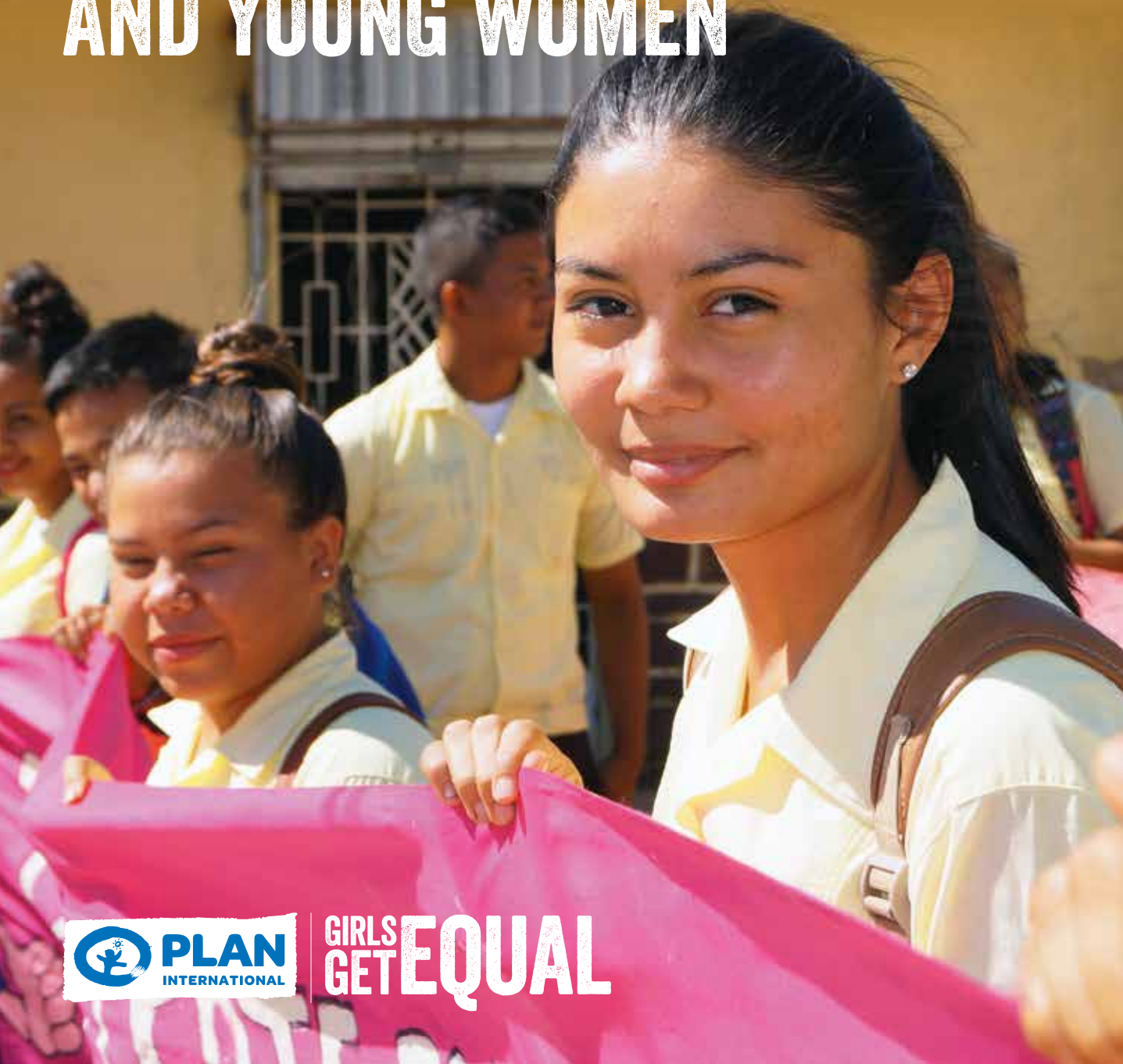


GIRLS REPORT 2018

STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN



GIRLS
GET EQUAL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EU	European Union
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
FLOW	Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women
G0	Gender marker 0
G1	Gender marker 1
G2	Gender marker 2
G20	Group of Twenty
G7	Group of Seven
GAA	Girls Advocacy Alliance
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAP II	Gender Action Plan
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KFW	German Development Bank
LFS	Leading from the South
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
VENRO	German umbrella association of non-governmental organizations in development and humanitarian aid

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Girls and young women,¹ particularly in developing countries, face countless challenges and have limited ability to influence the social norms and the political climate that govern their lives. While some advancements have been made to reach the goal of gender equality – one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all member states of the United Nations – progress for girls and younger cohorts of women in particular remains scant. As a result, girls and young women continue to remain the single most discriminated against and excluded group today.

