

EVERY LITTLE COUNTS...

"From a whisper to a roar"

No matter how big or small your efforts to make a difference really can count:

- Take 5-10 mins to join our campaign by emailing Rosaria@engender.org.uk
- Get together with other women to talk about the issues - realise that not only should something be done within your local community to address problems but that something CAN be done – by your local authority.
- Raised awareness of equalities legislation and anti-poverty commitments within your local authority will lead you to a greater understanding of their accountability in addressing the issues.
- Think about any other local groups you can join up with to form alliances or campaign with on your chosen issue.
- Add your voice to those of other women's groups across Scotland and let's make our public service providers sit up and pay attention to us and to their responsibilities.

YOU CAN COUNT ON US TO:

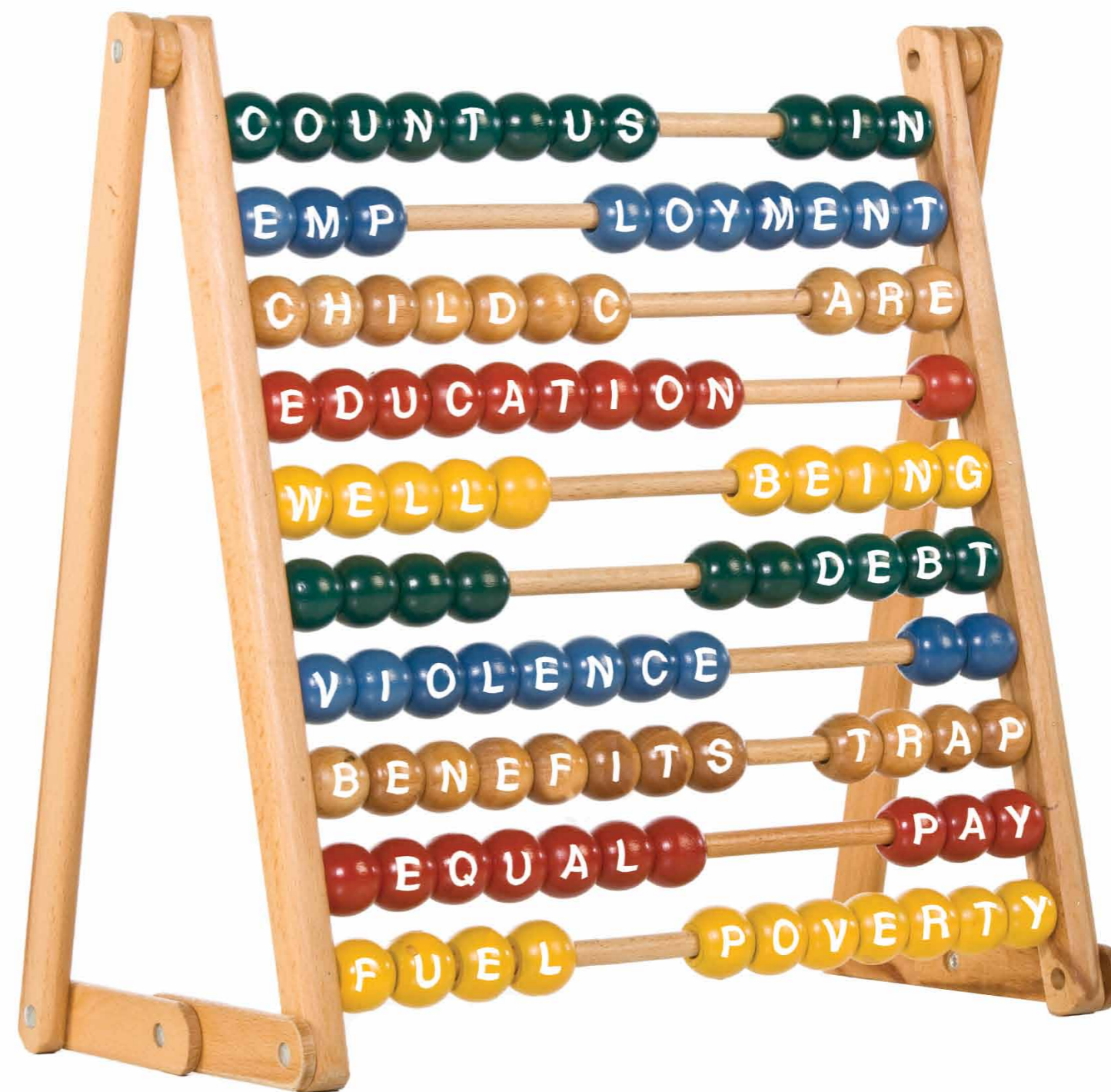
- Provide ideas and encouragement to your group from our Project team
- Support your group to develop ideas on how to get your message across about women's poverty.
- Help with planning and holding events to take place on What Counts? Day, 01 March 2010
- Work with your group to produce campaign materials
- Assist with organising press releases, interviews and meetings targeting public bodies
- Continue to provide follow-up support to your group on any requests for public body responses.

