

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-fourth session 1-12 March 2010

Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century': implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realisation of the Millennium Development Goals

Report submitted by ENGENDER, a non-governmental organisation in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

ENGENDER is a women's organisation based in Scotland, working on a feminist, anti-sexist agenda. Our aim is to make visible the impact of sexism on women, men, children, society and on our social, cultural, economic, and political development. We do this by making the causes and impact of women's inequality visible, promoting gender equality in policy and practice and increasing women's power and influence. Our policy priorities are Women's poverty, Violence against women and Women's participation and representation in decision-making

1a Haddington Place – Edinburgh EH7 4AE – Scotland – UK
info@engender.org.uk www.engender.org.uk +44 131 558 9596



Beijing + 15 review: Report to CSW54

Preamble

ENGENDER has long worked with the UN and EU mechanisms for the advancement of women to express our views in an international arena and to support feedback from UN and EU events to women and their organisations in Scotland. In 1995, together with other organisations, groups and other experts in Scotland, we drew up a Scottish report to the UN 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, in which we identified three priority areas: Poverty, Participation and Violence against Women. These have remained our priority themes throughout the fifteen years since the Beijing conference. We have contributed regularly to the UK non governmental organisations' (NGOs) Shadow reports to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee hearings and, in 2009, we made our first submission to the ECOSOC Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

For CSW54, we have consulted individual and organisational members in drawing up this report, identifying key areas in which we would like to see further progress in Scotland. We also hosted a meeting in the Scottish Parliament to disseminate information about the CSW54 review of progress since Beijing and to gather input for this report.

Executive Summary

[NB to be written when all comments are in. A short intro para about devolution will be included. The numbered points below are taken from Engender's report to ECOSOC 2009 and are included here as an indication of the type of summary we intend to include.]

For ten of the fifteen years since the Beijing Conference and its Platform for Action (PfA), women in Scotland have lived with a new system of devolved government in Scotland. The Scottish Government now has responsibility for education, economic and skills development, enterprise and economic growth. The founding principles of the Scottish Parliament included Participation, Equality, Transparency and Accountability. However, during the first ten years of the parliament, equality has been slow to emerge as a principle to be taken seriously.

In terms of meeting UN objectives across the PfA, and other imperatives including ICESCR, CEDAW, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Scotland is failing to prioritise the economic status and independence of women. The current global recession is biting in Scotland, and the resultant public sector spending squeeze will impact heavily on low-paid women workers and their children across public services.

1. The Scottish Government is a devolved primary legislature within the UK. Currently, the profile of equality issues and analysis in the Scottish budget documents is minimal. It is essential for the Government to empower the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to use its powers to work for effective realisation of rights to equality and human rights within its role as the national body charged with that remit.
2. The Gender Equality Duty (GED) is still new, but already is to be repealed and drawn into a Single Equality Duty, under the UK Government proposals for the Single Equality Bill. This Single Equality Duty must be drawn to drive more substantive equality.
3. The Modern Apprenticeship scheme is one example of the manifestation of occupational segregation within the Scottish labour market. The question of who is accountable for taking this forward is key given the clear evidence base for action.
4. The 2008 index of women in positions of authority and influence in Scotland shows an emerging trend of reversal or stalled progress, with only a few significant increases. It is vital that the Government should demonstrate real commitment to closing the power gap, with true representation for ALL groups of women.
5. According to the UK Department for Work and Pension's own statistics, at least one in five women in the United Kingdom lives in poverty. Career breaks, low pay and/or caring responsibilities mean that over 4.3 million women pensioners across the UK have failed to build up sufficient National Insurance (NI) contributions to qualify for the full basic state pension. The Government must consider introducing changes retrospectively to reforms planned for 2010. These will not help current women pensioners or reduce the sharp differences in entitlement between people reaching pension age before that date.
6. Current government strategy – with its focus on work as the key route out of poverty – is only partially effective. The Government needs to include a focus within initiatives such as Workforce Plus and the Employability Learning Network to recognise and address that women are amongst the most disadvantaged in the labour market in terms of low pay, insecurity, discrimination and family unfriendly practice.
7. It is vitally important that government recognises the role of carers in society in terms of health care planning. They should demonstrate their commitment to supporting carers through considering options such as, introducing a campaign targeted at general practitioners, a nation-wide public information campaign and a respite and short breaks awareness campaign.