One of the most effective ways to empower girls and young women is to enable them to have a voice. When they actively participate in social and political life, they become drivers for change in their own lives and in their communities. Early experiences in political participation build their confidence, allow them to take action on issues that matter to them, and empower them to stand up for their own rights.

This report seeks to shed light on what the international donor community, and the German government in particular, is doing to support the political participation² of girls and young women. It focuses on two questions:

1. What are best practices in the international donor community for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries?
2. What does the German government do to empower girls and young women in developing countries, and how does Germany perform in comparison to other donors?

The report's findings are based, first, on a quantitative analysis of 30 OECD donors' official development assistance (ODA) flows targeting political participation of girls and young women. Secondly, informed by the results of the financial analysis, further qualitative research and expert interviews were conducted to identify international best-practices.

Key findings of the report

- While visibility for the topic has increased in recent years, **financial support by donors for strengthening access of girls and young women to political processes is still marginal.** Taken together, the 30 donors analyzed spent US\$403 million in bilateral ODA per year between 2014 and 2016; this corresponds to 0,46% of their total bilateral development assistance. Only five donors spent more than 1% of their total bilateral ODA on the topic.
- **Donor funding is highly concentrated.** Only five donors (Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, the European Union (EU) Institutions, and Canada) provide more than two-thirds of all ODA for the political participation of girls and young women. This shows that a few donors are financially committed, but most donors provide only limited resources so far.
- **Three donor countries – Sweden, Canada and the Netherlands – were identified as best-practices, given their strategic focus on girls and young women. Other donors, including Germany, could learn from these.**
 - Backed by a strong political commitment at the highest level of government, **Sweden** features a “feminist foreign policy” that specifically promotes the political participation of girls and women.
 - Under its “feminist international assistance policy”, **Canada** has made gender equality its top development priority. The country pledges to invest 15% of total bilateral ODA on projects specifically targeting gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women.
 - **The Netherlands** champions girls and women's participation in various international fora and initiatives, e.g. by initiating the “SheDecides” movement in 2017.

¹ For the purposes of the present report, “girl” refers to every human being of female gender and below the age of 18 years, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, organizations often use different definitions. “Young woman” refers to everyone of female gender aged 18-25. This definition is used by Plan International, however, there is no uniform definition which is endorsed by all actors.

² Political participation is not limited to voting or participation in political parties. Rather, it extends to all areas of life and all sectors of society. Child and youth participation encourages girls, boys and youth to express their views and be involved in shaping decisions that affect them in an informed way.

- **A deeper look at Germany reveals that its ODA levels and policies have much room for improvement.** Germany is the seventh-largest donor in absolute terms (US\$22 million per year from 2014-16). However, it falls behind to 19th place when comparing funding to its overall ODA. The relevant strategies of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – the Strategy on Gender Equality in Development Cooperation and the Gender Action Plan 2016-20 – emphasize the importance of political participation of women, but lack a dedicated budget, and mostly do not identify girls as a stand-alone target group.

