

GenderWorks

Putting women at the heart of Europe

October 2008



Welcome to the first issue of GenderWorks, the newsletter for everyone involved with women experiencing poverty or working to tackle social exclusion.

It includes all the latest news from the GenderWorks project and beyond, details of upcoming events, useful resources, and everything you need to know about our training courses.

It also features a section called Get Involved!, which is all about how you can participate in the project. It might be by telling us about your experiences with your local authority, volunteering to work with the GenderWorks team, or simply having your say about the issues that frustrate you on our website's blog.

We hope you enjoy it!

The GenderWorks team

What is GenderWorks?

GenderWorks is a two-year project funded by the European Commission. It aims to explore the problems faced by women living in poverty across Europe, and influence European Union member governments to tackle these problems more effectively. To find out more, visit www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks

GenderWorks tackles government over poverty plan



Jean Smith is just one of the many women who would benefit from a more robust National Action Plan. She was denied flexible working when her first child was born and became unemployed. Credit: Chris Worrall/Oxfam

GenderWorks was at Liverpool Town Hall in September, attending the launch of the government's new plan to tackle poverty in the UK.

The draft National Action Plan (NAP) 2008-2010, produced by the Department of Work and Pensions, sets out government policies to eradicate child poverty and reduce social exclusion over the next two years. It was launched alongside a series of workshops to discuss the government's green paper on welfare reform, "No one written off", which sets out how the NAP will be delivered.

GenderWorks took part in the workshops and warned that the NAP could be a wasted opportunity because it doesn't consider how the policies and services it outlines will affect women.

For example, the government's strategy to increase the number of people in work makes no mention of the barriers that prevent many women from working, such as the lack of affordable childcare and options for flexible working.

Tricia Duffy, of the Women's Direct Access Centre in Manchester, attended the launch:

"At first I was a wee bit overwhelmed by the building and the people," she said.

"But then I thought: 'What an amazing opportunity.' So I took the microphone and fed back the points raised at our workshop: that gender plays an ever more key role in tackling poverty, and that you ignore it at your peril."

If you'd like to have your say on the government's plans for welfare reform, email the event's rapporteur, Edward Thorpe, at ed@thorpeuropeanservices.co.uk, and let him know what you think.

Get involved with NAPs

All EU member governments must produce a National Action Plan every few years setting out their strategies for tackling poverty.

To find out more about the NAPs and how we can influence them, go to: www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks

News

Southall Black Sisters to attend practice exchange

GenderWorks has invited Southall Black Sisters (SBS), a west London domestic violence support group for black and Asian women, to attend an international practice exchange in Vienna at the end of October. SBS will share its learning from the landmark High Court hearing at which it secured funding earlier this year.

The practice exchange will be hosted by our Austria-based partner WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe), and will focus on violence against women, poverty and social inclusion. Speakers from Oxfam and WAVE will be joined by Hannana Siddiqui of SBS, who will discuss domestic violence and ethnic minority women, and share learning from the group's legal battle.

Set up in 1979 to challenge violence against women and provide a comprehensive service to ethnic minority women experiencing abuse, SBS was threatened with closure after Ealing Council decided to withdraw its funding. The council proposed using the money for a new service for all women, at the same level of funding.

SBS brought the case on the grounds that, among other things, Ealing Council had failed to carry out an adequate race equality impact assessment before making its decision, and had wrongly

relied on cohesion guidance to argue that a generic service was necessary. The council withdrew its case before the hearing had ended.

What the SBS case means for you

SBS hopes its success in securing funding will encourage other grassroots groups to fight back, saying: "We believe this case has set a precedent and that the guidance that will be available should enable all specialist groups to fight for the right to exist as autonomous groups."

You can read the full judgement from the hearing on the website of the Public Law Project, a national legal charity which brought the case.