Engender has chosen to focus on a priority list of objectives from the Platform for Action, and our report is structured accordingly. These priorities are:

- **Women and Scotland's Economy**
 - **Women and the Labour Market**
 - **Women and Poverty**
 - **Violence against Women**
 - **Girls**
-

Women and Scotland's Economy

Ten of the fifteen years since the Beijing Conference and PfA have been under a new system of devolved government in Scotland, with responsibility for education, economic and skills development, enterprise and economic growth. In this time there have been multiple government strategies and funded programmes to build skills, address deficits, boost employment and regenerate local economies and communities. The European Structural Funds have made significant financial and policy contributions to economic development in Scotland, and stand out from domestic policy drivers because of their concern with and interest in gender equality, and in mainstreaming gender issues including discrimination and unequal access to jobs and skills, into their programmes. The extent to which that legacy endures in mainstream economic development agency programming, or in government policy remains to be assessed.

Women's economic disadvantage

Attempts at mainstreaming gender into economic development, skills and enterprise programmes have largely not been successful. Gender analysis of proposed programmes and policy outcomes are still not regarded as integral to the business of 'mainstream' economic development agencies, of which there is a number in Scotland at national, regional and local level. According to commentators, '...the systems of gender analysis introduced by a mainstreaming approach should have contributed to the use of macro-economic policy as an instrument for greater equality and empowering of women, yet this has failed to happen. Gendered assumptions concerning rigidities between "men's work" and "women's work" still dominate skills policy and employability programmes and such gender inequality has contributed directly to the gender pay gap in Scotland.'¹

The perennial indicators of women's economic disadvantage – pay gap, labour market participation rates and occupational areas, unpaid work and care – continue to reveal the unequal picture. There is progress in some areas, including participation and attainment

¹ Meikle, A. and MacKenzie, M. (2009) 'Economics for Equality – A Legacy for Policy Makers'. paper delivered at conference Scotland, 10 Years On', June 2009.

for girls and women in education. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Report, *Sex and Power*, 2008, ‘...girls’ attainment is higher than boys’ at S5 and S6 levels² and 57 per cent of all university students are women’.³ This is not reflected in labour market patterns or in the nature of employment in which women participate. ‘In Scotland 83% of working age men are economically active in 2008 compared to 77% of working age women’⁴ (EHRC, 2008). The impact of the recession on women and men is still to be measured, but it is reasonable to assume that the different experiences will be along gender stereotyped lines, with a negative impact on traditionally male jobs, with female jobs in the public sector being slightly less affected, until the massive spending cuts in public services, especially social care, take hold and directly impact on low-paid women.

The pay gap in Scotland persists, along with one of its major causes – ongoing occupational segregation. Currently the figures from Close the Gap⁵ show:

- The full-time gender pay gap in Scotland is 14%. This means that women working full-time earn 86p per hour, for every £1 per hour that a man working full-time earns. (*Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2008*)
- The part-time gender pay gap in Scotland is 33%. This means that women working part-time earn 67p per hour, for every £1 per hour that a man working full-time earns. (*Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2008*)

Employment law remains outside the competence of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government, but there are plenty of ‘soft’ policy instruments available to policy and decision-makers should they wish to use them to tackle the ongoing pay gap and enduring levels of occupational segregation in Scotland. During the ten years of devolution, two specific projects come to mind. Funded by successive administrations and established to address these themes, *Fair Play Scotland* and *Close the Gap* (CtG) were both initiatives of the now defunct Equal Opportunities Commission, and only CtG survives. These have been described as projects that were ‘allowed to tinker round the edges mainly as a result of equality groups lobbying through changes in legislation and institutional structures as a result of devolution’.⁶

Gender budgeting

One positive area of development in Scotland has been the enduring attempt to integrate gender budget analysis into the national budget-setting and resource allocation process. The Scottish Women’s Budget Group (SWBG) was formed in 1999 and continues to advance the argument for and evidence practice in gender budget analysis. Most recently this work has included campaigning for a focus on equal pay in Scotland, and specifically the budget and rights deficit that endures in unequal pay structures and systems across the

² Scottish Government (2008) SQA Attainment and School Leaver Qualifications in Scotland: 2006/07.

³ Scottish Executive (2006) High Level Summary of Equality Statistics: Key Trends for Scotland.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2008) Labour Market Statistics May 2008: Scotland.

⁵ Close the Gap: <http://www.closesthegap.org.uk/facts.asp?h=Statistics>

⁶ Meikle and MacKenzie, 2009

public sector in Scotland. There are currently in the region of 35,000 cases pending in the Employment Tribunals. Current and previous Scottish governments have failed to make provision in the national spending plans and allocations to public bodies which would allow them to remedy previous discrimination, and the public authorities themselves have been slow to turn their attention to this national scandal.