Seven recommendations to the German government

1. **Expand financial support for the political participation of girls and young women.** This could be done by backing the Gender Action Plan with a dedicated funding envelope, or by setting a quota to ensure a certain share of BMZ funds specifically target the empowerment of girls and young women.
2. **Single out girls as a stand-alone target group,** rather than grouping them together as “women and girls”. The next update of the key strategies should explicitly mention principles and measures to address the specific needs of girls and young women.
3. **Ensure an inclusive and transparent consultation process during the next update of the Gender Equality Strategy and Gender Action Plan.** The broad consultation process conducted in Canada, incorporating recommendations from civil society, experts and practitioners, can serve as an example.
4. **Ensure active and meaningful participation of girls and young women in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects funded by BMZ.** A prerequisite is the continued inclusion of “participation, voice, leadership” as a priority in the Gender Action Plan’s annual roadmaps.
5. **Increase funding to civil society organizations that work with children and youth, particularly in those with a focus on girls and young women.** In addition, more flexible funding mechanisms would allow space for attentive programming, piloting, and learning, similarly to the approach of the Dutch government.
6. **Strengthen visibility for the political empowerment of girls and young women at a global level.** Germany should sustain its engagement for girls and women beyond its past G7 and G20 presidencies, e.g. by leveraging its close relationship with France to advocate for this to be placed high on the agenda of France’s G7 presidency in 2019. In addition, BMZ should promote the empowerment of girls and young women in all negotiations with partner countries.
7. **Improve the quality of data on girls and young women.** BMZ should disaggregate data by age for all projects that seek to advance gender equality, to be able to single-out girls and young women more systematically in project design and implementation. Additionally, Germany and all other donors should improve their reporting to the OECD, by comprehensively using the gender markers and describing projects in greater detail. This would enhance the comparability of donor funding and make it easier to monitor progress toward SDG 5.



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1. INTRODUCTION



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Girls and young women, particularly in developing countries, face countless challenges and have limited ability to influence the social norms and the political climate that govern their lives. Many are held back by family economics, with sons of poor families much likelier to be sent to school than daughters. Social norms oftentimes prevent many girls and young women from attending school and participating in public life. Religious values may additionally undermine the importance and voices of girls and young women. Moreover, political and legal structures tend to protect the status quo, upholding the barriers girls and young women face. In the world today, girls continue to be the single most discriminated against and excluded group.¹ Without more robust efforts from the international community, this is unlikely to change.

Enabling girls and young women to have a voice is one of the most effective ways to unlock their potential as drivers of change. When they participate in the social and political sphere, girls and young women can become changemakers, both in their own lives as well as in their communities. Political participation is not limited to voting or participation in political parties. Rather, it extends to all areas of life and all sectors of society.

Child and youth participation encourages girls, boys and youth to express their views and be involved in shaping decisions that affect them in an informed way. Participation fosters youth leadership, enabling children and youth to individually and collectively use their power, resources, and skills in inclusive structures and processes to mobilize others around a shared agenda or goal of social, cultural, economic, and political transformation for equality and human rights for all. It strengthens the political empowerment of girls and young women, reinforcing their understanding of the power dynamics and relations that govern political and social spheres, and providing them with the capacity and skills to act with agency and autonomy to access, influence and change these. Promoting their political participation will not only help girls and young women to take effective action on issues that matter to them, but it will also strengthen the government's understanding of girls and young women as active agents.

It is important for political participation to start in girlhood. These are the most formative years in a woman's life – during which girls and young women build confidence in themselves and the worth of their voices, and learn to take up their right to actively engage in social and political life. It is also the most vulnerable time, where

many instances of exploitation and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation occur. Moreover, girlhood presents the opportune moment to shape and build female activists and leaders for the future.

In January 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all member states of the United Nations (UN), came into force. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on “achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls” (SDG 5), with its target 5.5 aimed at ensuring women’s full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.³ In addition, several other SDGs place gender equality at their center.⁴ In recent years, global efforts to strengthen gender equality have tended to put an emphasis on the economic empowerment of women and on ending gender-based violence. Other vital areas – such as political empowerment and the ability of girls and women to influence their own lives – have remained largely overlooked. What is more, focus on the younger cohorts of girls and young women is still lagging in international politics.

To reach the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda, all UN member states will be required to put their commitments into action. The prime responsibility to advance these goals lies within the countries themselves. They must put in place suitable national strategies and ensure adequate resources. However, the larger international community must also follow up on the commitment made, including the promise to work towards strengthening political participation of girls and young women throughout the world.

The present report sets out to identify existing good practices in the international donor community to empower girls and young women and promote their political participation. Furthermore, it takes a deeper look into Germany’s development assistance and provides recommendations on how the German government can increase its engagement to strengthen the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries.