The Public Law Project's Louise Whitfield, who provided input to the GenderWorks training course Making the Gender Duty Work in Manchester in July, described the judgement as "a key decision that will help protect BME women's services and ensure local authorities meet their duties under the equalities legislation when reconfiguring their service provision".

The Public Law Project provides free advice to voluntary-sector organisations on public law disputes as part of a three-year project funded by the Big Lottery. For more information call 020 7697 2198 or email evs@publiclawproject.org.uk



Amanda Jones-Said of the Rainbow Haven project in Manchester attends a GenderWorks training course. Credit: Chris Worrall/Oxfam



GenderWorks backs campaign for gender equality in Europe

On 15 September, GenderWorks attended a conference held by the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) entitled "Women's voices in Europe: Promoting gender equality through lobbying and policy influencing in Europe".

The conference looked at what European conventions exist to protect women; how European policy affects women in the UK; and what actions are being taken to ensure equality between men and women in Europe. It featured a speech by Myra Vassiliadou, Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby (EWL).

The following day, EWL launched its 50/50 Campaign – "No modern European democracy without gender equality" in Brussels. The 50/50 Campaign urges decision-makers, political parties, civil society, trade unions and all European voters to work towards parity democracy – the equal representation of women and men – within the European Union institutions.

In 2008, men occupy on average 77 percent of parliamentary seats in the European Union. In 2009, European voters will elect the new European Parliament, and the new European

Commission will be nominated, presenting a real opportunity to achieve a more gender-balanced picture of Europe next year.

If you'd like to improve the presence of women in European decision-making and help put pressure on political parties and decision makers to introduce measures to advance parity, take a look at the lobbying toolkit produced by EWL and available on its website at www.womenlobby.org For more information and to get involved, visit the 50/50 Campaign blog at 5050campaign.wordpress.com

Training

GenderWorks training delivers the goods

The GenderWorks training course “Making the Gender Duty Work” has been held in Manchester and Glasgow, and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants in both cities.

The free, two-day course explores the issues surrounding poverty and gender, and helps women’s organisations understand how they can use the Gender Equality Duty, which compels public bodies to take account of the different needs of women and men when they design and deliver services.

The first course was held in Manchester and attended by representatives of ten local organisations, all of whom said they had “enjoyed it loads” on an anonymous evaluation form. The second course was held in Glasgow with 17 participants,

and comments afterwards included “I know where to go for information and feel empowered”, and “This has been one of the best training events I have attended”.

There will be a follow-on session for women who attended the Manchester course at the Women’s Centre on 12 November. Pragna Patel of Southall Black Sisters will share some of the challenges, experiences and practical issues related to holding public authorities to account under the Gender and Race Equality Duties.

What participants say

“We learned that the authorities have to consult those of us who work with the public, and that decisions can’t just be made. It’s empowering to find that out,” said Amanda Jones-Said of the Rainbow

Haven project for asylum seekers in Manchester, who attended the first GenderWorks training course in Manchester in July.

“We thoroughly enjoyed both days, it was interesting and informative, and gave us a greater understanding of what the Gender Equality Duty is trying to achieve,” said Anne Keegan of the women’s drop-in centre Tea in the Pot, who attended the Making the Gender Duty Work course in Glasgow in September.

If you’d like to take part in the free, two-day “Making the Gender Duty Work” course, check out the details below of where the next sessions will be held and get in touch with us today.

Gender Duty courses – coming to a city near you!

“Making the Gender Duty Work” courses will be staged in four other cities during the next 12 months – check the details below to see which would be most convenient for you.

The course is free, refreshments are provided, and we’ll help you out with your travel and childcare costs.

Places are limited, so get in touch today to book your place. What are you waiting for?

Birmingham, 3 and 4 December, 9.30-16.40, at the Deaf Cultural Centre, Ladywood Road, Birmingham B16 8SZ.

Edinburgh, 27 and 28 January 2009, 9.30-16.30, at the Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2.

London, March 2009.
Dates and venue to be confirmed.

