

ONE GIRL TAKES HARD-LINE ON OUTDATED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

14 OCTOBER 2019 | One Girl CEO, Sarah Ireland has today announced that she'll be taking parental leave in January 2020 as she and her husband welcome the birth of their second child!

Sarah and her partner David Sims — who works for Oxfam Australia — have a three-year-old daughter who is looking forward to meeting her new sibling, and staff are looking forward to welcoming another member of the One Girl family. In true One Girl style, and in line with their value of 'challenging the status quo', Sarah's parental leave won't be your typical 12 months absence.

One of the barriers to education that girls and young women face in the countries in which we work is early marriage and teenage pregnancy and our programs work to address that. Here in Australia, we are lucky enough to have a high school completion rate for girls that sits above 95% and low teen pregnancy, however, women in Australia do still face barriers to success. It just happens later ... after they leave school and enter the workplace.

There is more work to be done to make sure that women are equally represented and valued in our workforce but also that they have access to paid parental leave, flexible work arrangements and suitable return to work plans. As an organisation that champions equality, it's important that we 'walk the talk' to give women and girls every opportunity to succeed - both here in Australia and overseas.

One Girl CEO, Sarah tells us ***“One Girl has a gender-neutral paid parental leave policy that has thrown off the shackles of widely accepted, non-inclusive plans that include the nomination of a co-parent (rather than simply ‘parent’) or a primary vs secondary carer with different leave and pay entitlements accordingly.*”**

“Obviously the gender wage gap is about more than just equal pay, it's about getting more women back into the workforce by allowing more men back into the home — because you can't have one without the other.”

But it's not just about the paid parental leave policy, it's the flexible working arrangements that really shows how One Girl is paving the way, and it doesn't just apply to parents. One Girl's flexible working arrangements are available to all staff who have valued commitments outside of work — no matter what their stage of life or personal choices regarding parenthood.

Leading by example, Sarah plans to relinquish all operational duties during her period of parental leave but will remain the public-facing head of the organisation which will allow a more flexible and staggered return to work that benefits parent, child and workplace alike.

“I wanted a policy that would not only reflect One Girl's values, but also those that David and I want to model for our children, and that I believe we should all aspire to. I hope other organisations take seriously the task of ending the inequality that exists in the workforce for women everywhere because when you raise women up, everyone benefits,” says Sarah.

One Girl is excited to welcome a new part-time, operational CEO who will support the team and provide strategic leadership from January 2020.

For for information or for interviews please contact One Girl Communications Director, Méabh Friel on 039913 4818 or at media@onegirl.org.au