



## Women and Poverty

**“It is the women who are leaders of change and without their participation poverty can never be removed.”**

**Ela Bhatt**

When we discuss poverty we tend to think of financial income, however, you cannot discuss the poverty experienced by women in Scotland's communities without beginning with the social oppression they experience.

Women make up the majority of carers in our society and as the National Union of Teachers recognised, “Women's greater responsibility for care work is fundamental to understanding women's poverty”. Women are more likely to be carers for children, older people and sick and disabled people. These responsibilities not only increase women's risk of poverty, but also often extends their experience of poverty throughout their lifecycle. If you are in low paid part time work, in order to care for children and parents then the opportunity to gather savings and pension for older age is extremely limited, if not impossible.

The inequality of pay is a core issue for women in relation to poverty. Not only does the fact that women earn on average 15% less than men in Scotland and are more likely to be earning below the living wage, “Two-thirds of workers earning less than the living wage are women” (Closing the Gap Briefing. Women, work and poverty in Scotland : What you need to know) Their lack of independence, either from the state or in unequal relationships, reduces their control over their finances. Women are more likely to experience the direct impact of Government changes to the benefits and tax system as they are more likely to be accessing benefits and subsidies to increase their low pay. Recent austerity changes by the Government has seen a decrease in women's income as they shoulder 86% of the savings raised through cuts, resulting in lone parents for example losing £4000 per annum.

In the UK, women make up 91% of lone parents and are over-represented at services such as Foodbanks. The National Union of Teachers also recognised the “triple jeopardy’ of slashed benefits, job cuts, and a reduction in the core public services”, as highly significant on women's lives.

When you add to all this, women's experience of domestic abuse and other forms of male violence against women and children, then women's control over their income decreases further. The National Violence Against Women Network highlighted that, “89% of women experience financial abuse, as an aspect of coercive control, when experiencing domestic abuse”. This not only impacts on women at the time, but also increases the chance of women becoming lone parents when they leave abusive relationships. We know women who are lone parents earn less money when in employment, but also that “72% of households that had their Housing Benefit capped are lone parents”, (Closing the Gap).

Women are, however, also at the forefront of challenging this poverty. Women are active in Foodbanks and other community approaches to challenge poverty, as well as contributing to new ways of thinking how the economy works, e.g. Scottish Women's Budget Group. It is essential that women are part of these discussions and actions for it is women who understand the impact of poverty on their lives and the lives of those they care for.

## EVENT RESULTS

**THEME:** Research shows us that poverty overwhelmingly affects women and children. Even the World Bank acknowledges this.

This Summary outlines what women identified as their priorities issues for women in Glasgow.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Total of 76 women from local communities, representing a wide range of backgrounds, convened 22 break-out groups on issues with 69 proposed actions over two sessions. **(Feb 2012 / May 2016)**

### TOP PRIORITIES VOTED BY PARTICIPANTS (NUMBER OF VOTES)

February 2012	May 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, education, education. To raise awareness about poverty and the impact on families, women and children. Educate children/early intervention services/service providers. <b>48 votes</b></li> <li>• Educate children (and adults) Not fashion or celebrity defined:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cooking – healthy food is not more expensive.</li> <li>○ Issues: fair-trade and environment.</li> <li>○ About diversity. <b>30 votes</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Educate our children:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To respect ourselves and others.</li> <li>○ To appreciate what they have and express gratitude.</li> <li>○ To not expect everything they want immediately.</li> <li>○ Not to succumb to peer or media pressure.</li> <li>○ To aspire to be responsible. <b>21 votes</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Government should invest in more affordable childcare places in Scotland. <b>21 votes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship and peer support programme for the isolated and lonely hearts. <b>23 votes</b></li> <li>• More equal and diverse representatives on all public services especially department of work and pensions. <b>22 votes</b></li> <li>• More campaigning. Be vocal. As individuals contact MPs, MSPs, councillors. <b>20 votes</b></li> </ul>

### GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

February 2012	May 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education/Awareness raising. <b>162 votes</b></li> <li>• Government/legislation/benefits. <b>114 votes</b></li> <li>• Community action. <b>41 votes</b></li> <li>• Campaigning/Lobbying. <b>33 votes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government/Structural changes. <b>82 votes</b></li> <li>• Education/Training/Awareness raising/publicity. <b>55 votes</b></li> <li>• Organised action/Support groups. <b>44 votes</b></li> <li>• Individual action/mind-set change. <b>21 votes</b></li> </ul>

## DETAILED RESULTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

February 2012	May 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, education, education. To raise awareness about poverty and the impact on families, women and children. Educate children/early intervention services/service providers. <b>48 votes</b></li> <li>• Educate children (and adults) Not fashion or celebrity defined             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cooking – healthy food is not more expensive</li> <li>○ Issues: fair-trade and environment</li> <li>○ About diversity. <b>30 votes</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Educate our children:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To respect ourselves and others</li> <li>○ To appreciate what they have and express gratitude</li> <li>○ To not expect everything they want immediately</li> <li>○ Not to succumb to peer or media pressure</li> <li>○ To aspire to be responsible. <b>21 votes</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Government should invest in more affordable childcare places in Scotland. <b>21 votes</b></li> <li>• Ensure resources are available for ill people to afford their proper dietary needs. <b>17 votes</b></li> <li>• Reduce the gap between rich and poor – capping top salaries. <b>16 votes</b></li> <li>• Equality in criminal justice system. Make use of councillors/MSP's – election. <b>14 votes</b></li> <li>• Pay Grannys an allowance for looking after grandchildren – affordable childcare. <b>13 votes</b></li> <li>• Central and local government should be pro-active in informing people about all benefits provision and entitlement – by law. <b>13 votes</b></li> <li>• Get communities talking - get to know your neighbours. <b>13 votes</b></li> <li>• Remove stigma/challenge media – collective voice/united voice/email/lobby. <b>12 votes</b></li> <li>• A Governmental body who is responsible for designing and delivering the relevant training for women with different levels of education and experience. <b>12 votes</b></li> <li>• Enable community workers to widen accessibility to social clubs and events – promote social inclusion. <b>12 votes</b></li> <li>• Teach children financial life skills. <b>11 votes</b></li> <li>• Challenging not fit for purpose – homeless/temporary accommodation (private and social). <b>11 votes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship and peer support programme for the isolated and lonely hearts. <b>23 votes</b></li> <li>• More equal and diverse representatives on all public services especially department of work and pensions. <b>22 votes</b></li> <li>• More campaigning. Be vocal. As individuals contact MPs, MSPs, councillors. <b>20 votes</b></li> <li>• Education – male/female. <b>12 votes</b></li> <li>• Recognise the worth of traditional female roles in terms of skill status and financial worth. <b>12 votes</b></li> <li>• Make information simple and clear to understood (rather than 20 page forms and tick boxes – online forms: consider language barriers; less volunteers and more trained, paid workers. <b>12 votes</b></li> </ul>