Cardiff, May 2009.
Dates and venue to be confirmed.

If you would like to take part in any of the courses, contact Sandhya Sharma on 0161 860 2817 or at SASharma@oxfam.org.uk

Putting policy into practice

GenderWorks is developing a “Policy into Practice” training package aimed at public-sector policy makers and service providers. The aim is to ensure they consider gender when planning and delivering services.

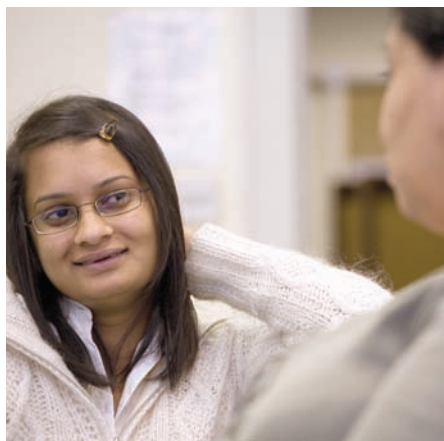
The training will include:

- Information about gender mainstreaming tools such as gender budgeting, gender indicators and gender impact assessments
- Real-life case studies that raise issues which cut across equality strands and provide an anti-poverty framework
- Action learning sets for ongoing development (meeting regularly with

others to explore solutions to real problems and decide on what action to take)

- Ongoing support for a number of local authorities that want to become “gender champions”, and the opportunity for them to work with local women’s organisations
- The development and piloting of a GenderWorks toolkit

The project hopes to run two courses, one in Manchester and the other in Glasgow. For more information contact GenderWorks Project Manager Steph Kendrick-Jones on 0161 860 2813 or at skendrick-jones@oxfam.org.uk



Geeta Azam (left) and Asher Singh, both of Central Manchester Women’s Aid. Credit: Chris Worrall/Oxfam



GenderWorks training participants compile a gender timeline. Credit: Chris Worrall/Oxfam

Get involved!

Could you work with the GenderWorks team?

Do you have skills and experience that are relevant to the GenderWorks project? Have you got some time to spare? We're always on the lookout for extra help and we'll make sure you're not out of pocket, so get in touch if you'd like to join the team.

You might want to contribute to training courses; talk to women experiencing poverty to help create case studies; or encourage women's groups to lobby the government to integrate gender into its plans for welfare reform.

Whatever your skills are and however you'd like to get involved, contact GenderWorks Project Manager Steph Kendrick-Jones on **0161 860 2813** or at skendrick-jones@oxfam.org.uk. We look forward to getting you on board!



GenderWorks Gender Skills Officers Sandhya Sharma (left) and Suzanne Motherwell. Credit: Chris Worrall/Oxfam

Have you got something to say?

What are the challenges you face each day? What would you like to see changed? How could the politicians really help?

We are looking for women who have something to say, and who would be happy to see their stories and opinions publicised. This is your chance to tell people how you feel.

- The government wants to get everyone into work, but do you find that the jobs you're encouraged to apply for are low paid and have inflexible hours? Would you like to tell the politicians what they could do to help?
- Would you talk to us about your situation, so that we can explain

to the media the kind of challenges you face?

- Would you like to get something off your chest through a blog on the GenderWorks website? Is there a problem you're faced with that other women might have experienced too?

We know how precious your time is, and are happy to talk to you wherever and whenever it's convenient. Or if you prefer, we can call you and you can tell us what you want to say over the phone. We will let you know exactly how and when we plan to publicise what you tell us, to ensure that you are comfortable with it.

Everyone has a voice worth listening to. Why not have your say?

Resources & Publications

For useful links, toolkits, reports and other documents about gender, poverty and social inclusion, check out the Resources page on our website www.oxfam.org.uk/genderworks. If you would like hard copies of any of the documents listed, please give us a call on **0161 860 2813**.

