

UNEQUAL NATION (ABRIDGED)

The case for social innovation to work for a gender equal future

Freya Johnson Ross & Ceri Goddard



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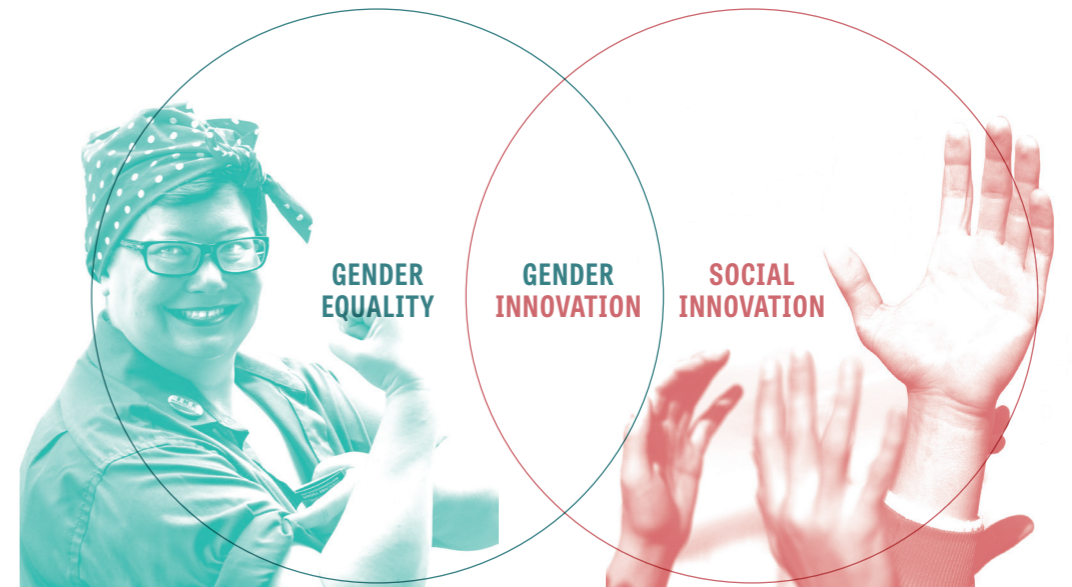
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INTRODUCTION

The Young Foundation works to harness the power of social innovation to tackle the root causes of inequalities blighting our society and limiting our potential. Gender inequality remains one of the most pervasive and entrenched inequalities. It negatively impacts on millions of individuals, from how they live and love, to what they do and earn. It also undermines our collective social and economic potential. However gender inequality is not inevitable. To build a stronger, more just society, we must find alternatives. Unlike biological sex differences, gender norms can and have changed over time and in different places. By gender norms we mean how our society values and treats men and women, and what it expects them to be and do. Ideas that are commonly accepted today, such as the value of women entering the workplace or men spending time caring for their children, were once opposed or even unimaginable.

Rather than seeing particular roles, attitudes and outcomes as 'natural' and inevitable, the idea of gender as something socially constructed and shaped has enabled both men and women to question and expand the horizons of how they live.

We have already seen change occur and we now know the positive difference it can make. Countries that rank highest for gender equality also consistently rank highly for happiness. Where gender equality is advanced, whole economies and individual businesses are more successful in terms of financial and social impact. More equal families and communities are healthier, safer and more able to contribute to creating a strong social fabric, alongside the state and businesses. Freed from restrictive gender expectations and damaging discrimination, individuals are more likely to flourish, and this also brings benefits for the communities and societies in which they live.