UN objectives

In terms of meeting UN objectives across the PfAs, and other imperatives including ICESCR, CEDAW, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Scotland is failing to prioritise the economic status and independence of women. The current global recession is biting in Scotland, and the resultant public sector spending squeeze is likely to impact heavily on low-paid women workers across public services.

Women and the Labour Market

The period from 2005 provided opportunities for significant action on labour-market-based gendered inequalities. None of these opportunities has been fully exploited to deliver the types of fundamental changes required to address the systemic inequalities that persist in employment, or to encourage women to start businesses.

The passing of employment legislation is reserved to the UK (Westminster) Parliament, but there are elements of regulation that affect employment, such as public sector equality duties, that fall within the scope of the Scottish Government. Many other levers of change are within the grasp of the Scottish Government and Scottish public authorities.

Women and Work Commission

In 2005, the UK Women and Work Commission concluded its consideration of the gender pay gap. The report of the Women and Work Commission, *Shaping a Fairer Future*,⁷ rehearsed the causes underpinning the gender pay gap, which are very similar across the UK: occupational segregation, inflexibility of working conditions, and discrimination within pay systems.

Concerns were raised on the establishment of the Commission that it contained no Scotland commissioner. These concerns were realised with the publication of *Shaping a Fairer Future*, which contained much to be welcomed, but eleven of the forty

⁷ Women and Work Commission (2006) *Shaping a Fairer Future*, London: Department of Trade and Industry

recommendations required a differentiated Scottish response – predominantly those around occupational segregation.

Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty, which came into force in 2007, represented a step-change in gender equality legislation. It requires public sector employers to have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to promote gender equality in its activities as service providers and as employers.

In Scotland, a separate specific duty on equal pay was implemented, requiring employers to publish a statement that set out their ambitions for closing gender pay gaps within their own organisations and the ways in which they would achieve this.

Public authorities have yet to refresh their schemes and report substantively on progress made against the strategic objectives they identified in 2007. However, it is clear from work done by a range of gender equality organisations that the requirement to carry out gender impact assessment on policies has not resulted in the type of change that might have been anticipated. Some significant programmes remain to be impact-assessed, including the Modern Apprenticeship scheme.

The consequences of failing to act have not always been clear to public authorities, although the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has undertaken some compliance work around the duty. The gender equality duty will be replaced with a Single Equality Duty (SED) before the first round of reporting on the gender equality duty is complete. Activists who have lobbied the Scottish Government on the implementation of the SED have underlined the importance of incorporating clear consequences of a failure to deliver on the duty within the statutory code of practice that will accompany the duty.

Single Equality Bill

The Single Equality Bill is currently working its way through the UK Parliament, and is expected to pass into law in the current session. This Bill consolidates the many existing pieces of equalities legislation across race, religion and belief, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and trans.

Although the Bill, as published, was made significantly more robust than that proposed in the Green Paper, it does not address some of the structural issues around equal pay that many activists were hoping would be addressed. Provision for hypothetical comparators, which would have given recourse to, for example, low-paid women cleaners employed by arms-length organisations (ALMOs) contracted by public sector authorities, was not included. Nor was protection from discrimination on the grounds of caring responsibilities, which may have extended the weak legal provision of the right *to request* flexible working, rather than the right *to* flexible working.

Occupational segregation

A particular focus of Scottish activists around occupational segregation has been the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. This scheme, on which in excess of £50m is spent annually in Scotland, is the key Government initiative for vocational education and training. For a significant number of school leavers it comprises an entry point to the labour market.

Following a formal investigation into Modern Apprenticeships by the then Equal Opportunities Commission, which identified significant gender segregation in some modern apprenticeship frameworks (e.g. less than 1% of participants in the childcare framework were male and less than 1% of participants in the plumbing and engineering frameworks were female), an internal group was set up within the then Scottish Executive to consider how occupational segregation might best be addressed.

This group met through 2007 and 2008 and reported in 2008⁸. Although the group's term was bisected by a change of political administration in Scotland, it is nonetheless disappointing that the actions identified in the final report of the group did not include any substantive action by the Scottish Government or non-departmental public bodies, except for a marketing campaign to attract men into primary school teaching.

Although the work of external organisations and projects is undoubtedly useful in building capacity in employers and individuals, action is required by central government and public sector bodies in educating and skilling up Scotland's citizens.

Systemic barriers can be dismantled only by the organisations that are responsible for erecting and maintaining them, and neither the Government's own internal group looking at occupational segregation, nor the gender equality duty, nor the Women and Work Commission has levered any significant action to address gender segregation in modern apprenticeships in Scotland.

