

COMMUNITY VOICES

Transformational Leadership Without Equality Is Neither: Challenging the Same Old System

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Abstract

This paper reports on my experience in the 2004/2005 University of New Brunswick sponsored *21 Leaders* initiative, on the presentation of the initiative by me and a colleague at an international conference - Women as Global Leaders - and on the capacity of *21 Leaders* to contribute to transformation in New Brunswick.

Résumé

Cet article rapporte mon expérience en 2004/2005 à l'occasion de l'initiative *21 Leaders*, parrainée par la University of New Brunswick, sur la présentation qu'une collègue et moi avons faite sur l'initiative lors d'une conférence internationale - Women as Global Leaders - et sur la capacité de *21 Leaders* de contribuer à la transformation au Nouveau-Brunswick.

Introduction

I am convinced that women will prevail. They will continue the work to make human rights - their rights, their children's rights - a reality. I have seen for myself how women in every region are increasingly...press[ing] for change. (Robinson 2006)

In March 2006, Zayed University, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), hosted Women as Global Leaders (WAGL): Communities in Transition. It focused on the role that women play in today's changing society - on the successes experienced as a result of the women's movement, and on the challenges still confronting women as they struggle for gender equality.¹ Delegates were addressed by an array of distinguished women, including the Honourable Mary Robinson, Former United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights; and Her Excellency Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. From different perspectives, the message throughout the conference was consistent - equal rights have not yet been achieved so we must keep working to achieve this important goal.

My colleague Anne McInerney and I attended this conference to share with women around the world our Canadian experience as young female members of *21 Leaders for the 21st Century*, a pillar of New Brunswick's NextNB program² that was launched by the University of New Brunswick to address the need for transformation in the province of New

Brunswick. This was an especially exciting opportunity for me, not only as a student in the fields of marginalized populations, youth leadership, and public policy, but also as a young woman who is committed to channeling her efforts towards promoting leadership development and achieving equality for young women. This paper, which presents my reflection on the *21 Leaders* project and experiences arising from that project, uses the definition of transformational leadership put forth by Kouzes and Posner (2002), scholars in business leadership and management. Their pragmatic definition focuses, from a North American perspective, on helping those in formal positions of power (e.g., business executives, school principals) lead their organizations to become catalysts for societal change. Transformational leadership, which connotes change towards a more ethical outcome, is comprised of five principles: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner 2002).³

After outlining the intent and implementation of the *21 Leaders* program, I reflect on the program's strengths and weaknesses related to the engagement of women, highlight ongoing challenges facing women's equality in New Brunswick, and discuss our presentation at the WAGL conference and the creation of 21inc., two initiatives that arose from the *21 Leaders* program. I then offer an assessment of the transformative capacity of *21 Leaders* according to the leadership principles outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2002). Finally, I make recommendations about ways that *21 Leaders* can advance the definition of transformational leadership by aspiring for inclusive transformation.⁴ In considering the program's transformative capacity, I contend that in order to experience inclusive transformation in New Brunswick, we must be sensitive to equality issues in our creation of experiences like *21 Leaders*. In particular, we have a responsibility to examine structures that

systemically disadvantage women and minorities, and to constantly seek out the voice of the marginalized. Without inclusivity, we will only be able to serve some New Brunswickers, which will ultimately bring the process of transformation to an unsuccessful conclusion because transformational leadership without equality is neither.

Reflecting on *21 Leaders* for the 21st Century

In 2004, the University of New Brunswick's President, Dr. John McLaughlin, launched NextNB, an initiative described as the beginning of a story of transformation. His intention was to lead the transformation of New Brunswick society; a response to significant demographic, socioeconomic, political, health, and education challenges (NextNB 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2005), including a shrinking population and pool of skilled employees, a struggling resource-based economy, and an increasingly unhealthy and illiterate citizenry. Together, these challenges create a need to transform the way we think about our province and the future we envision for ourselves. One of the pillars of this initiative was the creation of *21 Leaders*. In 2004, the inaugural group of *21 Leaders* (including 9 women) was selected to participate in a series of meetings, a tour of the province, and a provincial conference focused on generating ideas for driving New Brunswick's transformation. The initiative was designed to connect a diverse group of young New Brunswickers and encourage them to engage in frank discussions about the economic, cultural, social, and demographic challenges facing the province. As well, the project was meant to impassion participants to become engaged in the province's present and future. Through meetings, conference calls and research opportunities, a tour of the province to visit community members and business, government and voluntary sector leaders, and a provincial conference designed to generate action plans for the

next New Brunswick, the group developed strong bonds with each other, and a strong commitment to the idea of making New Brunswick a sustainable province and a better place to live for its entire citizenry. This initiative specifically targeted the transformational leadership concept of inspiring a common vision (Kouzes and Posner 2002) among participants, and ultimately among people in the province. For me, the experience of being a part of this group resulted in two key outcomes: (a) a better understanding of New Brunswick, and (b) the development of my personal network.