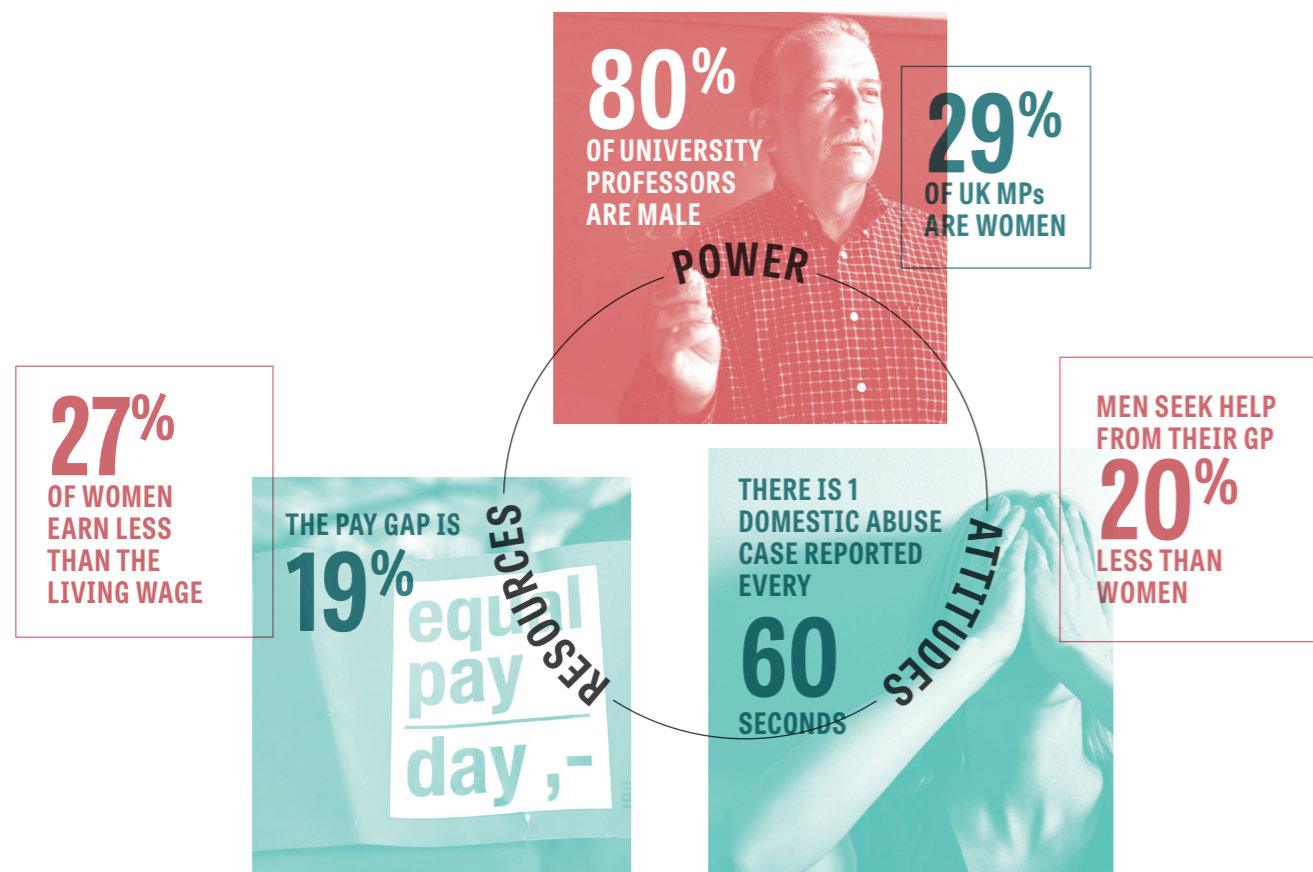


Above: What is Gender Innovation?

However we are still far from achieving gender equality, and the range of new possibilities it could open up. Although one of the key achievements of the gender equality movement has been to gain broad recognition of this, progress in many areas remains extremely slow and in others has stalled. In some areas signs of regression and unravelling of previous gains are even visible. This dynamic reflects the sheer scale and complexity of the challenges that remain, including how gender intersects with other economic and social inequalities. To both accelerate and embed future change it is clear that greater efforts which engage a much wider set of actors and resources are needed. In this context we believe that a greater application of social innovation approaches would offer immense potential to create the change we need to achieve.

To explore this potential we first present an evidence based overview of the scale, nature and impact of gender inequality in the UK today. We then consider the potential of social innovation to enhance current efforts to address this as well as how far this is being reflected in current practice. We conclude with recommendations.

1. GENDER PRESENT — STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY



Gender inequality in the UK remains a large and deep rooted problem, and is a major barrier to wider social and economic progress. We have reviewed and synthesised a wide range of recent research to present a picture of current levels of gender inequality, and their impact on the interconnected areas of resources, attitudes and power.