Conclusion

Although the period from 2005 has been characterised by mass litigation around equal pay and an increasing awareness of women's inequalities in the labour market, action to address systemic barriers has not been as meaningful as it could have been.

A number of projects and organisations are working around equal pay and the discrimination within the labour market that women experience. However, systematic discrimination requires systematic approaches to tackle it, and these are currently not sufficiently robust to finish the job.

Women's Poverty

We heartily support the Scottish Government's statement (from its *Gender Equality Scheme*) that, 'If we are to eradicate poverty in Scotland we need to understand the gendered nature of poverty and its ramifications on equality of opportunity for men, women and their children'.⁹ Poverty has various causes, including structural ones. The application of gender analysis to a wide range of policies and programmes is critical to poverty reduction strategies. In order to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, women and men must participate fully and equally in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies and strategies for the eradication of poverty.

According to UK Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) statistics, approximately one in five women in the UK live in poverty. (This is likely to be a conservative figure because poverty is measured at the household rather than individual level.) In November 2008, the Scottish Government published *Achieving Our Potential: a Framework for Tackling Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland*, setting out the joint approach of the Scottish Government and COSLA. This framework for the first time refers to 'lone mothers' rather than simply 'lone parents' – an indicator, at least, of the recognition of the gendered dimensions of poverty. Women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, lack of access to education and support services and minimal participation in the decision-making process. Poverty can also force women into situations in which they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Women's poverty is also affected by their diverse identities: for example, 20% of white women are living in poverty, but the figures are 38% for Black women and 64% for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

Child poverty

The child poverty rate in Scotland, although among the lowest in the UK (25%), is by any standard at an unacceptable level. By narrowly focusing on child poverty, the Government's anti-poverty policy has obscured the gender dimension of children's poverty. Any serious effort to eradicate child poverty must include consideration of women's and men's poverty and how they relate to children's status, especially since women are still more likely than men to experience poverty in the UK. A thorough gender analysis of the Government's anti-poverty policies needs to take place.

As seen in the UK government's report on progress since Beijing, current government strategy focuses primarily on work as the key route out of poverty. This approach suffers from a number of problems:

- Half the children and working age adults living in poverty are living in households where an adult works

⁹ Scottish Government (2008) *Gender Equality Scheme 2008–2011*, 4.15

- Four out of 10 children in poverty are in single mother households
- A further 3 out of 10 are in households where the father works full time but the mother is on low income or no income.

(See also section on Girls, below.)

Pensioner poverty

The number of pensioners in poverty in Scotland has come down by more than 100,000 since the late 1990s. However, with less than 12% of women receiving the full basic state pension and a woman's average retirement income estimated at around 53% of a man's, many women find themselves at a much greater risk of poverty in old age. The majority of women who are over 75 live alone, and they face a higher risk of living in poverty. In particular women make up the majority of those dependent on State Pensions and Pension Credits, constituting about 64% of claimants of both benefits in 2005.

Reforms promised for 2010 mean that everyone, male and female, can qualify for a full pension with National Insurance (NI) contributions and credits of 30 years. However, this is taking place against a background of women having to work potentially to age 68 to receive the pension their older sisters received at age 60.

Reducing poverty

Poverty in Scotland is not created by a shortage of resources. It is the uneven distribution of these resources that leaves people living in poverty. Eradicating poverty is therefore about reducing inequalities and ensuring a fairing distribution of wealth, which means that the government has a key role to play.

- The UK key target for halving child poverty (2010) is upon us and the Scottish Government has clearly indicated that increasing economic growth in Scotland is its key priority. However, it is important to note that focusing on economic growth will not in itself eradicate poverty. Countries such as Denmark and Sweden have a long-held commitment to tackling inequality and as a result have low levels of child poverty.
- Focused action is required since it is clear that eradicating poverty will not happen as a by-product of other activities. Monitoring progress is also essential and we need to have specific targets to reduce inequality within any anti-poverty strategy.
- It is now widely accepted that work is the best and most effective route out of poverty. However, it is clear that work is only an effective route if the work is properly paid, secure and safe. Significant numbers of women are concentrated in the lowest paying jobs and occupations. Low-paid workers are twice as likely to be female as male. Low-paid jobs also tend to be more insecure. This means that many women live through a cycle of 'low pay, no pay, low pay' and there is no evidence that staying in low paid work will lead to better-paid work.
- The current minimum wage still leaves many workers in poverty. The Low Pay Unit and the Council of Europe's Decency Threshold have both set higher minimum hourly rates than the current UK level.

