THE GENDER EQUALITY CHALLENGE: Would quotas help?

5% of the 500 CEOs on the 2016 Fortune 500 list are women, a mere 27 out of 500

Men are two to three times more likely to hold senior management positions

45% In Canada, despite a “comply or explain” disclosure regime, 45% of companies still have no women on their boards

In Canada, achieving 30% female representation on boards of directors would require at least 30 years

SOMETHING MUST CHANGE... Should government or firms impose quotas?

NO Quotas WON’T work

Perceived as unjust:
Quotas may be seen as violating justice for individuals, even if the group outcome is improved.

Potential stigma:
If women are added to boards at token levels, they might be seen as less qualified and will likely be delegitimized.

Reduced employee engagement:
Perceptions of unfairness can lead employees to disengage.

Reduced support for diversity:
Because quotas are externally imposed, managers may not be motivated to support the goals.

Failure to address underlying discrimination:
Quotas per se do not address the underlying bias in society.

YES Quotas WILL work

Fears about quotas are overblown:
Countries that don’t have quotas fear them, countries that do, appreciate them.

No pipeline problem:
Imposing quotas leads boards to search more creatively for new members, increasing candidate pools.

No stigma:
Quotas achieve a critical mass of women, thus avoiding tokenism and marginalization.

Substantial positive effects:
Diversity in leadership makes groups more effective.

A useful shock to the system:
Quotas provide a structured framework to overcome biases.

BUT HOW? Next steps:

If you DON’T use quotas

Engage in targeted recruiting to reach out to potential female candidates.

Provide voluntary opportunities for diversity training.

Appoint diversity managers to increase social accountability.

Create corporate diversity task forces.

Hold people accountable through external monitoring.

Set diversity targets as part of compensation and reward systems.

If you DO use quotas

Frame affirmative action plans as remedying past discrimination in order to reduce opposition.

Establish a critical mass (30-40%) so that female members are not tokens.

Expand your search and actively seek qualified women.

Shift your definitions of the ideal candidate.

Expect some discomfort. Any organizational change requires a period of transition.

To learn more visit: http://uoft.me/Quotas