The report aims to answer **two central questions**:

1. What are best practices in the international donor community for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries?

2. What does the German government do to empower girls and young women in developing countries, and how does Germany perform in comparison to other donors?

The first section of the report analyzes the official development assistance (ODA) of 30 donors within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC; 29 countries and the EU institutions) to examine how much governments are financially contributing to promote the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries. Donors are ranked according to their financial contributions, while trends and key findings across countries are identified.

The second section of the report starts off by identifying donor countries that perform particularly well, based both on their financial contributions as well as their policies and approaches for promoting political participation of girls and young women. Secondly, it takes a deeper look at what the German government does to empower girls and young women, and how it performs in comparison to other donors in terms of financial support to the topic. The section concludes with recommendations on what the German government should consider doing going forward if it were to place a stronger focus on the political participation of girls and young women in its development strategies and allocation of funds. Best practices from other countries are harnessed for these recommendations. With this, the report sets out to give the German government inspiration for how to expand its engagement to untap the potential of more than 1.3 billion girls and young women in developing countries to actively shape the future.^{ll}

³ The SDG 5 targets that are directly relevant for political participation of girls and young women include 5.5 “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”, 5.b “Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women”, and 5.c “Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels”.

⁴ SDG 16 target 16.7 commits to ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. This stipulation that no one should be excluded from the political process implies that also girls and young women should be allowed to participate.

MAYRA: GIRLS CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING!

Mayra (21) is an activist for the rights of girls in Guatemala. The young woman shows what a targeted promotion of leadership skills can do. At the first International Day of the Girl Child, just 13 years old, she gave a speech to Members of the Congress of Guatemala. Upright and strong, she reports on the daily discrimination against indigenous girls and resolutely calls on politicians in her home country to finally invest more in the education of girls.

Her appearance at the kick-off event of Plan International's *Because I am a Girl* campaign in October 2012 is one of the experiences the 21-year-old is fond of remembering. Giving speeches is her great passion. Since her thirteenth year she participates in projects of the child rights organization. She quickly realizes that this promotes her development and is a door opener for her: „I was able to suggest and exchange ideas, meet other people, learn a lot of new things and change my reality! I realized there was another world out there.“

Early adulthood

Mayra is a member of the Q'eqchi ethnic group and lives in Alta Verapaz, five hours north of the capital. She was born shortly after the end of the civil war, in which the Mayan population in particular was the target of cruel crimes. The father left the family when Mayra was just five. She learns early to take responsibility and to support her single mother and her siblings. She's a great help, but often money is tight.

Strengthening civil society

Despite all adversities Mayra goes her way. At twelve, she is invited for the first time to meet a Plan International children's club. Just six months later, 2,000 girls and boys elect her to the Children and Youth Council for the development of the district¹. The 13-year-old is trained with her peers and learns which rights and national laws protect children and young people. She learns to identify and address violations, develop strategies and action plans, and work with adult district representatives to find solutions.

Similar to the Local Development Councils (COCODE)², in which community members, state institutions and civil society organizations are represented, Plan International set up the **COCODITOS**³ in 2010 – Children and Youth Development Councils, which actively participate in the decisions of their communities. The political work in the team and the acquired competences strengthen the self-esteem of the girls in particular.⁴



Photo: Andrea Aragon

Spokesperson of the *Because I am a Girl* campaign

Mayra experiences in the Development Council that she can influence social processes. The other children and youth councils are impressed by her maturity and seriousness. That girls express their opinions in front of adults, especially men, is anything but usual in Guatemala. In this small Central American country, patriarchal, gender-based violence is widespread. “As indigenous

¹ Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents

² COCODE = Community Council for Urban and Rural Development. The system of development councils was introduced by law in Guatemala in April 2002. It is the result of the peace agreement and is one of the commitments set out in the agreement on socio-economic aspects and the agricultural situation.

³ COCODITOS = Community Committees for the Development of Children and Young People.