- Although the Scottish Government cannot raise the national minimum wage it could use its role as a major Scottish employer to set a minimum ‘living wage’ for public sector staff. According to Child Poverty Action Group, a third of low pay in Scotland is in the public sector. The Scottish Government has a direct lever to lift these families out of poverty.
- The public sector spends substantial funds buying goods and services from the private and voluntary sector. The Government should insist on a living wage clause in contracts and on appropriate health and safety, equality proofing etc in these contracts and so raise wages across Scotland. This will lift many women and children out of poverty.
- The Scottish government has a particular role to play in improving the pay of women. Despite more women than men being employed in education, health and social work they are still more than twice as likely to be low paid as their male colleagues. Local authorities have paid between £260 and £510 million in compensation to low paid women in the last three years despite the fact that there is not one concluded equal pay claim of this type in Scotland. These figures demonstrate the scale of the legitimate income women have been denied for decades. The public sector can make significant inroads on poverty by adopting progressive equal pay policies – a move that would have a positive spread effect on low wages across the economy.
- Gender segregation in the workplace is a key cause of the gender pay gap. The pay gap will not close if women continue to be trapped in low wage sectors of the job market. The government has a key role to play in education and training to ensure that girls get the opportunities at school to study subjects that enable them to enter well-paid jobs and to access on going training in the workplace. This must be the case for those who enter the job market at all levels. Modern apprenticeships still see girls moving into training for jobs that will be lower paid in the long term than boys. (See references to occupational segregation below.)
- Childcare and early years education should be expanded and be delivered by a fully trained and appropriately rewarded childcare workforce. This would help to reduce poverty in two ways. First, the high cost and availability of suitable childcare is a key barrier to work for many women. Engender would prefer universal free childcare delivered by the public sector but any expansion of the current free early years education would help women balance work and family commitments and make them better off financially.

Violence against Women

Regarding the UK government response to the ‘Questionnaire to Governments on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)’ –

Engender agrees with the UK Government’s report that the last 10 years have seen much change, mostly progressive, in government attitudes and resourcing of work relating to violence against women. We particularly welcome the new strategy for Wales and England.¹⁰ A number of the institutions involved have responsibilities in Scotland, so joining up their work with Scotland’s strategic approach is a welcome challenge (although one that may not be very visible in London).

We also welcome the expanded policy focus – to violence against women from domestic abuse – and we look forward to seeing that focus reflected in proportional investment and ownership of agendas concerning rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, pornography, prostitution, etc.

We feel compelled to point out, however, that most of the progress in England and Wales (often referred to as ‘national’ progress in the UK government’s report) has been in the very recent past and is still much in the arena of policy that has yet to deliver clear outcomes for women’s right to live free from violence. That progress, while welcomed, is hardly in proportion to the demonstrated need, nor the fact that 15 years have passed since the agreement on the Platform for Action.

However, it is important to note that ‘national’ initiatives and resources cited in the UK response in fact refer almost entirely to Wales and England. Policy and provision have for the most part developed separately in Scotland. The integration agenda is welcome – and the result of some hard-fought campaigning on the part of the women’s sector – but for the most part applies across institutions in England and Wales.

There is little or no coordination of policy or service across the four countries of the UK, and this is especially clear in the lack of progress on the UK Government’s commitments to international agreements, e.g. CEDAW and the CESCRCovenant.

We appreciate that the UK Government’s response could not cover every detail of work on violence against women. However some critical issues were omitted:

- The 'no recourse to public funds' rule denies immigrant women experiencing violence access to certain state benefits, including housing benefit and income support. The UK Government position puts the UK in breach of CEDAW and other international agreements.
- A ‘postcode lottery’ of access to services reflects uneven and inadequate service provision across the UK, in part because the government has not created a strategic, sustainable resource to support services.

¹⁰*Together We Can End Violence against Women and Children: a Strategy*,
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/vawg-strategy-2009/>

- The recent willingness to address criminalising demand for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation is very welcome. However, progress on this agenda has been excruciatingly slow, and the focus in Wales and England on criminalising men who knowingly buy sex from a trafficked or ‘pimped’ woman is token at best.
- Government response to victims of trafficking is still driven largely by misguided immigration policy.
- Finally, the welcome work of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has helped to make the links between women’s inequality and violence against women by making violence against women a high-profile obligation under the Gender Equality Duty.

Scotland

As mentioned above, the presence of a devolved government with responsibilities over a wide range of policy areas (and a distinct political and historical context) has meant that policy in Scotland has largely developed on a separate path since 2000. An important difference is that for the most part government policy has been based on a gendered definition of first domestic abuse and then violence against women as the policy focus expanded.

