.

The existence of sex-disaggregated data varies considerably across the organisations consulted, meaning the ability to assess this dimension of gender equality is patchy:

- Organisations were evenly split according to whether they collected data on the sex of the lead entrepreneur.
- Only some organisations track the sex of beneficiaries.
- More than half the organisations track the area of the intervention (for example education, or employment), but none track whether it has a direct or indirect impact on gender inequality. This is surprising particularly given that inequality is central to the agenda of many of the organisations we spoke to.

These initial findings suggest:

- the need for capacity building to ensure a gender lens is mainstreamed within social finance and support
- the need to develop forms and sources of social finance with an understanding of gender equality and gender equality actors
- the need for further research to understand in more detail the relationship between social innovation and finance organisations, gender equality, and the perspective of gender equality organisations

In addition to this, from the perspective of those already engaged with gender equality work, recent research has highlighted the limited funds available in the UK in relation to gender equality work.<sup>195, 196</sup> Internationally the limitations on the way in which new corporate actors have been engaging with the gender equality agenda as also been highlighted.<sup>197</sup> For example, research by the Association of Women in development found:

1. Women and girls are in the public eye, recognized as key agents in development, with unprecedented visibility.
2. Vast resources are becoming available under the broad umbrella of 'women and girls'. AWID mapped 170 related initiatives that collectively committed USD14.6 Billion.
3. Mechanisms and sources of development financing and philanthropy are becoming increasingly diversified, but economic growth and return on investment are principle drivers for many of the 'new actors' supporting women and girls, with human rights taking a backseat.
4. Women's organizations are key change agents: when supported strategically and over the long-term, they achieve significant impact in gender power relations and the lives of women and girls.

Despite this, the current spotlight on women and girls has had relatively little impact on improving the funding situation for a large majority of women's organizations around the world. In 2010, the median annual income of over 740 women's organizations around the world was just USD 20,000.

Along with the survey of social finance organisations, we also sought the views of a small number of gender equality organisations. Insights included:

- In general it was felt that there was a synergy between the processes and aims of their work and social innovation.
- It was felt that the different language and concepts used by the social innovation and gender equality sectors could act as a barrier to greater joint efforts in a number of ways, including accessing social finance or investment.
- More information and support on understanding and accessing social innovation finance was desired.
- There were some concerns that certain tools or methods considered part of the social innovation sector would not be appropriate for tackling certain gender equality issues. For example, could a refuge for victims of domestic abuse ever operate as a social enterprise?
- The value of having time and capacity to develop innovative ways of working and outputs was recognised, including challenging traditional approaches.

When we look across the whole of the social innovation sector in the UK, including those which have engaged with the gender equality agenda in some way, we can see there are clear areas for development:

- Social innovations engaging with gender tend to have a focus on individual women, and not necessarily on the structural roots of gender inequality. While this is very valuable, it is not the whole story if we want to create a gender equal future.
- Social innovation intermediaries tend not to consider gender equality in relation to their work and support propositions in relation to social innovators – for example in relation to incubator or accelerators, or other training or in kind support.
- Funding for social innovation is not sensitive to, nor targeted at gender innovation.

Whilst this remains the case, the impact of both the gender equality and social innovation sectors will remain limited. However, if these forces can combine and inform each other we believe the gender equality sector could benefit by:

1. **Increasing the number of practitioners** - by mobilising and engaging a new set of actors to work on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment we will increase the total number of people who are committed and working to that end. Collective action is larger than the sum of its parts and can result in wider, more visible, more effective and driven action that can make a difference.
2. **Trialling new ways of tackling old problems** – it is possible that we may find new ways of addressing old, structural problems by employing different techniques and strategies to the ones that have been used so far. Some of the solutions may be more effective at addressing these issues.
3. **Creating new services** – social innovation may lead to the creation of new services that never existed before. This could be through the design of an entirely new service, or by bringing together existing services and actors in a way that has never happened before.
4. **Providing a new lens** – like gender, social innovation provides a lens through which to analyse existing problems. By adding new methodologies and strategies to the analysis of structural gender inequality it may be possible to uncover more ways in which to approach the structural grounds that sustain the inequality.
5. **Channelling and increasing available resources** – social innovation funders are not traditional gender equality funders. By bringing together the two movements, gender equality actors will be able to access new sources of funding that historically have not focused on the gender equality sector



