

## Comments on Indicators

Comments by organisations, groups and individuals listed alphabetically under each of the headings identified as the main issues raised in the responses to the consultation.

**Belfast Butterfly Club** - - agree with these indicators although comment that there is no specific mention of transgendered people.

**British Psychological Society** - comment that the benchmarks are wholly appropriate and are extremely comprehensive but the extent to which these will be indicative of the initiative itself or more general social trends will be almost impossible to disaggregate.

**Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI)** - would strongly advocate that if Government is serious about including girls and boys in this strategy CiNI, alongside their representative groups, must be involved in the process of developing indicators and the action plan. CiNI note the suggestions for selected equality indicators but say it is difficult to comment as the indicators are not linked into specific actions. They point out that there appears to be a lack of girl/boy centred indicators and overall would advocate further desegregation of indicators to reflect the spectrum of multiple identities.

**Council for Catholic Maintained Schools** - recommend that attention needs to be paid to how these indicators can be disaggregated in terms of different equality and social groupings to enable analysis in relation to multiple identities.

**Disability Action** - are disappointed that the draft strategy contains a limited focus on a short action plan and a series of gender equality indicators adding that these lack targets, outcomes and time frames as well as information on monitoring and evaluation.

**EHSSB** - advise that the indicators need to take into account issues in respect of early childhood experiences such as children and young people's start to life within the care system.

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** - comment that there is no sense that the indicators presented in Annex 8 have been used to inform the strategy and recommend that the indicators expressly inform the developing strategy

**INGAGE - Inter-Agency Group** - recommend that targets, actions, Indicators and a meaningful time frame - all three will be needed if measurable and real change is to come about as a result of the strategy. They agree that there is a need for gender equality indicators for NI and that these could also be applied to the EQIA processes within all statutory bodies

**NIC ICTU** - say they assume that the indicators set out in Annex 8 are to serve as the benchmarks against which 'measurable improvements' are to be assessed. They add that, if correct, then they consider that there should be a clear link between these indicators and the data on women's inequality and, as appropriate, that clear and specific time-bound targets need to be expressed for these indicators.

**NICVA** - consider that the strategy is missing some vital indicators including: the cost and quality of childcare; young people's views on childcare and education; the different needs of rural women; experience of housing and homelessness; and the pension gap between women and men. The Council sees no evidence of awareness about the major government research project 'Indicators of Equality and Diversity'. They also believe that the indicators also fail to acknowledge the reality of overlapping benefits whereby many women cannot claim incapacity benefit if they already receive a widow's

pension. Referring to "mainstreaming gender into employment policy for land-use zoning policy" (on page 15 of the document) they ask where is the gender equality indicator that reflects this progressive thinking?

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive** - think there is a need for indicators relating to equality of access to a child/children to both parents following family breakdown e.g. percentage time spent with father/mother/grandparents.

**Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)** - feel that the Indicators data, while useful, is not sufficiently comprehensive and needs to be based on a fuller understanding of the variety of factors contributing to women's inequality.

**Presbyterian Church in Ireland** - comment that imbalance in the composition of the educational workforce at all levels may or may not indicate inequality of opportunity and that using this composition as an indicator of inequality may give spurious results. The Church consider that the indicators under Annex 8, number 3, "Attitudes", have the potential to be either naïve and/or intrusive and that they do not allow for personal choice. They also feel that the indicators under number 5, "Income" are not at all clear and that those under number 10, "Violence and crime" do not seem broad enough.

**QUB** - comment that the suggested indicators are comprehensive.

**Save the Children** - Of 57 indicators suggested by the strategy, only two are directly related to children and both of these refer to education attainment..... In order to ensure that the Gender Equality Strategy is having apposite impact on boys and girls, it will be essential that a complete range of child focussed indicators are included.

**South and East Belfast Trust** - believe it will be important for lower-level performance indicators and targets for actions to be set and to identify benchmarks by which actions can be measured. The Trust Particularly welcomes using indicators to track progress. These, they say, are comprehensive and cover key aspects. The Trust would recommend recognition of differences within the gender domain through indicators related to disabled, long-term unemployed people, Travellers or minority ethnic groups as too high-level a statement can appear exclusive.

**UNISON** - can see no linkage between the data presented in the strategy and the indicators of gender equality indicators set out in the Annex.

**Women's Criminal Justice Network** - point out that the gender indicators do not cover crime, justice and community safety and that this omission needs to be addressed. They hope that the indicators for violence and crime will be picked up through the equity monitoring arrangements which are coming into play within the Criminal Justice system and recommend availing of this information in the future. They recommend that issues such as crime, justice and community safety need to be properly considered and issues such as gender indicators in sport, the arts and business appear to have been overlooked. They would also welcome the inclusion of indicators on Community Safety and Crime issues as indicators of greater equality, as well as indicators relating to representation within the Criminal Justice system.

**Women's Resource and Development Agency and the Rural Women's Networks** - believe that the list of gender indicators given lacks this focus (referring to the structural reasons for women's inequality and the multiple discrimination experienced by women) because it ignores any indicator which cannot be directly related to the experience of men and women. They feel that the indicators set out in Annex 8 do not appear to be linked into the Strategy in any meaningful way that this is a clear omission and needs to be rectified.

**Women's Support Network** - comment that there is also need clear targets and indicators and with sufficient resources to make a difference to women's lives.

**YouthAction Northern Ireland** - are unclear how these selected equality indicators will be linked to the strategy and to actions and would recommend that these indicators should go beyond statistical analysis and measure aspects of attitudinal change, particularly in relation to how both young men and young women perceive their future and their roles in various aspects of life in Northern Ireland. They add that the indicators and benchmarks need to be clearly linked to the overall strategy and priority actions. They explain that if the indicators are not clearly linked to actions and to SMART objectives, it will not be possible to assess whether changes have been a direct result of the strategy or simply an accidental process.