Understanding New Brunswick

Our experience with the *21 Leaders* program provided us with a sense of the different experiences (by region and by profession) that define the lives of New Brunswickers. The group's experience was characterized by geographic and linguistic diversity, but was limited in its access to the most marginalized people in the province. Those suffering from illness, living in poverty, and experiencing isolation remained invisible. As well, most of the identified leaders that we met were men, due in part to the disproportionate number of leadership posts controlled by men, and in part to the way we conceptualize what it means to be a leader. Our participation in a ceremonial sweat lodge with members of the Elsipogtog First Nation was a wonderful experience, but devoid of discussion about the prevalent, inexcusable, and well-documented challenges of life on a reserve. Presenting diverse leadership role models and societal conditions is important to dispel stereotypes of what leaders should look like, and to clarify the many challenges we face in this process of transformation.

Developing Personal and Professional Networks

Each participant now has a network of 21 new colleagues and friends around the province. Through these relationships, strong professional and personal

connections have developed. As a member of this group, I had the opportunity to develop significant and lasting relationships with an interesting milieu of people. For example, as a result of the *21 Leaders* program, I am far more familiar with the workings of the private sector. As well, I am more attuned to issues facing rural New Brunswick given that I now have personal friends who call small, rural communities home. The people in our group represented various professional interests, and were divided nearly equally between gender and official language groups. Still, involvement required both a significant time commitment and the luxury of being able to travel independently around the province for one week. Therefore, the benefit of this experience came to women who, like me, were relatively free from serious barriers to participation, such as those faced by single mothers, women who are illiterate and/or uneducated, or women who survive on social assistance or minimum wage.

Reflecting on Transformational Leadership's Capacity to Facilitate Equality

BARRIERS TO EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

If achieving gender equality in leadership were easy or broadly desired, we would have already achieved this goal. Women's suffrage, which brought about critical but incomplete reforms to women's democratic participation, is now over 100 years old, highlighting the reality that international efforts to promote gender equality have been around for some time. Particularly in the last forty years, the United Nations' efforts to support women's rights on a global scale has drawn attention to the plight of women around the world and has been instrumental in facilitating a coordinated movement (Antrobus 2004; Newman and White 2006). Globalization in its literal sense has allowed more geographically connected efforts related to the pursuit of equality; still, many consider economic globalization as being particularly detrimental to women the world over. The

feminization of poverty, the ongoing pay gap between men and women and increased female trafficking are but three examples of this (Grant-Cummings 1998; Newman and White 2006).

More recently, the women's equality movement has seen women organizing in parallel with human, environmental and civil rights movements, all as part of an ongoing effort to promote gender equality. In fact, the pursuit of women's equality allows us to peripherally address a number of other social concerns through a more complex framework because equality is a cross-cutting issue (Goldin Rosenberg 1996; Newman and White 2006). Further, today's women's rights movement has come to be considered more political, primarily based on the recognition that oppression's systemic causes demand systemic solutions (Goldin Rosenberg 1996). In this vein, Canadian women work both from within, and outside of, the formal political process in an effort to bring about the growing diversity of changes being demanded (Newman and White 2006). Despite major advances for women, there remain a number of reasons that gender equality eludes us. Particularly, we are yet to experience a balance of power between men and women, a reality that is dramatically represented by considering historical definitions of the concept of leadership, discrepancies between the fundamental human rights of men and women and structural barriers to women's participation in leadership positions.

