



Rosa, the UK Fund for Women and Girls, was set up to support initiatives that benefit women and girls in the UK. While many women and girls do enjoy freedom of choice and the opportunity for success in their lives, that's simply not true of all. This paper is one of four, which each look at where we are on a key issue: economic justice, safety, leadership & participation and health & wellbeing. Each paper describes the issues that need tackling, where we want to be, and how we'll know we're there.

Without a strong, vibrant women's sector, and the money to underpin action, we can't hope to bring about women's equality. Rosa's aims are to achieve social justice and equality for all women in the UK.

Leadership and Representation

Where are we now?

Women's participation in public life and decision-making in the UK is at an all-time high but still falls short of an equal voice. Where women *are* equally represented, they are more likely than men to promote women's equality across a broad range of issues,¹ and there is some evidence of them acting in concert to bring about change that benefits women.² However, women's rates of participation and leadership both directly in politics, and more widely in the economy, the media, and in social agencies (public services and the third sector) are low, and show that in most key areas of decision-making and influence, men still run the UK.

The snowy peaks of decision-making and influence currently exclude women except in small numbers. International experience indicates that women make progress when gender roles are challenged in education, in the media, and by women themselves. Most powerful institutions in the UK are dominated by men and are so structured that they deliberately or indirectly exclude women; these need to be changed. Women need to use the mechanisms that men have used to progress: networking and mentoring (political parties); joining forces to make an influential voice (Trade Unions, the CBI, professional bodies). However they currently lack the resources to do so - either of time, because they bear the double burden of paid work and unpaid caring (in the UK, 70% of all housework is done by women, and even if they work over 30 hours per week, nearly two-thirds of all housework is done by women³) and because they do not have access to wealth in their own right. This lack of resources holds women back from playing their rightful part in our democracy.

Politics: the figures on women's representation

- Women make up 29% of MPs⁴ in the Westminster parliament; 40% of the Wales Assembly; 19% of the NI Assembly; 35% of the Scottish Parliament⁵

- 41% of UK MEPs are women, compared to 37% of MEPs across all 28 EU Member States that took part - the fifteenth highest in the EU⁶
- Women local authority councillors: England 32%; Wales 26%; Scotland 24%; NI 23%⁷
- Women are underrepresented in local strategic partnerships and other local bodies⁸

Politics: the culture that keeps women out

- 41% of parliamentary candidates believe that selection committees in their parties look more favourably on male than female candidates⁹
- Women in Westminster are more likely than men to be censured for illegal interventions, and subjected to sexist verbal harassment.¹⁰
 - *I was always being told by the Tory men that it was nice to have a better class of totty around. The Tory benches shouted things across the chamber at you, about your appearance or your size. A lot of it came from the front bench, though it wouldn't be picked up by the microphones. It was shocking, but it was routine. The Tories made gestures [she cups an imaginary pair of breasts]. Even on our side, the men would stick their hands out, so you'd sit on them. It was like stepping back in time. People have networks and if those networks operate out of smoky bars, they're probably excluding many women. You were pond life. In the chamber, you had to wait seven hours to be called to speak. Some of the men with power would be flirtatious, though it felt as though they were testing to see how you would respond. If you succumbed, or made your own advances, it would be the worse for you. It had to be on their terms.*

Collated comments from a number of women MPs at Westminster, 2007¹¹

The Media

A 2010 survey¹² showed that only 30% of TV reporters were women, and only 31% of by-lined newspaper articles were by women.

The gender divide continues in the type of news stories that women and men cover. 78% of newspaper reports on politics are by men, as are 69% of stories of the economy. Women journalists only edge into a slight majority in coverage of the category of celebrity, arts and sports.

The same gender divide is noticeable in who makes the news: men are the subject of 69% of stories, rising up to 76% of stories on politics, and 73% of stories on economics. Women are not in a majority in any of the main story categories, except in representing popular opinion, where they made up 56%. Conversely, men make up 75% of the quoted spokespeople and 'experts'. Women make up 66% of stories on fashion and cosmetic surgery and 69% on gender-based violence. These gendered patterns reinforce stereotypical notions of women's authority and voice.