Above: The Gender Innovation eco-system

The social innovation sector could also benefit from engaging with gender equality by:

1. **Increasing impact** – addressing gender inequality and targeting the needs of women and girls will enable social innovations to better tackle social needs in tailored ways, resulting in improved impact and efficiency of the intervention.
2. **Opening a new area of focus** - focusing on gender equality will open a whole new area of work which has to date been untapped by social innovation – unchartered waters have the potential to have many possibilities for action and experimentation.
3. **Increasing its methodological repertoire** - by drawing on the learning and insights generated by the gender equality movement, and the perspectives and insights of both women and men in developing social innovations.

## **What is needed to connect social innovation and gender equality?**

Realising the potential of bringing together gender equality and social innovation actors in the long term will require a much more developed gender innovation eco-system that will include thought leaders, shared platforms, funders, pioneers and delivery actors to support and grow this.

This would involve bringing together actors from the state, business and civil society, coupled with the tools and insights from the gender equality and social innovation movements. As a step towards realizing this we have developed recommendations spanning across the areas and actors involved, outlined in the following section.

# 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential of social innovation to increase the effectiveness and impact of gender equality goals is significant but largely untapped. Our scoping suggests gender equality and social innovation actors have yet to have opportunity and space to work in tandem to address gender inequality. Despite there being some promising areas of existing social innovation work relating to gender equality, we have found a lack of structured systematic ways in which gender equality and social innovation have been enacted together. This is the case in terms of social ventures, intermediaries, funding and policies.

To combine the power of social innovation and gender equality actors to accelerate and deepen change will require greater levels of innovation in the gender equality movement and the mainstreaming of gender across the wider social innovation movement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We have divided our recommendations into two sections. The first are cross-cutting and general, the second relate specifically to some of the key actors discussed in this report. They are not intended as a prescription. Instead they are intended to stimulate discussion and action from those who have means and foresight to fully unlock the potential of gender innovation.

### Cross-cutting recommendations

- Acknowledge and raise wider awareness of the structural and interconnected nature of gender inequality, its role in wider inequality and the benefits of change.
- Address the need for greater gender innovations to not only mitigate the consequences of gender inequality (such as improved services for those facing discrimination) but also seek systemic or structural change.
- Reflect in policy and practice the relationship between the different dimensions of gender inequality – resources, attitudes and power.
- Create shared spaces for critical dialogue between social innovators and gender equality actors on problems and solutions.
- Create shared platforms and other mechanism, at local and national level, that support practical collaboration between different actors and sectors.
- Undertake further research to identify areas of gender inequality where the opportunity and/or the imperative, to better harness social innovation are greatest. We need to better understand which existing gender innovations can and should be scaled. Or what greater social innovation could bring in areas where progress is stalled (such as levels of gender based violence) or where inequality is widening (such as the disproportionate impact on women of austerity at local and national level).

### Sectoral recommendations

#### Policy makers

At local, national and EU levels:

- Incorporate gender equality opportunities and challenges within social innovation and investment policy goals.
- Reflect and draw on social innovation developments and learning in formulating and delivering gender equality and wider equalities policy.

#### Social investors and funders

- Develop understanding and measurement of gender inequality in the context of funding and investment processes for all organisations and ventures.
- Increase targeted funding and investment available to ventures directly addressing gender inequality.
- Develop understanding of and capacity in gender lens investing.

#### Innovation support bodies

- Include support on gender analysis and innovation within existing offers to ventures (gendering innovation).
- Proactively stimulate and support innovations whose aim is to directly address gender inequality (gender innovation).

### Gender equality organisations

- Make greater use of the idea, methods and tools of social innovation in enhancing existing and developing new gender equality interventions.
- Engage with innovation support bodies and funders in relation to current and proposed work to address gender inequality.

### Social ventures

- Take steps, including actively collaborating with specialist gender equality organisations, to reflect and tackle gender inequality in relation to developing socially innovative solutions, projects, and products.

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