(There will be some funding available to assist with campaign materials and the staging of events for What Counts? Day)



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Count Us In!



**Women promoting recognition
of gendered poverty**

What's the Story?

In November 2008 the Scottish Government (SG) published A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland. This Framework – agreed with COSLA – provides a focus for public, private and voluntary sectors to work together to deliver greater Solidarity for all and within it the SG state quite clearly that tackling poverty and income inequality is at the heart of their activity. Poverty is not simply about numbers because with low income comes a denial of choice and

opportunity that most people take for granted. While we have poverty in Scotland we cannot guarantee human dignity for everyone who lives here so we must redress the balance and ensure we are committed to working towards a more socially just society. National and local government must act to deliver initiatives which aim for a fairer distribution of wealth and advantages.

WHAT COUNTS?

“It really isn't rocket science!”

Low income lies at the heart of the problem, but along with that low income comes a denial of choice and opportunity that most people take for granted. Living on a low income in Scotland means seldom having your voice heard and being seen as having less value than others. We will only succeed in ending child poverty when we address mothers' inequality by ensuring they have access to equal pay, adequate benefits and freedom from discrimination.

When women earn extra income, they tend to spend it on their family members and their children's education. They save money for the future. The impact, therefore, extends to families and communities – and to the future generation. Providing women with access to and control over productive assets and resources makes a big difference in poverty reduction.

It is now forty years since the Equal Pay Act came into force, but there is still a massive inequality between men's and women's pay. The Government cannot hope to meet its commitment of ending child poverty unless serious inroads are made into closing both the full-time and part-time gender pay gaps.

HOLDING PUBLIC BODIES TO ACCOUNT

“One size does not fit all!”

Gender equality is just and fair. It is a fundamental, universal value. We cannot pretend to advocate for poverty reduction and sustainable development if we fail to reflect the voice of women, who constitute 52% of the population and the majority of the poor.

The 2007 Gender Equality Duty (GED) requires local authorities to conduct gender impact assessments of all new policies and laws, including on employment and service delivery.

The GED should thus give more attention to why poverty affects more women than men.

Public spending exercises should ensure that recipients of funding are required to demonstrate how the services they offer, whether in provision of research or a direct service provision will consider impact on women and men.

GENDERED POVERTY INDICATORS

‘The kind of life we want people to be able to have in order to flourish’

Poverty should not be thought of as something that is measurable simply in terms of income or based on a monetary poverty line. It is important to focus on the many ways women find themselves deprived of resources essential for their well-being. Poverty is about deprivation, which means a lack of well-being.

The women who participated in Engender's 'Who Counts?' workshops identified issues which form part of the concept of poverty as well-being deprivation. These elements can be used as key gender poverty indicators to monitor policy action.

WHO COUNTS?

“A chance to make our voices heard”

Promoting to our local authorities an understanding and recognition of the gendered nature of poverty.

Campaigning and lobbying our local authorities to develop their policies and practices in ways that make women and children less vulnerable to poverty, provide safety nets and work to protect them from persistent or recurrent poverty.

Shining a light for local authorities on the specific risks and hazards that women face and how their policies, practices and services can either help or hinder women negotiate these.

WHAT COUNTS TO WOMEN IN SCOTLAND?

Women are more likely to be affected by poverty than men due to their unequal place in society.

Women are under-represented in public life, limiting access to the same resources and opportunities as men. For example women are paid less than men so are subject to a lower standard of living.

Many issues which have been raised by the women who have participated in our 'Who Counts?' workshops highlight the consequences of women's inequality in Scotland. These issues are harmful to women's well-being and have a knock-on effect on equality as a whole. For example, children growing up in poverty decreases the opportunities available to them and discrimination based on sex allows men to be stereotyped creating barriers to basic rights such as paternity leave or access to childcare roles traditionally associated with 'women's work'.

Goals such as halving child poverty by 2010, tackling the issue of inequality in Scotland and raising the general standard of living, have not been achieved and we believe this is largely due to a failure in addressing the gendered nature of poverty.