In Scotland, we welcome progress in a number of important areas:

- There has been significant additional investment in services, particularly services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse and to a lesser extent for survivors of rape and sexual assault.
- The latter funding has come in parallel with the expanded focus from domestic abuse to violence against women, in place for about 10 years.
- Very welcome is the promised launch of the Caledonian model for working with men convicted of domestic abuse related offences. Particularly reassuring is the level of support in the model for partner support.
- We welcome the support for the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court and would like to see specialist procedures integrated into the operation of courts throughout Scotland.
- Devolved structures support a relatively collaborative approach with NGOs who provide a significant proportion of services to women and children.
- The Scottish Parliament’s Cross-Party structures have allowed for meaningful and constructive engagement among politicians, government institutions, and women’s NGOs.

Violence against women as cause and consequence of women’s inequality

The failure to feature violence against women in high-level policy outcomes is concerning. In addition, the link between women’s inequality and violence against them is not operationalised in decision making or policy structures – a failure to connect the dots, as it were, across government. Indeed, the relevant outcomes and indicators are absent from the national outcomes agenda, and the situation has deteriorated rather than

improved: a previous domestic abuse indicator has been removed from the menu of indicators for local government; now not one relevant indicator is in the set.

Localisation agenda

The government's localisation agenda has destabilised local funding for both specialist and public sector services and threatens multi-agency structures required for the delivery of single outcome agreements (SOAs) between central government and local community planning partnerships. A review published by Scottish Women's Aid highlighted the following:

- 16 SOAs highlight an increase in reported incidents of domestic abuse as a trend they are concerned about within their local area: addressing this locally is stated as a priority in only 11 SOAs.
- In 7 SOAs no reference is made to domestic abuse/violence against women in the area profile - which provides the basis for identifying priorities and outcomes in the SOA.
- In only 10 SOAs is there a specific reference within the area profile to children affected by domestic abuse. This is disappointing, given the focus of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People.
- In only 2 SOAs are there local indicators or targets that relate to forms of violence against women other than domestic abuse.
- The varied use of local outcomes and the contradictory mix of indicators and targets make any monitoring of Scotland's progress in addressing domestic abuse difficult at best.
- Only 5 SOAs make any reference to violence against women in relation to gender equality, or to how the CPPs will meet their legal obligations under the Gender Equality Duty.
- From our analysis, it is not clear how the implementation of national policy at a local level is monitored and evaluated, or how local authorities and their Community Planning Partners can be held to account.

Other concerns

Other areas we would have liked to see discussed in greater depth include:

- Slow progress on improving criminal justice outcomes, especially conviction rates for rape and domestic abuse, and trafficking
- The need for improved measures for criminalising demand
- The proliferation of pornography and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation as public health issues.
- Legislative foundation in criminal law.

Finally, there is little evidence that the strategic policy agenda on violence against women is linked to international commitments and obligations under CEDAW and CESC.

Women's Participation

In a report issued January 2007, the Equal Opportunities Commission (Scotland) stated, 'Scotland is missing out on a pool of female talent and women are missing out on fulfilling their potential. If we are to maximize the use of our female talent we have to take concerted action to remove the barriers in their way, or opportunities will be lost for generations to come.' The fifth annual index of women in positions of authority and influence in Scotland, *Sex and Power*¹¹, shows the trend that is emerging is one of reversal or stalled progress, with only a few significant increases.

Downward trend

Women have taken just 43 out of 129 seats (33.3%), compared with 39.5% in the 2003 elections. Women are:

- 12 of 47 Scottish National Party (25%);
 - 23 of 46 Labour Party (50%),
 - 5 of 17 Conservative Party (29%),
 - 2 of 16 Liberal Democrats (12.5%)
 - 1 Independent
- The two Green Party MSPs are both male.

- Women in Scotland make up 11.6% Senior Police Officers, 11.8% of Senior Judges, 23.8% of Senior Executives in the health service, 20.9% of Secondary headteachers, 23% of University Vice Chancellors, 27% of further education principals, 35% members of public bodies

In three of the 14 categories surveyed, there are fewer women holding top posts: as Members of the Scottish Parliament 34.1% (down from 38.8% 2006/7); in public appointments 32.4% (down from 34.7% 2006/7); as senior police officers 7.4% (down from 10.7% 2006/7). In another seven categories, the number of women remains unchanged since the 2007 index. These are: local authority council leaders 18.8%; Members of UK Parliament for Scottish Constituencies 13.6%; Scottish Members of the European Parliament 28.6%; Judges of the Court of Session 11.8%; local authority chief executives 12.5%; university principals 21.4%; health service chief executives 23.8%.