Historical Definitions of Leadership

One of our failings in achieving gender equality in leadership lies in our historical definitions of the concept of leadership. In the past, studies of leadership suggested that leaders were born, not made, and that certain individuals were endowed with specific traits that distinguished them from followers and allowed them to be leaders (Komives *et al.* 1998). Fortunately, more recent literature on relational leadership (Komives *et al.* 1998)

and transformational leadership (Kouzes and Posner 2002) suggests that leadership is accessible to everyone, and that people exercise leadership in many ways and at many levels of society. These newer perspectives are advantageous to women who continue to be excluded from formal positions of influence despite the extraordinary leadership they demonstrate in the maintenance of families, communities, and human relationships around the world. Furthermore, these perspectives help enable women to access formal leadership positions because these leadership theories acknowledge the skills, attitudes and actions associated with leadership (Komives *et al.* 1998; Kouzes and Posner 2002).

Ongoing Discrepancies in Fundamental Human Rights

Although it is tempting to point solely to the burden borne by the rights of women in the developing world,⁵ New Brunswick's women, who live in one of the most developed and economically endowed nations on earth, still do not experience parity with their male counterparts. Almost twice as many women as men work for minimum wage and almost five times as many families are headed by single women than by single men (ACSW CCCF 2006b). Further, nearly 33% of female adolescents in New Brunswick have been physically, sexually, or psychologically abused while in intimate relationships (Price *et al.* 2000). As well, women in New Brunswick continue to be marginalized by archaic abortion policies (McHardie 2007). These injustices lead to a host of related health, social, and emotional disadvantages (Brooks-Gunn *et al.* 1999; Hertzman 1999; Raphael 2004).

Ongoing Structural Challenges to Women's Participation

The shifting perspective of the concept of leadership facilitates small advances in recognizing the vast contribution that women make to society. However, this does not negate the importance of creating equal access for

women to positions in formal structures; structures that are predicated on historical understandings of leadership and that remain systemically advantageous to men. Our placement of women in positions of leadership is deplorable. Only five women have ever been elected to the House of Commons from New Brunswick (Next NB 2004c). As of 2006, New Brunswick had no female members in the Federal House of Commons (ACSWCCCF 2006a) and only 6 of its 55 provincial MLAs were women. The barriers to participation faced by women in politics in New Brunswick include deeply imbedded discrimination, election timing, and recruitment procedures (Pitre 2004, 2003). Low numbers of women at higher echelons of public life are structurally reinforced. Historical beliefs about men being more qualified for leadership and management remain residual in our nomination and election structures and result in relatively few women being nominated to stand for election, or in their being nominated to "un-winnable" ridings. Additionally, the hostile nature of politics for women discourages them from seeking office (Pitre 2003). Once they overcome this first layer of structural hurdles, women who do enter politics are subjected to gender-biased reporting (Trimble and Arscott 2003). Their appointment to cabinet posts is also impacted in the Atlantic provinces by our first-past-the-post electoral system which tends to favour men when sole representatives are elected.⁶ This trend extends into the formulation of cabinet; given that New Brunswick is likely to receive only one cabinet position, it typically goes to a man (Conrad 2003). Although this amply highlights the deficit of women in positions of leadership, there are many other professional examples. The Senate and the Queen's Privy Council are both dominated by men (Trimble and Arscott 2003), and women comprise only 34% of full time professors at New Brunswick universities (ACSWCCCF 2006a).

Discussions about the under-representation of women in formal

positions of leadership often precede a dialogue about why we should care. Beyond the fact that a system which treats women fairly is "just the right thing to do," women tend to advance policy that directly enhances gender equality more readily (Trimble and Arscott 2003). Fortunately, the *21 Leaders* program has started to address this systemic exclusion by engaging young women in the process of transformation in New Brunswick.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A MEANS TO EQUALITY

Transformational leadership, according to Kouzes and Posner (2002), is built on five principles: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. In addition to these characteristics, Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggest that the foundation of leadership is credibility. Transformational leadership is appropriate for considering leadership with respect to gender and other forms of equality because it can be modified to ensure that leadership responds sensitively to underrepresented and marginalized populations.

Throughout the inception and implementation of the *21 Leaders* program, there were signs of transformational leadership. The initiative's founder, Dr. John McLaughlin, was willing to instigate an uncomfortable but necessary dialogue about New Brunswick's transformation. His concerns about our shrinking and increasingly unhealthy population, our lack of economic competitiveness and our lagging educational achievements created an appropriate sense of urgency. Further, his acknowledgement that the last great transformation in New Brunswick was borne by young people returning from World War Two made him willing to put his faith in us as the future of the province. This modeling is recognized by Kouzes and Posner (2002) as being a foundational element of transformational leadership. Dr. McLaughlin has a reputation of being a visionary.

