



Enabling women's potential

the social, economic
and ethical imperative

Key Information

November 2015

**A White Paper from the National
Council of Women of New Zealand**

Te Kaunihera Wahine O Aotearoa

This document summarises the National Council of Women of New Zealand's white paper, *Enabling Women's Potential – the social, economic and ethical imperative*, produced in November 2015 to generate greater focus and action on gender equality. The white paper also contains references for the research and statistics cited in this summary, and it has information on the expanded ecological model used as an analytical framework to produce our recommendations for action. To read the full white paper, visit www.ncwnz.org.nz.

Introduction

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) can see a better way of life for all New Zealanders – one in which we are happier, healthier and economically stronger. We're a not for profit group that's working to improve New Zealanders' lives through a focus on gender equality.

Research shows we'll be better off socially and economically if we're gender equal. Many organisations and individuals already know this, and as a result there is substantial work underway to eliminate violence against women, the gender pay gap, and to improve women's representation in leadership and their financial independence.

But the statistics show we're not making enough headway. Our current approach has gaps and flaws.

We can't leave things as they are as the status quo is not good enough. Equality is a basic human right. It is unacceptable that for many women, from the day they are born, their life choices are limited. The individual toll of inequality, passed through generations, has driven the organisations and people that make up the volunteer-led NCWNZ since 1896.

The reasons for gender inequality are steeped in our history and entrenched in our culture. We need a sea change to kick us forward. We need to understand the impact of negative gender stereotyping, and change our attitudes and behaviour. We need to build the gender equality movement.

Our current state

Key statistics that highlight the current state of inequality include:

- Women achieve 61 per cent of the tertiary qualifications. But these qualifications are generally for lower paid industries than tertiary qualified men. Estimates of our gender pay gap range from women being paid 11.8 per cent to 14 per cent less.
- Women's unemployment rates are higher than men's, while more women aged 15-24 years of age are not in employment, education or training.
- Three quarters of people earning over \$75k are men. Meanwhile, women are 1.5 times more likely than men to live in a household with less than \$30k income.
- Only 14 per cent of directors on NZX 100 top companies are women. Nearly 42 per cent of public sector directors are female.
- One in four women experience intimate partner violence or sexual violence in their lifetime.
- One third of women report unmet need for primary health care, 22 per cent of men do.
- Less than 40 per cent of those nominated for New Year and Queen's Birthday Honours are for women, and as a result the majority of awards go to men.

What a gender equal New Zealand looks like

In a gender equal New Zealand all people have the freedom and opportunity to determine their own future. In a gender equal New Zealand:

- We can pursue whatever hobbies, subjects, careers and lifestyles we choose, unhampered by gender-based societal expectations.
- We can rise up the career ladder without gender bias reducing our chances of success.
- We see diverse role models in the community, media and workplaces.
- We receive equal pay for equal work.
- Unpaid work, such as household duties, caring and volunteering is shared and valued.
- It is as acceptable for men to take parental leave, full-time parent and work part time or flexibly.
- New Zealand leads the world with its low rate of violence against women.
- We've eliminated all forms of discrimination against women and girls.
- Our economy thrives due to workplace diversity and the utilisation of all willing labour.
- Our New Year and Queen's Birthday Honours Lists contain gender balance.
- We're proud that international measurement shows we're gender equality champions.

The case for gender equality

The research showing the economic benefits of gender equality includes the Goldman Sachs report stating New Zealand could boost its Gross Domestic Product by 10 per cent if it maximised the working potential of all its women; and the World Bank research showing a positive correlation between economies with greater equality and economic performance.

Dow Jones has found successful venture-backed start-ups have more than double the median proportion of female executives than failed ones. Successful business leader Diane Foreman said: "International research shows that companies that have a gender-diverse board make more money, so at the end of the day if your job as the CEO is to return more money to your shareholders then your job should be to have a gender-diverse board."

Inequality has a significant price tag. A 2014 report estimated the cost of New Zealand's family violence at \$4.1 billion and \$7 billion a year (the majority of family violence victims are women). Economist Suzanne Snively said employers lose at least \$368m annually due to ineffective workplace protections for victims of violence. The countries with the best gender equality have lower rates of violence against women.

Socially, it's the women and girls who are limited and hurt by gender inequality. Helping women facing inequality will reap intergenerational benefits for their children, families and communities.

The nature of the issue

In policy speak gender equality can be termed a wicked problem. Features of wicked problems relevant to gender include:

- It is difficult to define, and stakeholders have different versions of the problem.
- It's experienced in many different ways by individuals and groups of women.
- It is shaped by multiple interdependent factors that continually change and are deeply rooted in our economic and social structures.
- It requires change at societal, institutional, community, family and individual levels.
- There is little agreement or conclusive evidence on the most effective solutions.
- The effects of changes are unpredictable and uncertain, and may take years to show up.

Understanding and responding

A useful model for understanding and responding to wicked problems is the ecological model, as it shows the breadth of associated issues, depth of their reach through society, and the interplay between them.

The Impact Collective (www.theimpactcollective.co.nz) has adapted the ecological model to make it relevant for gender equality, including outlining five prerequisites for achieving a gender equal New Zealand. You can view the expanded model on www.ncwnz.org.nz. The prerequisites are: shared understanding; gender positive culture; structural equality; leadership and governance; and data and monitoring.

Viewing gender inequality through the lens of the ecological model provides insight into why our gender equality progress is patchy despite the current efforts of many organisations and individuals.