Women's representation has increased in only four areas, Ministers in the Scottish Parliament 31.3% (up from 27.8% 2006/7); head teachers in secondary schools 25.9% (up from 23.3% 2006/7); further education college principals 29.5% (up from 27.3% 2006/7) and trade union general secretaries or equivalent 20.6% (up from 18.6% 2006/7).

In the Scottish Parliament, women have taken just 43 out of 129 seats (33.3%) in the last election, compared with 39.5% in the 2003 elections. Women make up:

- 12 of 47 Scottish National Party (25%);

¹¹ *Sex and Power* (2008) Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland

- 23 of 46 Labour Party (50%),
- 5 of 17 Conservative Party (29%),
- 2 of 16 Liberal Democrats (12.5%)
- 1 Independent

The two Green Party MSPs are both male.

Looking back over the five years since *Sex and Power* was first published, Scotland has made slow progress and in some cases has seen stagnation. The last elections have resulted in the Scottish Parliament slipping from fourth to 13th place in world league tables on women in parliament. This lack of progress is depressing given the aspirations that women held for political representation in a devolved Scotland. However, we do welcome the recent (2008) publication of the Scottish Commissioner for Public Appointments' Diversity Strategy¹².

Why do numbers matter? Research has shown that having high numbers of women in parliament changed the focus of the traditional political agenda and the way politics was carried out. Engender asked the political parties to take action to promote gender balance in candidate selection at the last election. However, analysis by Dr Fiona Mackay and Meryl Kenny, political scientists at the University of Edinburgh, shows that most parties did little or nothing to promote gender parity in candidate selection. And, where they did, women candidates were generally placed in unfavourable positions. A reduction in women MSPs brings with it the threat of a reduced focus on issues that concern a large proportion of the population: equal pay, the cost of caring, violence against women and children, and poverty.

A key question is: What is the Scottish and the UK governmental commitment to closing the power gap, with true representation for all women, including ethnic minority women, disabled women, working class women, lesbians, transgender and bisexual women (LTGB) and women of all ages and faiths?

¹² *Diversity Delivers, A Strategy for enhancing equality of opportunity in Scotland's ministerial public appointments process* (September 2008) Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland

Girls

Girls' career choices

'Girls' educational achievements are not translating into well-paid jobs. Gender stereotyping remains an endemic problem in the education system, which has long and lasting effects.

Surveys show that the problem of stereotyping of gender roles may start early in children's lives. There is now a considerable body of publication on the subject in relation to children's literature and its possible effects on young people's life expectations. Yet such stereotyping persists - gender stereotyping in children's books is still widespread.¹³

Working class girls and ethnic minority women often suffer the most detriment in an education system that fails to widen choices and challenge stereotypes. Occupational segregation, which has been identified as one of the three major causes of the national gender pay gap, is largely the result of gender stereotyping. 'Women's relatively fewer resources to break free of their low-paid, low-status work exacerbates the problem of gender stereotyping.'¹⁴

After 30 years of equal opportunities education and training, school leaver destination statistics shows that young people in Scotland are still following traditional gender stereotyped career choices. A recent research project, 'Gender Stereotyping of Career Choice'¹⁵, examined factors influencing gender stereotyping of the careers preferences of school students in their middle secondary school years. It involved an extensive survey of pupils at S2 and S3 levels in state schools across West Lothian and Edinburgh and follow-on face-to-face interviews with pupils in four of these schools. The research was carried out by the Employment Research Institute at Napier University as part of a wider European Social Fund (Objective 3)-funded project led by Careers Scotland and other agencies. Findings included:

- Many pupils held gender stereotyped attitudes towards a range of occupations, although some occupations and jobs were much less stereotyped (e.g. teacher, shop worker, police officer). Girls showed significantly less stereotyping of jobs and occupations than boys.
- Pupils working at lower levels of achievement in Maths and English were more likely to stereotype than those working at higher levels.
- Many pupils perceived themselves to be suited to occupations based on traditionally gendered lines, although this was not the case for some professional jobs. Preferences were also influenced by ethnic background, year in school, levels

¹³ 'Sugar and spice', in *Information Scotland*, Journal of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland, August 2004, Vol 2(4)

¹⁴ EHRC (2008) Submission on 6th periodic report of UK to CEDAW Committee, p19, para35

¹⁵ <http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=6719&sID=2346>

- of achievement in Maths and English, general attitudes, and differences in job characteristics perceived to be important by pupils.
- Pupils used a wide range of information sources for advice about careers although parents, particularly mothers, were the main source.
 - An awareness of differences between groups of pupils (e.g. boys and girls, those with higher and lower levels of achievement) would be helpful. The influence of role models on career choice and parents as a source of careers information should be given greater importance when disseminating advice.

