



For Immediate release

Putting a face to poverty – and it's female

Women across Edinburgh speak out against poverty

Equality organisation Engender is holding a public event in Edinburgh to mark *What Counts? Day* on March 1st. The day is part of the *Who Counts?* project which aims to raise awareness of the causes of women's poverty, with events taking place across Scotland.

Events in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Dundee, Perth and Lochgilphead will bring together the women's groups who have contributed to the project to share information with the public and will offer the opportunity for women to leave messages about their own experiences of poverty. The Edinburgh event will be held in Café Camino, St Mary's parish Centre, Little King St, from 10am – 4pm and feature stalls, displays and films from groups involved in the project. At 1pm hundreds of balloons will be released from each venue.

Who Counts? is a women-led campaign to tackle the root causes of women's poverty in Scotland. Our priority is to highlight where and why women are being forced into poverty due to social or cultural issues, such as low-pay, poor health and housing or lack of access to childcare and education. We are calling on governments and local councils to publish information on the gender-breakdown of poverty and drive change to improve the lives of women across the country.

A poll conducted on behalf of Engender revealed that nearly two thirds of women in Scotland believe that their local authority fails to consider gender when attempting to tackle poverty in their communities. This comes despite the fact that the Gender Equality Duty obligates Local Authorities to take into account the impact their policy decisions will have on women.

Commenting, Niki Kandirikirira, Engender's Executive Director said:

"We know how many children, pensioners and households are in poverty but it's the statistics themselves that reveal why the numbers are proving so hard to bring down - at no point do we recognise the gendered nature of poverty."

"With our Local Authorities set to make massive budget cuts to services the issues raised by women around low pay, the gender pay gap, caring roles and benefits need to be heard so that they can be part of the budget debates."

Local Project Worker, Rosaria Votta said:

"Meeting the women during this project has brought home the day to day reality of the lives of women in poverty. It is essential that those who make the policies listen to who they are making the policies for."

~ Ends~

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Notes to Editors:

The Who Counts? project and our What Counts? day events give women the chance to tell their stories and to make policy makers aware of the gendered nature of poverty. We are calling on Local Authorities to introduce community-based gender indicators into their Single Outcome Agreements so that we have the tools to measure how poverty affects women. Only then can we produce policies which tackle the causes.

The aim of the Who Counts? project is to engage and support women in promoting the recognition of gender poverty. The project began in November 2009 and is funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

During the initial stage of the project interactive workshops were held with a diverse range of women's groups from local authority areas including Aberdeen City, Edinburgh, Glasgow and the Scottish Borders.

Engender is a membership organisation that works in Scotland and Europe on an anti-sexist agenda to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. It provides information, analysis, training, advice and networking to those people, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve equality and justice.