Community dialogues and the establishment of the *21 Leaders* group began the creation of a common vision, and laid the foundations for a province-wide movement. Most importantly, they enabled others to act (Kouzes and Posner 2002) by placing power in the hands of the community majority rather than in the hands of the traditional leadership minority. This served the important purpose of engaging members of the public in influencing a provincial agenda that addressed concerns of the general population; this engagement manifests itself through the *21 Leaders'* creation of 21inc. 21inc. will function as a diverse network which will facilitate opportunities to continue inspiring young leaders in New Brunswick and a public policy dialogue about the current and future state of New Brunswick's social, cultural, and economic development.

The decision to engage young people in the NextNB project is indicative of a new approach - a challenge to the status quo (Kouzes and Posner 2002). The gender and culture represented by these young leaders, as well as their involvement in various professional sectors, demonstrates some sensitivity to inclusion. Because formal leadership positions in New Brunswick have traditionally been dominated by white men, the mixed representation of this group challenges that process by demanding that leaders seek unique alternatives (for example, building a culturally diverse group with different ideas and perspectives) to help inspire growth and innovation (Kouzes and Posner 2002). It also requires leaders to be open to new ideas and to encourage risk-taking commensurate with skill and confidence. The act of taking young leaders on a tour of the province helped to build participants' confidence and better equip them to take risks associated with making significant changes in the province. The fact that almost half of the selected *21 Leaders* were women is symbolic; it acknowledges that while gender inequality is alive and well in New Brunswick, the creation of new networks that begin from a different

perspective is an effective and important starting point for correction. Not only did the initial *21 Leaders* program subscribe to some elements of transformational leadership, it also inspired subsequent transformational activities: the involvement of my colleague and I in the Women as Global Leaders conference, and the creation of 21inc.

WOMEN AS GLOBAL LEADERS (WAGL)

One of the initiatives that emerged from the *21 Leaders* program was our presentation at the WAGL conference. Besides the wildly inspirational experience of being surrounded by purposeful women from around the world, my involvement in this conference prompted my reflection on the role of the *21 Leaders* program in promoting gender equality. WAGL provided the opportunity to engage with women from around the world and to explore the idea of leadership as it relates to women. WAGL is one of many international gatherings over the past three decades to focus explicitly on the advancement of women in society. Since the first UN conference on the status of women, in Mexico City in 1975, the unique challenges facing women worldwide have been generally acknowledged and widely discussed. Through the formation of international networks born from these gatherings, women have come to share a common bond - an understanding that they are not alone in their plight for equality. The Mexico City conference, held to coincide with International Women's Year, laid out as its guiding objectives the achievement of full gender equality, the elimination of gender discrimination, the full integration of women in development, and a strengthened contribution of women to world peace (Choike n.d.). This conference was repeated in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995, in part to review the progress being made and the challenges remaining. Since Beijing, we have had over a dozen years to reflect on the outcomes of these conferences and to consider the successes and failures related to the

objectives laid down in 1975. My involvement in WAGL provided the specific venue through which my own reflection on these issues was channelled. The conference allowed 1,200 women from 87 countries to reflect on the role of women in media, politics, and economics, and on fundamental human rights abuses that continue to be disproportionately borne by women. Discussions and presentations ranged in topic from gender based violence, poverty, and HIV/AIDS, to economic and political equality.

The Honourable Mary Robinson's remark that, "the cause of women is inseparable from the cause of humanity itself. A society that is without the voice and vision of women...is less human" (Robinson 2006), highlighted the importance of considering the role of women in society. Her statement speaks to a new generation of feminists, characterized by the understanding that many desires of the women's movement are desires for humanity. The goals of this movement have historically been equated with women's rights because the absence of extended parental benefits, sexual equality, living wages and accessible childcare have a disproportionately large impact on the lives of women; however, addressing such injustices will improve the quality of life for all.

Not only did this experience inspire me to begin examining the equality of the work of the *21 Leaders*, but it also highlighted the involvement of young women from our province in positions of leadership, and the importance of creating opportunities for further leadership development for women. Equally as important, participation in the conference provided a sense of solidarity. The feeling of being part of an important global movement provided me with courage in the face of the constant criticisms associated with being a feminist. Finally, it reinforced the lens through which I wish to explore our group's next major initiative; the creation of 21inc.

THE CREATION OF 21INC.

