

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate distribution

TWF Urges Breaking Gender Zero-sum Thinking Promote Gender Equality to Sustain HK's Competitiveness



Hong Kong, September 18, 2023: As we move into the post-pandemic era, the world is facing new challenges and competition for talent across industries. To maintain its competitiveness, Hong Kong must prioritise and showcase its diversity and innovation, recognising the crucial role that gender equality plays in this regard. In view of this, The Women's Foundation (TWF) launched its #BreakZeroSum video campaign today, emphasising the benefits of gender equality for societal development and debunking misconceptions surrounding gender equality that we encounter in our daily lives.

Gender inequality continues to be a pressing issue in Hong Kong. According to the Quarterly Report on General Household Survey, Second Quarter 2023¹ by the Census and Statistics Department:

- Only 48% of women participate in the workforce, compared with 64% of men (excluding foreign domestic helpers)
- Gender pay gap stands at 15% (excluding foreign domestic helpers), for every HK\$10 earned by a man, their female counterpart earns just HK\$8.5
- Among women who are economically inactive, 34% say it is due to household duties, 10 times higher than the 3% reported by men

¹ Quarterly Report on General Household Survey, Second Quarter 2023, the Census and Statistics Department (<https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/wbr.html?ecode=B10500012023QQ02&scode=200>)

Hong Kong should prioritise boosting the female workforce participation rate. In comparison to neighbouring regions like Singapore, which boasts a female employment participation rate of 63%² in 2022, Hong Kong has consistently maintained a lower women's employment rate. This situation not only harms women's advancement but also has a negative impact on the overall development of Hong Kong. TWF calls for change and has launched the #BreakZeroSum video campaign for that purpose. The video shows a heated conversation between a man and a woman seated at opposite ends of a see-saw, illustrating misconceptions in promoting gender equality. It also underscores that gender equality benefits everyone, and it is not about one gender winning at the expense of another.

Research referenced in the video indicates that when companies prioritise gender equality it can lead to overall better business outcomes with an around 60% increase in areas such as profitability, productivity, and the ability to attract and retain talent³. Additionally, couples are happier in their marriage when household chores and childcare responsibilities are equally shared⁴. From a macro perspective, US\$12 trillion could be added to the global economy by closing the gender gap⁵, creating a win-win situation where everyone benefits from a more equal world.

As an international and multicultural city, Hong Kong's competitiveness and development are closely intertwined with gender equality. Promoting gender equality and raising awareness about its significance are pivotal for ensuring Hong Kong's sustainable future.

TWF encourages the public to share the video on social media, spreading the message that "Gender equality is a win-win, not a zero-sum game". TWF further calls on everyone to become advocates and take action to advance gender equality, fostering a more equal, happy, and prosperous Hong Kong together.

Please watch and share the #BreakZeroSum campaign video here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwuZXZbEHT4>

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² Female labor force participation rate in Singapore 2013-2022

(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/951113/singapore-female-labor-force-participation-rate/>)

³ Beyond the glass ceiling: Why businesses need women at the top

(<https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/beyond-the-glass-ceiling#benefits>)

⁴ Reconceptualizing the Gendered Division of Housework: Number of Shared Tasks and Partners' Relationship Quality

(<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11199-022-01282-5>)

⁵ How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth

(<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>)

About The Women's Foundation

The Women's Foundation is a Hong Kong registered not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong. TWF is focused on challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership roles, and empowering women in poverty through ground-breaking research, innovative and impactful community programmes, and education and advocacy.

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