The United Nations has said action needs to happen at the societal, institutional, community, family and individual level in order to help a wicked problem. However, most of the initiatives and programmes underway generally focus on one group of women or one area of inequality. While they may succeed in getting results in their target area, our very focussed and programme specific approach is insufficient to achieve equality.

The pathway to equality

We summarise the five prerequisites for gender equality:

Shared understanding

A basic requirement to achieving equality is a shared understanding of how gender impacts our lives and where it causes inequalities.

A gender positive culture

Gender culture refers to the dominating beliefs and processes that help shape people with ascribed gender roles, expectations and experiences. Gender culture shifts over time, which explains why there are different expectations of people today compared to those of 30 or 100 years ago. The behaviours and beliefs that make up our gender culture are learned.

Structural equality

Our lack of understanding and our gender culture causes structural inequality. This is where there is a bias against women in terms of equal relations in roles, functions, decisions, rights, and opportunities.

Data and monitoring

An essential part of responding effectively to wicked problems is to learn as we go. We need sources of information to see the impact of our responses. Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all levels of the ecological model will ensure efforts remain aligned, that all parties hold each other to account, and that progress is made at all levels of the model.

Leadership and governance

Driving change to wicked problems requires strong leadership and governance to direct, support and measure. Given the breadth and depth of inequality, this leadership and governance requires resourcing and stamina.

Leadership and governance creates a wider mandate for change, and supports the other prerequisites. Leadership and governance is wider than government – it refers to business, the media, community and individual leadership.



Ecological Model for Gender Equality

© The Impact Collective

What we need to do

Our white paper outlines 12 key actions that will help us achieve the: shared understanding; positive gender culture; structural equality; leadership and governance; and data and monitoring we need for a gender equal New Zealand.

A summary of NCWNZ actions are:

We're establishing a taskforce to develop a plan to improve our gender culture. The aim of this is to reduce limiting gender stereotypes that stand in the way of people having the freedom and opportunity to determine their future.

We'll run nationwide hui in 2016 to support communities to take local action to improve gender equality. These will culminate in a national summit in September 2016.

We'll continue to produce reports for international bodies like the United Nations to assess our country's performance against targets we've committed to – for example the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We'll produce an annual monitor as an independent way to assess whether we're tracking towards or away from equality. The first will be in September 2016.

We'll continue to influence and comment on gender equality issues, via the media, through submissions, and in various forum.

We're also calling for more:

New Zealanders to speak up against sexism and limiting gender stereotypes. Let's set some standards and help each other to stick to them so we treat each other as equals.

Leaders to champion gender equality publicly, within their sectors and industries, within their communities and families. The gender equality movement is growing and we'll be encouraging more people to join it and providing more ways they can get involved.

Employers, professional associations, and employee representative groups to take action to make sure their sector/workplace helps gender equality. Mitigating unconscious bias, ensuring pay and employment equity, and supporting victims of violence are ways to do this.

We're asking the Government to:

Produce a national plan of action for gender equality. The UN has called for this as do many groups working for gender equality within New Zealand. We need Government leadership and cross-party support for this plan to give it the medium-term focus and resourcing it needs.

Strengthen gender analysis in policy making and programme design. This is another UN request. It is important that Government work factors in genders' differing needs.

Establish gender equality indicators and outcome measures, and a platform for regular reporting of data. These need to endure over time to inform policy and ensure wise investment.

Summary Diagram - the pathway to equality

New Zealand Now

Women's unpaid contribution undervalued

Everyday sexism widespread

Highest rate of domestic violence in developed world

Women feel unsafe at night

Discrimination against women in the workplace, including gender pay gap & barriers to career progressions

Women financially unequal (less lifetime earnings and retirement savings)

Women have high unmet health needs

Economic growth limited by inequality, including lack of skill use, diversity and impact of domestic violence on productivity

Slipping global ranking for gender equality

New Zealand Needs

Shared understanding

A gender positive culture

Structural equality

Leadership and governance

Data collection and monitoring



Specific initiatives & programmes in improving women's:

Safety & health

Education & work

Economic independence

Influence in decision making



In a Gender Equal New Zealand

Family and community roles are valued

No sexism

Lowest rate of domestic violence in the world

People feel safe at night

Equal pay and opportunity to progress career

Equal economic independence

All genders' health needs are met

Greater economic growth through harnessing and leveraging diversity

World leaders in gender equality

Benefits for All

Resilient communities where people are valued for their uniqueness

Strong families across generations

People freed from stereotyped expectations to achieve their potential

Higher standard of living means more support for our most vulnerable

New Zealanders are proud of our gender equality

Get involved

You can:

Stay informed and get involved in projects as we roll them out. We're on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. You can sign up to our weekly e-newsletter containing gender equality news, research and events at www.ncwnz.org.nz/news.

Contact office@ncwnz.org.nz to enquire about membership options, or visit www.ncwnz.org.nz to see if there's a branch in your area.

Talk to us about partnering on a project or how we can support your work for gender equality. Contact via office@ncwnz.org.nz.

Donate a little or a lot to help us with our work. We can talk about the projects your funding would contribute to.

More about the National Council of Women of New Zealand

We are a volunteer-led organisation that has about 290 member organisations at a national or local level, and 260 individual members. We have 20 branches throughout New Zealand, and we're also establishing virtual groups. Our activity is diverse both nationally and at branch level. We've been around since 1896, and our founding President was suffragist Kate Sheppard.



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