Recognizing both the value of the ideas generated during the NextNB initiative, and the critical need for transformation in the province, the *21 Leaders* launched 21inc., comprised of the members of the original *21 Leaders* initiative. 21inc.'s birth in the summer of 2006, and formal launch in the fall of 2007, cemented our commitment to the transformation of the province. 21inc. facilitates both a leadership development program to enable and inspire young leaders in New Brunswick, and a public policy dialogue about the current and future state of New Brunswick's social, cultural, and economic development. Moreover, 21inc. is to function as a provincial network that connects the private, public, and voluntary sectors, and as an organization which boasts a diverse membership, both linguistically and by gender. This breadth enhances our capacity to remain relevant to the diverse needs and interests that comprise New Brunswick. When forming 21inc. we expected to face great challenges, but also great opportunities, as we attempt to inspire and enable transformation. Throughout this process, it is essential to keep an eye to the future.

LOOKING FORWARD

Responding to New Brunswick's need for transformation in a way that builds upon the former *21 Leaders* initiative and promotes equality for young women calls for some adjustments to transformational leadership as developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002). As we develop 21inc., we must pay careful attention to the values on which the organization is built. Through being intentional about our philosophy of inclusion, we will be able to address significant challenges related to the traditions and conditions that systemically perpetuate exclusivity. As mentioned above, 21inc. develops young leaders in New Brunswick and facilitates a public policy dialogue on the future of the province. In the short-term we can accomplish these goals

and inclusivity by:

- Focusing our efforts on projects that will enhance the equal treatment of women and minority groups. Based on the many barriers to participation facing women in today's New Brunswick, this strategy is critical to being able to motivate incremental and noticeable progress in the province.
- Embracing informal networking opportunities as a means of building on the existing strengths of women and ensuring that an ensuing public policy discourse can be broadly informed. In this process, it will be essential to intentionally support the development of informal networks for the purposes of engaging diverse people.

In the long-term, 21inc. has a significant role to play in modifying the foundation of, and approach to, transformation in New Brunswick. The most effective way to promote a broader understanding of what it means to challenge the systemic barriers that are faced by women is by including people in the leadership of New Brunswick who are normally excluded, and by adopting leadership concepts that are more egalitarian in nature. Further, the approach of 21inc. assumes that the success of New Brunswick depends on the collective success of all of its citizens. Therefore, the development and inclusion of women can be further supported by:

- Ensuring a recruiting process for future young leaders that acknowledges the barriers to participation that many people face. Specifically, this goal necessitates embracing a definition of leadership that is reflective of the more non-traditional leadership roles that women play in society.
- Promoting the experiential development of leadership skills

(e.g., collaboration, dealing with complexity, facilitation, visioning) among young leaders to allow them to engage more readily in positions of leadership.

- Exploring leadership structures, such as the diverse distributed leadership model (Itzkow 2005), that are inherently egalitarian and emphasize the importance of building equal relationships that allow leadership to happen in diverse ways.
- Encouraging research that focuses on the societal benefits of leadership equality for women. In order to understand the impact of female leadership on the world, we must invest in its exploration. While there is some research that explores the under-representation of women in politics, it is limited, and it does not focus on the experiences of young women, and how early life experiences may encourage or discourage leadership development.

Although long standing efforts to promote gender equality, both globally and locally, have been made, many are yet to come. In some ways, the above suggestions for ways that 21inc. can encourage inclusive transformation seem quite simple. However, the challenges we face are not easily overcome.

THE "YEAH, BUT..."

These recommendations are likely to meet resistance in their application. For starters, most members of 21inc. have become leaders by virtue of their abilities to succeed in spite of the current barriers to participation that many people face. Accordingly, while we may value egalitarianism, it is difficult to thoroughly imagine what egalitarianism looks like, or how it might affect us, making egalitarianism a frightening proposition. Fortunately, this is a challenge to which many members are

sensitive and therefore willing to face. It is also common that the notion of distributed success and power is somehow understood as something of a reverse oppression for those who have benefitted most from our present systems. In this case, we have a responsibility to work with this concern as we strive for equality, remembering that inclusion should be treated as an infinite resource.