Tackling occupational segregation is one of the ten gender equality objectives in the Scottish Government's Gender Equality Scheme.¹⁶

Girls and physical activity

Physical activity among girls after they started secondary school dropped from 63% in 2003 to 56% in 2008. Research shows that sports celebrities, pop stars and political figures have little impact on young women, with 80% of the influence on a young girl and how she lives her life coming from her peers and the people in her neighbourhood.

National objective

Launched in February 2008, *Fit for Girls* is a joint programme between the Youth Sport Trust and sportscotland and is backed by Scottish Government investment of £510,000 over three years. It is aimed at schoolgirls aged 11–16 with the intention of encouraging them to adopt more active lifestyles.

The programme is based on the success of pilot schemes run by 27 secondary schools across Scotland, which resulted in an average increase of girls' participation from 18% to 27% within the first year. Their strategies included improving changing rooms, introducing new activities, using different deliverers, creating 'girls only' sessions, such as girls' multi-activity clubs, changing PE kit and, most importantly, consulting with the girls. It also recognises and builds on much of the current good practice in schools.

Fit for Girls will be delivered through Scotland's 380 secondary schools over the next three years and supports the physical activity workforce (teachers, Active Schools co-ordinators and other physical activity staff and volunteers) to increase girls' participation by producing and implementing an action plan, following attendance at a nationally delivered workshop. The programme also provides schools with supporting resources including case studies, an ideas pack of solutions to common problems, a DVD demonstrating good practice and a planning guide.

Above all, *Fit for Girls* wants to bring about a sustainable change that builds a positive future for girls' participation in lifelong physical activity.

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2008) *Gender Equality Scheme 2008–2011*, 3.1; 4.2

Girls and mental health

A new study¹⁷ suggests that 15-year-old girls are probably the most mentally ill single group of people in the whole country: a staggering 43% of them are seriously emotionally distressed (i.e. mildly depressed or anxious) and 27% are suffering a full-scale major mental illness (severe depression or anxiety).

The study also demonstrates massive increases in girls' distress since 1987. Originally, they measured levels of anxiety and depression in two very large (2,000-plus) representative samples of 15-year-olds, one in 1987 and the other in 1999.

Among the bottom social class, girls' distress rates rose only a little but in the top class, the rise was from 24% in 1987 to a startling 38% in 1999 – more than one third of the most privileged and successful. Contrary to popular perceptions there was a far less significant increase in problems among boys, (from 17% to 19%) but for the privileged girls, rates of the kind of distress that can require hospitalisation rose threefold (from 6% to 18%).

Now the researchers have carried out a further study, finding that, in 2006, distress rates among girls from the top social class had continued to increase, reaching 43%. But the additional bad news is that girls from less privileged circumstances had almost caught up with their more privileged sisters, with rates of 41%.

The rise among girls from affluent homes between 1987 and 1999 coincided with a period in which girls began to outperform boys in almost every academic subject at every educational stage. In 1987, there was virtually no difference between genders in levels of attainment at GCSE level but by 1999, a gap had opened up: 43% of boys obtained five or more passes at grades A to C, while 53% of girls did so. The greater success of the girls was accompanied by increased emotional distress.

The research showed that affluent girls, unlike boys, found the time leading up to exams most stressful, and that this difference arose after 1987. In the three months before exams, increased distress was more likely only among the high-income girls.

Self harming

A total of 2008 pupils aged 15–16 years old completed an anonymous questionnaire on this subject. The pupils all attended secondary schools in Glasgow and Stirling. Self-harm was recorded if they answered 'yes' to the question: 'Have you ever deliberately taken an overdose (e.g. pills or other medication) or tried to harm yourself in some other way (such as cut yourself)?'

Self-harm was reported by 13.8% of the teenagers. The majority (71%) of those who had self-harmed had done so in the past 12 months, and girls were 3.4 times more likely to have self-harmed than boys. A further 14.4% of the adolescents said they had thought seriously about self-harming, but had not done so. Again, girls were more likely to have thought about taking an overdose or trying to harm themselves than boys.

¹⁷ <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/printerfriendlynews.php?newsid=134461>

The most common motive given for self-harm was 'to get relief from a terrible state of mind'. Almost four in ten (37.6%) of the teenagers reported that they wanted to die.

ENGENDER
1/2010