



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT SPARKS ECONOMIC SUCCESS



“Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth.”

– press-release announcing the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The Big Picture

Women's empowerment is necessary for human well-being.



Gender equity puts in motion economic and social benefits that extend beyond households and communities to national productivity and global security. In the strongest democracies and most efficient economies, women's and men's economic and political participation is roughly similar. Yet the family care work mostly done by women is still generally invisible – despite its enormous economic contributions.

Harnessing the power of proven correlations between the value of care, gender equity, and shared prosperity, the Caring Economy Campaign (CEC) provides powerful tools for crafting more effective public policies.

The CEC's Social Wealth Economic Indicators (SWEIs) demonstrate the connection between investing in people, promoting an infrastructure of care, and advancing human capacity development and well-being. These new measures compare policies from one place to another, and track their progress over time.

Consider These Facts:

- ❖ Nations with a smaller gender gap enjoy greater prosperity and a higher quality of life, as well as more robust democracy.
- ❖ Women's workforce participation correlates to economic expansion, enhanced global competitiveness, and a higher GDP.

- ❖ Paid family leave narrows the pay gap, cuts costs to employers and stimulates the economy.
- ❖ The economic value of unpaid domestic labor (e.g. raising children and running households) represents 25% to 50% of a nation's GDP.
- ❖ Public investment in care policies (e.g. quality early childhood programs, flexible workplace arrangements) yield great benefits, lowering public costs and raising household income and profits.
- ❖ Support for gender equity increases women's political representation and broadens issues addressed by legislative action, especially in education and health.

Why is the status of women a reliable indicator for quality of life for everyone?

Women are half the world's population and the majority of caregivers. In the US, women possess more degrees than men at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. When women have higher social and economic status, they are more likely to share in political power. Where women's representation approaches 50% in government, those societies prioritize caring policies. Increased attention and public investment in education and care benefit well-being and economic security at every income level and in every demographic.



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All around the world, movement toward gender equity correlates with:

- Faster economic growth
- Less corruption and more transparent business operations
- Lower crime rates
- Lower mortality rates for mothers and infants
- More schooling for kids
- Less malnutrition
- Less child abuse and intimate violence

So, Where Does the US Stand?

In spite of being a superpower and the world's largest economy, the US has fallen dangerously behind other industrialized countries in significant respects:

- ❖ The US is the only industrialized nation with no nationally guaranteed paid maternity and paternity leave. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators>, 2014
- ❖ Among developed nations, the US invests the least in early childhood education. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators>, 2014
- ❖ The maternal mortality rate is higher in the US than any other developed country. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators>, 2014
- ❖ A child in the US is over two times as likely to die before age 5 than a child in Iceland. <http://whale.to/b/deathchild.html>
- ❖ Data from the 2013 US Census Bureau indicates 20% of US children live in poverty. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2013>
- ❖ Women's poverty rates in the US are always higher than men's, and nearly twice as high over age 65. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2013>
- ❖ The US spends less than half as much as other industrialized nations on family



benefits as a percentage of GDP. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators>, 2014

- ❖ In 2013 the median annual income for female workers was 20% less than the median annual income for men, at \$38,097 vs. \$48,099. The discrepancy for women of color and Hispanic women is even greater. <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/03/08/international-womens-day-inequality-in-charts>
- ❖ The US gender wage gap exists across all industries, occupations, education levels, races and ethnicities. National Partnership for Women & Families, Issue Brief, An Unlevel Playing Field, American's Gender-Based Wage Gap, Binds of Discrimination, and A Path Forward, April 2015
- ❖ The US pay gap between mothers and fathers is 29%. National Partnership for Women & Families, Issue Brief, An Unlevel Playing Field, American's Gender-Based Wage Gap, , April 2015
- ❖ Women hold 20% of seats in the US Congress. Ten other nations have at least double this number. <https://www.savethechildren.net/state-worlds-mothers-2015>
- ❖ The estimated economic contribution of unpaid U.S. family caregivers was \$450 billion in 2009. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/labor/report/2014/02/05/83427/family-matters/>
- ❖ In spite of dramatic increases in educational attainment, women are over-represented in low wage jobs, especially in the service industries like home health aides, child care workers, fast food workers, restaurant servers, maids, and cashiers. National Women's Law Center, Underpaid and Overloaded; Women in Low Wage Jobs, 2014.
- ❖ The US ranks 33 in in the 2015 *Mothers' Index Save the Children*, based on the 5 indicators of maternal health, children's well-being, educational status, economic status, and political status - behind most European nations, as well as Japan, Canada, and Singapore.