The Economy

There is less than 23% female representation on FTSE100 boards. Women make up 29.8% of Non-Executive Directors and 9.6% of Executive Directors.¹³

Men run the majority of businesses, especially large enterprises, and research has indicated that they outperform female-owned businesses in economic terms, with this apparent under-performance directly linked to women's lack of start-up capital.¹⁴ However, since the recession started in 2008 and 2011, women have accounted for an unprecedented 80% of the new self-employed.¹⁵ Within the trade unions (representing the workforce which is nearly 50% female) only 27.3% of general secretaries are women.¹⁶

Social Agencies

The professions, and leaders of third sector and nongovernmental agencies, enjoy high levels of influence over public policy, the way in which services are delivered, and the allocation of social resources. However, women hold only 20% of professional jobs.¹⁷ Despite making up a large majority of NHS staff overall, the proportion of women drops at professional level; 47% of GPs are women, but only 32% of NHS Consultants. Similarly women dominate in the teaching profession but only make up 39% of secondary head teachers; and although women make up 39% of all academic professionals, they are only 21% of all university professors.¹⁸

Women hold 41% of public appointments (mainly lower level positions: they make up only 24% of Chairs).¹⁹ They are 38% of senior civil servants;²⁰ 12% of local authority chief executives;²¹ 18% of police officers of Chief Inspector and above. Only 15% of Police and Crime Commissioners are women. Women make up less than a quarter of judges in England and Wales, and fewer in Scotland, with only Northern Ireland anywhere near parity at 46%. In the officers' ranks of the armed forces – 13%.²²

At universities, only 17% of vice chancellors are women. In the third sector, whilst 7 out of 10 employees are female, only 43% of charities are led by female Chief Executives and Chairs. In charities with a turnover of £10m plus, female leadership is even scarcer; women lead just 27% of major charities.²³

There are 30,000 women's voluntary and community organisations in England and Wales; only 1.2% of UK voluntary sector funding goes to women's organisations, despite making up 7% of registered charities.²⁴ Faith institutions are almost entirely run by men, and are regularly consulted by Government on policy issues; the Bishops of the Church of England, all men, occupy reserved seats in the Westminster legislature.²⁵

Where do we want to be?

What difference would more women make? There is an ethical argument on the democratic deficit, that half the population is currently largely excluded from decision-making and power. The OECD notes that 'women's capacity to participate in and influence the decisions that affect their lives, from the household to the highest levels of political decision making, is a basic human right and a prerequisite for responsive and equitable governance'.²⁶

There is also evidence that women's presence makes a difference to how politics is conducted. The OECD has found that in countries where women's participation and access to the public sphere is more restricted, there is a higher level of political instability.²⁷

Few countries have made progress in increasing the number of women in politics except by either taking positive action measures, or by starting entirely new institutions where men do not have a built in advantage. The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 allows political parties to adopt positive measures to reduce inequality between the numbers of men and women elected. It covers elections to the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the European Parliament and local government. Positive measures include training and mentoring, techniques such as 'twinning' and 'zipping', and quotas (i.e. all-women short-lists). The Act will expire at the end of 2015, unless it is extended. It needs to be more widely adopted.

In the economy, there is increasing evidence of the business case for diversity. Research in the US shows that more women improve corporate performance: companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least, on return on sales by 16%, and return on invested

capital by 26%.²⁸ Overall in the U.S., women-owned firms have an economic impact of \$3 trillion that translates into the creation and/or maintenance of 23 million jobs, amounting to 16% of all U.S. jobs.²⁹

The news media shape our norms, and influence our sense of gender and leadership. The fact that men are heavily overrepresented in the news both as reporters and editors may at least in part explain why men are overrepresented in the news stories that are reported. We need more women in the media and more coverage of women in the news beyond page 3.

How will we know we are there?

- 50% representation of women in all elected posts – in national and local government
- Ongoing commitment by all the political parties to sex equality – in their candidates, their Ministerial teams, and their policies
- Equal voice for women across the media both as citizens, and as reporters/editors
- The glass ceiling that keeps women out of top decision-making jobs has been shattered
- A well resourced women's sector able to build women's leadership capacity
- Equal numbers of women in peace building and conflict resolution initiatives, drawing on best practice overseas, and in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820
- A changed social care settlement that encourages shared domestic and caring responsibilities and allows women to become involved in public life
- Internationally, a strong, stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Sustainable Development Goals, and the inclusion of gender-specific targets and indicators in the other goals.³⁰