Resources

On a basic level, the range, size and quality of resources available to men and women impacts on their life chances. These resources are the things - including time, money, education, and health - that all people need to flourish and participate fully in society. These different types of resource are interconnected – education shapes later employment, time spent on unpaid work limits the time available for paid work or leisure, income, work and family life all affect health and wellbeing.

Key Findings and Impact

The economic opportunities and public services available to women and men are gendered, and their outcomes in terms of education, health and economic wellbeing are unequal. Reviewing the evidence across education, health, welfare, work and time, wealth and, crime and justice we found:

- evidence that early years care and education plays a vital role in shaping and perpetuating gender inequalities for children and into adulthood
- unequal opportunities and pay for women in relation to paid work
- unequal balance of responsibility and time spent on unpaid work - with women doing more
- women are disproportionately affected by reductions in public spending, particularly to welfare, which is not adequately considered or mitigated
- inadequate attention to gender in relation to the treatment of crime and justice issues.

The impact of this upon individuals and wider society results in:

- unequal choices and results in relation to education for young women and men
- a gender pay gap - with women paid considerably less than men
- lost productivity and wasted human resources in relation to the economy
- lack of choice in relation to the balancing of work and family life for men and women
- women, especially single parents, BAME and disabled women are more likely to be in poverty
- wasted resources and damage to female victims and offenders as well as their families.

Attitudes

Social and cultural understandings of gender and what it means to be a man or woman are central to the ways in which gender inequality is maintained and reproduced. The attitudes and opinions of individuals, groups and institutions reflect what society does and does not value, shape how people behave, and impact how people experience the world around them.

Key Findings and Impact

Stereotyped representations of men, women and gender relations continue to dominate multiple areas of mainstream society. This contributes to the limitations placed on men and women of all ages in terms of their gender identity, sexual orientation and ability to be healthy and free from violence and abuse.

Reviewing the evidence on culture and media, sexual orientation and identity, body image, and gender violence and abuse we found:

- unequal and limited representation of women in relation to sport and culture
- ongoing bullying and discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation
- growing prevalence of serious illnesses in relation to body image, particularly among women
- ongoing high levels of violence and abuse predominantly perpetrated by men against women

The impact of this upon individuals and the wider society is serious and damaging:

- perpetuating stereotyped attitudes and views about women, men and gender that undermine attempts to bring about change
- personal and public costs result from the need to address the physical and mental ill health resulting from bullying and self-harm of different kinds
- personal and public costs resulting from the need to support the victims of violence and abuse, as well as dealing with the perpetrators.

Power

To assess levels of inequality we must look at who in society has the power and influence to shape and change it, and their own lives. When power lacks balance it impacts on the extent to which different groups are able to shape our society as well as individuals' autonomy and choice.

Key Findings and Impact

Reviewing the evidence in relation to gender, representation and authority across the political and public sphere we have found:

- the ongoing under-representation of women in positions of authority and influence across the political, business and social spheres
- some positive but limited progress in relation to members of elected bodies and corporate boards

The impact of this on individuals and wider society is significant:

- an inadequately diverse range of views and approaches contributing to the social and political agenda and direction of the UK on a local, regional, and national level
- non diverse representative bodies are less effective in legislating to meet the needs of their entire populations
- businesses and charities are less effective in reaching their financial and social goals

This report also makes clear the interconnections between inequalities in the areas of resources, attitudes and power. Moreover it shows they interact with other forms of inequality such as ethnicity and social class to create deep and complex forms of discrimination and disadvantage. When we look across people's lives, we can see how inequalities in childhood and youth affect unequal incomes and power relations in later life. When we focus on specific issues such as gender based violence or unequal pay we see how inequalities in resources, attitudes and power all combine to both produce these and maintain the status quo.

Our review of the evidence makes it clear that the goals of social innovation simply will not be achieved without acknowledging and addressing the presence and impact of gender inequality. Additionally, we also need approaches to tackling gender inequality that recognise its deep-rootedness and so the complex nature of this task.

Delivering Gender Equality: Approaches to change

The gender equality movement is a broad church which to date has worked effectively on many fronts, engaging with and harnessing the power of the state, business and civil society. It has also taken a wide range of approaches to create change, which we characterize below.

