

## MAKE THE GENDER CONNECTION

**“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.”**

– from the press release announcing the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, a new UN agency formed in July, 2010

### Focus of Action:



Our job is to put the proof that women’s issues are key to human and economic development on the world stage. Together, we

can insist that economic measures, political analyses, and national and international policies recognize that the status of women is not a peripheral matter but central to the future of humanity.

Building caring economics requires putting an end to the traditional devaluation of anything stereotypically associated with women and “women’s work” that prevents us from adopting caring, equitable and sustainable practices and policies.

### Discover the Facts:

- ❖ Many people still think that chronic poverty, environmental destruction, violence and political repression have nothing to do with gender, but studies now prove that the status of women and children are key predictors of both long-term quality of life and economic success.
- ❖ A 1995 Center for Partnership Studies’ study of 89 nations statistically verified that when the status and power of women is higher, so is a nation’s general quality of life, and when it’s lower, so is the quality of life for all.

- ❖ The 2000 World Values Survey, which studied 65 countries representing 80% of the world’s population, shows that societies where there is more acceptance of women’s equality are more economically prosperous and more democratic.

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

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

### ***Why is the status of women predictive of quality of life for all?***

- ❖ Women are half the human population, and provide the majority of caregiving in both families and communities. Societies where women have higher status and are almost 50% of the government (such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland), give more fiscal priority to caring policies, such as universal healthcare, high quality child care, parenting education, and generous paid parental leave.

The Caring Economics Conversations Program is a project of the Center for Partnership Studies  
Learn more at: [www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org)

## So, What's the Status of US Women?

Many people may assume that the status of women in the United States is far higher than in other countries, and it is true that there are many places in the world where women have far lower status and far fewer opportunities than they do in the US.



However, **the US has actually fallen behind** most other Western Industrialized countries in many important areas:

- ❖ The U.S. now ranks **66th globally** in women's representation in national government.
- ❖ The **gender gap** in access to resources and opportunities is **wider in America than much of the Western world**. In 2010, the US ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in World Economic Forum's annual gender gap report. <https://members.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2010.pdf>
- ❖ White women earn **77 cents to every dollar** earned by men in the US; African-American women earn 62% of what white men earn for the same work, and Latina women earn 53%. These numbers have all trended **downward** instead of improving in recent years. <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/350PressSept2010.pdf>.
- ❖ Women are **segregated into low paying occupations** that involve the work of care and are thus devalued. In 2007, nearly half of employed US women were clustered into just 20 occupational categories, of which the average annual median earnings were **\$27,383**. Wider Opportunities for Women, unpublished analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2007.
- ❖ Women hold 15.7% of the seats on Fortune 500 boards, and only 3% are held by women of color. **10% of Fortune 500 boards include no women** members.



<http://www.catalyst.org/publication/460/42/2010-catalyst-census-fortune-500-women-board-directors>

- ❖ Over the span of their prime working years, women **earn only 38% of what men earn**. Why? In part because women step out of the workforce to perform 75% of the unpaid work of care for their loved ones and community members. Stephen J. Rose and Heidi I. Hartmann, "Still a Man's Labor Market: The Long-Term Earnings Gap," Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2004.
- ❖ American women over **65 are twice as likely** as men of the same age **to live in poverty**. Stephen J. Rose and Heidi I. Hartmann, "Still a Man's Labor Market: The Long-Term Earnings Gap," Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2004.
- ❖ The U.S. ranks **41st worldwide in maternal mortality**, behind many developing countries. African-American women are 4 times more likely to die in childbirth than white women. [http://articles.cnn.com/2010-03-12/health/maternal.mortality\\_1\\_maternal-deaths-deaths-and-complications-pregnancy?\\_s=PM:HEALTH](http://articles.cnn.com/2010-03-12/health/maternal.mortality_1_maternal-deaths-deaths-and-complications-pregnancy?_s=PM:HEALTH)



### Conversation Starters

1. What surprises you in the data presented here?
2. Given that the status of women is such a critical indicator of both economic success and quality of life for all, where **in your community** do you see opportunities to positively impact women's lives?
3. Which of these statistics do you think would change most dramatically if we, as a culture, valued care and caregiving more highly? Why?

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