¹ Critical Mass, Deliberation and the Substantive Representation of Women: Evidence from the UK's Devolution Programme, Chaney, Political Studies, Volume 54, Issue 4, pages 691–714, December 2006

² Assessing the Policy Impact of Parliament: Methodological Challenges and Possible Future Approaches, Paper for PSA Legislative Studies Specialist Group Conference, Russell, Bentoni, 2009
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/parliament/policy-impact/policy_impact_parliament.pdf

³ European Social Survey (ESS), ESRC, 2013, http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/press-releases/27163/A_womans_work_is_never_done.aspx

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-32601280> [accessed 2 June 2015]

⁵ Women in Parliament and Government, House of Commons Library, March 2015, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01250>

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Where are the women in LSPs? Women's representation in Local Strategic Partnerships, Elin Gudnadottir, Sue Smith, Sue Robson and Darlene Corry, Women's Resource Centre, 2007

⁹ Women's Resource Centre, Uncovering Women's Inequality in the UK: Statistics, April 2007

¹⁰ Hansard, 3 June 2015: Column 711: *The Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise (Anna Soubry): Move on. Alex Salmond: Move on where? Luckily the right hon. Lady is on the Front Bench, so will not be standing to be a Chair of one of these Select Committees, otherwise she would have done her chances no good whatever. Members on the Treasury Bench should behave better in these debates. She should be setting an example to her new Members, not cavorting about like some demented junior Minister. Behave yourself, woman!*

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150603/debtext/150603-0004.htm#15060332001808>

¹¹ 'Oh babe, just look at us now', The Observer, 22 April 2007,

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labour/story/0,,2062629,00.html>

¹² Who Makes the News? United Kingdom & Northern Ireland Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report, 2010, http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2010/national/UK.pdf

¹³ Professional Boards Forum BoardWatch, May 2015, <http://www.boardsforum.co.uk/boardwatch.html>

¹⁴ Entrepreneurial Leadership and Gender: Exploring Theory and Practice in Global Contexts, Henry et al, 21 APR 2015, Vol. 53 Issue 2, Journal of Small Business Management, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jsbm.12174/full>

¹⁵ Labour Force Survey, Office of National Statistics 2013, cited in UK Female Entrepreneurship: key facts, Prowess, <https://www.prowess.org.uk/facts> [accessed 4 June 2015]

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- ¹⁶ Women Trade Union General Secretaries, Centre for Women and Democracy, 2011, <http://www.cfd.org.uk/uploads/WomenTradeUnionGeneralSecretaries.pdf>
- ¹⁷ http://www.eoc.org.uk/pdf/facts_about_GB_2006.pdf
- ¹⁸ Women in Public life, the Professions and the Boardroom, House of Commons Library, 2014, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05170/SN05170.pdf>
- ¹⁹ Commissioner for Public Appointments Annual Report 2013/14, OCPA, 2014 <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/OCPA-Annual-Report-2013-14.pdf>
- ²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service/about/equality-and-diversity>, [accessed 2 June 2015]
- ²¹ http://www.local.gov.uk/workforce-local-government-pay/-/journal_content/56/10180/3700165/ARTICLE [accessed 4 June 2015]
- ²² Women in Public life, the Professions and the Boardroom, op cit
- ²³ Close to Parity: challenging the voluntary sector to smash the glass ceiling, Lewis, 2010, <http://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk/userfiles/documents/Research%20reports/2010/Research,%20Rowena%20Lewis,%20FINAL.pdf>
- ²⁴ The State of the Women’s NGO Sector: Shadow Report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in response to the United Kingdom’s 6th Periodic Report, 2008, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/WRCUK41.pdf>
- ²⁵ Although efforts are being made to ‘fast track’ the first women bishops into the House of Lords over the next ten years via the Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/18/enacted>
- ²⁶ Gender equality and women’s rights in the post-2015 agenda: A foundation for sustainable development, OECD, 2014, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/POST-2015%20Gender.pdf>
- ²⁷ ibid
- ²⁸ Why Diversity Matters, Catalyst Information Center, 2013, http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/why_diversity_matters_catalyst_0.pdf
- ²⁹ The Economic Impact of Women-Owned Businesses In the United States, Center for Women’s Business Research, 2009, <https://www.nwbc.gov/sites/default/files/economicimpactstu.pdf>
- ³⁰ Gender equality and women’s rights in the post-2015 agenda: A foundation for sustainable development, OECD, op cit