Sameness, Difference and Transformation

This characterization refers to the type of result or outcome different approaches have sought. Sameness approaches seek for women and men to be treated in the same way. For example, the passing of equal pay legislation which required that men and women doing jobs that were the same or of equal value were paid the same. Difference approaches seek for women and men to be treated in different ways because of gender inequalities or sex difference e.g. different parental leave employment rights for mothers and fathers. Transformation approaches aim to create alternatives to traditional and unequal gender norms e.g. the implementation of flexible working practices which reflect that many employees have caring responsibilities, not just women.

Legislative, Practical and Attitudinal

Approaches to change can also be characterized by the strategy they employ: devising legislation or policy, altering practices or influencing attitudes. For example efforts to tackle workplace inequality have drawn on all three including anti-discrimination legislation, new workplace practices and campaigns and training designed to tackle sexist attitudes.

State, Business and Civil Society

Interventions to promote gender equality are also often characterized in terms of where they originate from or are led by - the state, business or civil society. State-led approaches are often associated with the development of legislation, but can also include measures such as publicly funded services or programmes that address gender inequality. For example state childcare provision, or gender mainstreaming within local government. Business or market-led approaches can include the development of new employment practices, or the development and delivery of services or products that reflect or address inequality. Business-led approaches can also include corporate social responsibility initiatives. Civil society-led approaches span a broad range of activity (from campaigning to service provision) and include different actors (from charities and community activists to academia and trade unions). Civil society approaches also play a key role in securing change from the state and business as political citizens and market consumers.

At any given time, and on a number of different gender equality issues, actors using all of these approaches can play an important role. However, such work may often take place in parallel rather than in concert – at best meaning efforts to bring positive change don't reference each other, and at worst that they are in direct conflict. Debates about what can be achieved by legislation or the state, the extent of the responsibility of the private sector and what can be achieved by civil society often characterize responses to gender inequality at local and national levels. Whilst such debate and even conflict can ultimately lead to more innovative and effective action it can also result in silo working where differences act as barriers to cross sector learning and collaboration.

Effective action for gender equality often needs to combine different approaches and actors to have the most impact. The lines between the roles of state, business and civil society are becoming increasingly blurred. The external environment for existing and emerging gender equality interventions is changing rapidly: the needs, the solutions, the actors, and critically the funding. For gender equality organisations, these changes require new partnerships, organisational structures, funding and business models, and even entirely new understandings of what constitutes 'impact'. Gender equality actors have always worked on different fronts – from demanding state action to developing business practices – yet the links between these need considerable strengthening. This makes the potential connection between gender equality and social innovation an incredibly valuable one.

2. GENDER FUTURES — GENDER AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

What is social innovation?

Social Innovation is both a means and an end. It can refer to the process of identifying, prototyping, and scaling new social solutions to problems. However, social innovation also refers to the outputs of such processes, which can range from the concrete to the conceptual. For example, new ideas, new products or new practices. They could be a new (use of) technology, a principle, a piece of legislation, a practical tool, a hybrid organisational form or a combination of these.

The heart of social innovation acknowledges that making a difference often lies in combining different existing actions, actors, insights and methods, rather than in developing something entirely new. This includes actively seeking to combine the perspectives and resources of the state, business and civil society to achieve change.

Socially innovative processes and outputs have a number of key features in common:

1. **Newness** - a social innovation is new to the context in which it appears. It might not be entirely new but it must be new to those involved in its implementation.
2. **Meets a social need** - social innovations are created with the intention of addressing a social need in a positive or beneficial way.
3. **Is put into practice** - like innovations more generally, social innovations are ideas that have been put into practice.
4. **Engages and mobilises stakeholders** - a range of stakeholders, in particular those who will benefit from an innovation, are involved or engaged in the development of the social innovation or in its governance.
5. **Transforms social relations** - social innovations aim to transform social relations by equalising access to power and resources. As such, social innovations can empower specific groups of people and challenge unequal distribution across society.

Below: The Gender Innovation eco-system



Who can do social innovation?