Despite our capacity to acknowledge barriers to participation, these barriers are often monumental in scope and stature. Tangible barriers such as lack of childcare and lack of education are difficult to address because the solutions require a dedicated, long-term, allocation of resources - a luxury that tight budgets, political cycles, and tenuous funding partners hinder. As well, there are many interests in New Brunswick that compete for priority attention; equality in language, ethnicity, and economics also deserve attention. Finally, change processes are challenging. Potential changes are often impacted by external factors such as global economic systems and national and international policies which, in many cases, lie beyond our direct control. Further, all sectors impose some barriers to change because of their levels of knowledge, desire, fear, and because of the real or perceived level of imminence of the consequences associated with failing to change. As well, individuals within the province, and inevitably within this process of transformation, will be divided on various issues, in some cases challenging the desire for a particular change. These barriers to change demand attention at a meta-level so that transformation happens quickly enough to produce responses to immediate challenges, but slowly and collaboratively enough to allay barriers that can be managed internally in New Brunswick.

Conclusion

Although we clearly face challenges, I am confident that we have the capacity to overcome these challenges and

contribute to New Brunswick's transformation. Through WAGL, *21 Leaders*, and now 21inc., I have developed a new respect for the importance of gender equality, and for the role that young people must play in creating a vision for the future. I am now acutely aware that transformational leadership must be sensitive to equality if it is to truly incite transformation. 21inc. can contribute to the transformation of the province by committing itself to inclusion and working to accomplish it through the short-term and long-term strategies outlined above.

Despite my optimism, and our efforts, I am reminded daily that we must remain vigilant in our pursuit for equality. Consider New Brunswick's Business Council, which was established in 2005 to mobilize the business community to join in taking up the challenges facing the province. Until the spring of 2006, no women sat on this council. Fortunately, after public criticism, the Business Council took an important and initial step towards embracing equality by inviting the very qualified Nancy Mathis to join the group. Although Mathis has now moved on to lead the new Wallace McCain Institute for Business Leadership, her participation placed her at a table where she belonged because of her capabilities, not because of her gender. Her membership signified the importance of being attentive to the real danger of new initiatives perpetuating the cycle of inequality if we are not consistently diligent about our commitment to inclusion. I am hopeful that the Business Council will continue to include women and expand their number.

21inc. is a vehicle through which accessible and inclusive leadership can be encouraged. In their conclusion, Kouzes and Posner (2002) discuss the idea of leadership for everyone. They reflect on the role of leadership at the grassroots level of organizations - in the communities on which our province, our country and indeed our world are built. They claim that leadership built on a strong notion of self, an enhanced

sense of morality, and the capacity to inspire hope and stay in love with your cause allows ordinary people to do extraordinary things (2002). Through 21inc., we can promote equality by examining the structures that systemically disadvantage women and minorities, and constantly advocate for the value of diversity by seeking out the voice of the marginalized. Without focusing intentionally on equality, the transformation of New Brunswick is not possible. Inclusive transformational leadership begins to address equality. With this inspiration, I am more able to go forth and lead - on equal terms.

Endnotes

1. I use equality to describe fair treatment of people, both in terms of their access to formal positions of leadership, and in terms of the value given to the styles and functions of their leadership. Equality recognizes differences between and within all gender groups, and that past discrimination may demand correction via differentiated treatment. While equality of women in politics is critical, this article uses the concept of leadership broadly to describe a skill set that can be applied beyond formal positions of power. Newman and White (2006) present this as one of three definitions of the word equality.
2. NextNB was a non-partisan public policy initiative launched by the University of New Brunswick in 2004, in partnership with Aliant and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. It was designed to draw attention to, and mobilize communities and individuals around New Brunswick's significant demographic and socioeconomic challenges, including health care, demographic shifts, education, and provincial-federal relations. Its major actions included published discussion papers, the *21 Leaders* program, and SeaChange, a culminating provincial conference.
3. "Encourage the Heart" focuses on celebrating people and their successes as a means of providing them with the motivation and energy to persist through difficult

transformations (Kouzes and Posner 2002).
4. Inclusive transformation is an idea that I present in the discussion about ways to ensure the promotion of equality. The idea of inclusive transformation refers to the notion that in order to achieve transformation which results in a more equitable society, we must be intentional about including women and other marginalized groups.

5. Girl trafficking, the "missing girl child" phenomenon, and the feminization of HIV/AIDS are among the examples of our abysmal record with protecting women's rights around the world. However, this manuscript focuses on the human rights abuses born by women in New Brunswick to counter the temptation to consider human rights violations as problems exclusive to the developing world.

6. Various proportional representation systems do a much better job of electing a more representative body, as evidenced by increased female political participation in countries where such systems have been adopted (e.g., Denmark, Germany).

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