We hope you've found the GenderWorks newsletter an interesting read. Please send us your comments, ideas and any information you'd like to see included in the next issue; you can call us on **01865 472137** or drop us a line at genderworks@oxfam.org.uk We look forward to hearing from you!



This publication is supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsil

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Partners

Lamoro launches GenderWorks in Italy

GenderWorks' partner in Italy, Lamoro, launches its activities at the end of October with a series of interactive seminars aimed at raising awareness of gender issues among town and city council officers.

Lamoro aims to gradually expand the influence of the project from the local level up to the Italian Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies – responsible for drafting the country's National Action Plan.

For more information contact Prisca Giaiero at europa@lamoro.it or see www.lamoro.it/



Prisca Giaiero of Lamoro, GenderWorks' partner in Italy

WAVE provides input to Austria's poverty plan

Our Austrian partner, the Vienna-based WAVE network (Women Against Violence Europe), has held two rounds of seminars involving representatives of women's shelters, intervention and counselling centres, and Austria's Anti-Poverty Network.

The first seminars, which took place in May, focused on Austria's National Action Plan and how it currently fails to prevent women affected by violence from falling into poverty. The resulting position paper on social inclusion was submitted to the NAP.

The second round of seminars included a meeting at Austria's Ministry for Social Affairs, at which WAVE presented the "Femqua" project, which helps migrant women affected by violence to get back into work, as an example of good practice.

WAVE is now organising a third round, which will focus on producing a report on Violence against Women and Poverty.

For more information contact Alina Zacher at alina.zacher@wave-network.org or see www.wave-network.org/

Resources & Publications

Links to our partners

EUROPA – Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities:

Social Protection Social Inclusion: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/index_en.htm

LAMORO: <http://www.lamoro.it>

WAVE: <http://www.wave-network.org/start.asp?ID=22650>

Women's Resource Centre: <http://www.wrc.org.uk/>

Single Parent Action network (SPAN): <http://www.singleparents.org.uk/>

Publications

For a wealth of toolkits, reports and other useful documents about gender, poverty and social inclusion, including the ones listed below, check out the Resources page on our website: www.oxfam.org/genderworks. If you would like hard copies of any of the documents listed, please give us a call on **0161 860 2813**.

Women and Social Exclusion – Oxfam submission to NAP 2008 (PDF)

Forgotten women (PDF)

This report documents research findings relevant to understanding the experiences of South Asian women who have survived domestic violence and who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – the “forgotten women”.

Tackling Inequalities: A guide to planning better services (PDF)

In the same way that you must always consider cost when designing a project or service, you must always consider fairness. This booklet is designed to help people consider inequalities from the outset when designing projects.

Gender Budgeting as a means to fulfil Public Sector Duty on Gender (PDF)

This paper explores how gender budgeting can be a useful tool to monitor performance delivery of the Public Sector Duty on Gender Equality.

Where are the women in LSPs? Women's representation in Local Strategic Partnerships (PDF)

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) aim to improve how local services are planned and delivered. This report looks at the shortage of women in LSPs, especially in senior bodies, as well as the lack of monitoring which masks the problem, and the absence of specific support to shift the balance.

Not seen and not heard? Gender, community engagement and representation (PDF)

This paper argues that a gender-aware approach is essential for effective community engagement. It looks at key policy areas and outlines practical steps for integrating gender into decision-making processes.

From getting by to getting on: women's employment and local regeneration programmes (PDF)

Why does regeneration fail the poorest women, and what can be done to help? The issues are complex, but the solutions are achievable. This report demonstrates that women's employment needs have been left out of regeneration planning.

A Change in Thinking: Gender Budgeting – now's the time

A Change in Thinking is a CD that Oxfam has put together with its partners to show how gender budgeting can deliver better value services for both women and men.

Into the lion's den: a practical guide to including women in regeneration

Gender is an important but often neglected aspect of regeneration work in the UK. This guide aims to develop the capacity of community-based groups in regeneration areas by providing the tools and techniques for them to hold decision-makers to account.