Social innovation doesn't refer to a specific kind of organisation, or to any particular sector of society. Social innovations can be developed anywhere, including the public and private sectors, and civil society organisations and groups. Frontline public services like schools, hospitals, prisons or care homes can develop social innovations. They can also be developed at the local level by voluntary and community sector organisations, grassroots networks and associations, as well as by social entrepreneurs. All of these areas contribute to the large and diverse social innovation eco-system made up of a number of different actors.

This includes **social entrepreneurs and pioneers** – individuals and groups who lead the development of an idea for a social innovation. It also includes a range of **social ventures** – organisational forms including businesses, charities, community groups and cross sector hybrids that tackle a social problem such as poverty or health and have the potential to be financially sustainable and scale what works. **Social enterprises** – businesses with a clear social aim that reinvests their profit in the same – are just one type of social venture. The social innovation eco-system also includes **social innovation intermediaries** – individuals, organisations, networks and spaces that connect people, ideas and resources, and **social innovation**

financiers who provide the funding to develop and support innovations. This ranges from non-repayable development grants and prizes to repayable finance and social investment.

The Potential of Gender and Social Innovation

It is important to note that socially innovative outputs and indeed innovators are not limited to the social innovation sector. If we consider the gender equality movement and its actors in the UK, we could argue that the ideas, methods and practices it has developed should be retrospectively recognized as social innovations. This includes the idea of gender and gender equality. The idea of gender as something socially constructed has revolutionized the way in which we view others and understand ourselves as men and women. Rather than seeing particular roles, attitudes and outcomes as 'natural' and inevitable, the idea of gender as something socially shaped has enabled both men and women to question and expand the horizons of how they live. Many other key achievements of the gender equality movement also constitute social innovation. These include delivering new legal rights and entitlements, institutions and organisational forms, new policy practices, and changes to employment and service provision. Moreover many of the principles and practices of today's social innovation movement, such

as participatory research and community organizing, have their roots in approaches and concepts pioneered by the women's and other equality movements.

We can see that to date the gender equality movement has been both innovative and had a valuable impact on society. This supports the idea that gender equality and social innovation have things in common. On the one hand, social innovation is concerned with bringing about positive social change. To do this without understanding and attending to the most fundamental inequality in our society can only result in partial success. Simultaneously, although the gender equality sector has also made progress in achieving its goals, it remains painfully slow. To both accelerate and deepen change it is clear that the new approaches, broader engagement, and greater resources of social innovation are needed.

This could:

1. **Increase the number of practitioners** - by mobilising and engaging a new set of actors. Collective action is larger than the sum of its parts and can result in wider, more visible, and more effective action.
1. **Trial new ways of tackling old problems** – we may find new ways of addressing old, structural problems by employing different techniques and strategies to the ones that have been used so far.
1. **Create new services** – through the design of an entirely new service, or by bringing together existing services and actors in a way that has never happened before.
2. **Provide a new lens** – by adding new methodologies and strategies to the analysis of structural gender inequality it may be possible to uncover more ways in which to approach the structural grounds that sustain the inequality.
3. **Channel and increase available resources** – gender equality actors will be able to access new sources of funding that historically have not focused on the gender equality sector.

Developing this potential will require both greater **gender innovation** and **gendering innovation**.

Gender innovation means the development of innovations which directly and deliberately focus on tackling the structural roots of gender inequality.

For example, an online platform where organisations can analyze and publish their gender pay gap, or educational spaces without rigid gender norms.

Gendering innovation means mainstreaming the consideration of gender into the broader practice of social innovation. For example an anti-poverty social venture considering gender inequalities in planning its theory of change and activities or social investors using a gender lens as one way to assess likely return on investments.

What's happening in practice?

Whilst in principle the links between gender and social innovation are clear and compelling, this does not mean they have been reflected in practice. As part of our scoping we undertook desk-based research, and consulted actors engaged with social innovation, to examine the extent to which the gender equality and social innovation movements have cross-fertilized.

We found that those undertaking gender equality work have mostly not engaged with the theory, methods or modes of funding associated with the social innovation sector. Similarly, the majority of social innovation practitioners, intermediaries and funders have not systematically engaged with the ideas and expertise of the gender equality sector. They operate, for the most part in parallel, with little bridging between the two.

Having said this, we have identified some exciting green shoots of a gender innovation movement in the UK and internationally. Nevertheless there is much scope to expand the range and focus of this when we consider the extent of the challenge set out in the previous section.

Financial and Other Support for Gender Innovation

A critical component of a flourishing gender innovation eco-system is the availability of appropriate financial and non-financial support. Without investor demand and appropriate support that reflects the specific needs of gender innovators, supply will be curtailed and levels of gender innovation will remain low.

Our scoping research indicated that both funding and tailored support is in short supply, inhibiting the development and sustainable growth of gender innovation. We found there is no dedicated or targeted innovation fund aimed specifically at gender innovation.

There are a small number of traditional grant funding organisations that do have dedicated gender equality programmes or explicit gender equality priorities. However these are not necessarily linked to their organisations' social investment wings – meaning the links between gender and social innovation are not being made. The lack of targeted gender funds or support would be less concerning if gender equality was consciously mainstreamed throughout social investment and social intermediary organisations. However our survey of a sample of current UK social innovation funders, including those with a focus on inequality, indicated this was not the case, despite indications of interest.

We also consulted with organisations working on gender equality. They generally agreed there was synergy between the processes and aims of their work and that of social innovation. However, they did feel language and terminology could be a barrier to greater joint efforts, and that certain tools of social innovation might not be appropriate to tackle gender inequality. They highlighted the need for more information and support to understand and access social innovation finance. They acknowledged and were open to the need to challenge traditional approaches.

What is needed to better harness social innovation to advance gender equality?

The potential of social innovation to increase the effectiveness and impact of gender equality action is significant but largely untapped. Our scoping suggests gender equality and social innovation actors have yet to have the opportunity and space to work in tandem to address gender inequality. Despite there being some promising areas of existing social innovation work relating to gender equality, we have found a lack of structured systematic ways in which gender equality and social innovation have been enacted together. This is the case in terms of social ventures, intermediaries, funding and policies.

To combine the power of social innovation and gender equality actors to accelerate and deepen change will require greater levels of innovation in the gender equality movement and the mainstreaming of gender across the wider social innovation movement.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

We have divided our recommendations into two sections. The first are cross-cutting and general, the second relate specifically to some of the key actors discussed in this report. They are not intended to be prescriptive. Instead they are intended to stimulate discussion and action from those who have the means and foresight to fully unlock the potential of gender innovation.

Cross-cutting recommendations

- Acknowledge and raise wider awareness of the structural and interconnected nature of gender inequality, its role in wider inequality and the benefits of change.
- Address the need for greater gender innovations to not only mitigate the consequences of gender inequality (such as improved services for those facing discrimination) but also seek systemic or structural change.
- Reflect in policy and practice the relationship between the different dimensions of gender inequality – resources, attitudes and power.
- Create shared spaces for critical dialogue between social innovators and gender equality actors on problems and solutions.
- Create shared platforms and other mechanism, at local and national level, that support practical collaboration between different actors and sectors.

- Undertake further research to identify areas of gender inequality where the opportunity and/or the imperative, to better harness social innovation are greatest. We need to better understand which existing gender innovations can and should be scaled. Or what greater social innovation could bring in areas where progress is stalled (such as levels of gender based violence) or where is inequality widening (such as the disproportionate impact on women of austerity at local and national level).

Sectoral recommendations

Policy makers

At local, national and EU levels:

- Incorporate gender equality opportunities and challenges within social innovation and investment policy goals.
- Reflect and draw on social innovation developments and learning in formulating and delivering gender equality and wider equalities policy.

Social investors and funders

- Develop understanding and measurement of gender inequality in the context of funding and investment processes for all organisations and ventures.
- Increase targeted funding and investment available to ventures directly addressing gender inequality.
- Develop understanding of and capacity in gender lens investing.

Innovation support bodies

- Include support on gender analysis and innovation within existing offers to ventures (gendering innovation).
- Proactively stimulate and support innovations whose aim to directly address gender inequality (gender innovation).

Gender equality organisations

- Make greater use of the idea, methods and tools of social innovation in enhancing existing and developing new gender equality interventions.
- Engage with innovation support bodies and funders in relation to current and proposed work to address gender inequality.

Social ventures

- Take steps, including actively collaborating with specialist gender organisations, to reflect and tackle gender inequality in relation to developing socially innovative solutions, projects, and products.