⁴ Master's Thesis "Participación infantil" by María Emilia Numer, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences FLASCO, March 2015

girls, we are often harassed by men on the streets and cannot move as freely as boys,” Mayra says. “We don’t live in a place where we feel safe.” As she wants to change this, she becomes a spokesperson of the *Because I am a Girl* campaign in 2012. In an eight-month training course before the start of the Plan campaign, she acquires leadership skills. She knows how to motivate others.

Her speech in the national parliament on the first International Day of the Girl Child is not without consequences. In 2014, she will be invited by the British Ambassador to the World Summit Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Areas. It is her first trip abroad, and she is especially proud of a project that she herself has recently developed and is due to introduce in London. This is a training course against gender-based violence, which she implemented with experts from governmental institutions and young people in two months. It ensures that 1,500 minors and community leaders in their district are informed about the subject.

Commitment against early marriage

She is also determined to fight child marriage. It makes her sad that 30 percent of the girls in her home country are already married at the age of 18⁵ and that there are so many teenage pregnancies. “In my community, many girls don’t continue their education after primary school. Their parents want them to stay home and take care of the house,” says Mayra. “They think girls should just get married, do chores and have kids.”

Together with friends, she calls on relatives, neighbours and acquaintances to stand up for a ban on child marriage and asks them to sign a petition for a change in the law. The girls organise discussion rounds and inform about the sad facts and their consequences. They also



Photo: Andrea Aragon

call on the social media to support their cause. Finally, in May 2017, the Guatemalan Congress will raise the minimum age for marriages to 18. “When I heard they had adopted the new law, I felt so happy. I collected signatures and was part of a team of people who had brought about change, I was so proud.” Mayra explains.

Mayra’s plans for the future

The once silent girl has become a committed activist for girls’ rights. Mayra knows that she can achieve whatever she has planned in life. And that’s quite a lot. With the support of Plan International, she was able to attend secondary school and complete her high school diploma. Now she wants to study. She dreams of having her own law office and wants to support human rights defenders.

“My world has grown bigger”

“Nothing is easy”, the 21-year-old knows. “But the most important thing is to have the will, the intention and the initiative and to believe in yourself. Because if you do not, nobody else will.”

Based on the experience with girls like Mayra and from other projects Plan International has started the global Girls Lead program. Girls Lead will help to strengthen organizations and networks of young people in general and girls and young women in particular and expand their opportunities for political participation. The young people thus will make an important contribution to achieving equal rights of girls, boys and adolescents. Girls Lead will be a pillar of the program work in Asia, Africa and Latin America.



Photo: Andrea Aragon

⁵ UNICEF Report 2018

2. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

To answer the question to what extent the international donor community – and the German government in particular – supports the strengthening of political participation of girls and young women in developing countries, the following methodology was applied:

1. Quantitative analysis: An analysis of OECD data to measure donor funding for political participation of girls and young women

First, a quantitative analysis of bilateral ODA was conducted to examine how much donor governments are financially contributing to promote the political participation of girls and young women. The analysis used the micro-datasets of the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) compiled by the OECD DAC. ODA flows of the 29 countries and the EU institutions were reviewed for the three-year period between 2014 and 2016. All ODA flows are stated in 2016 prices, which takes into account inflation and exchange rate fluctuations across the years so as to ensure comparability of funding data across donors and time periods.

The analysis comprised three steps:

I) Identification of projects with a focus on political participation

The first step identified projects directly targeting political participation. To measure funding aimed at strengthening political participation, relevant sub-sectors reported under the OECD CRS sector “Government and civil society” (151) were screened. Within this sector, five sub-sectors were selected as proxies for political participation: “democratic participation and civil society” (15150), “media and free flow of information” (15153), “human rights” (15160), “women’s equality organizations and institutions” (15170), and “ending violence against women and girls” (15180)⁵. Annex 2 includes a full description of the five sub-sectors.

These sub-sectors were chosen as they indicate how many activities and projects donors undertake specifically to foster political participation or to reduce structural barriers to participation. Three sub-sectors directly target participation in political processes and in the public sphere (“democratic participation and civil society”, “media and free flow of information”, and “women’s equality organizations and institutions”). The other two (“human rights”, and “ending violence against women and girls”) refer to projects that address broader, structural barriers to political participation and create an enabling environment for political participation to flourish. Limiting the analysis to these five sub-sectors implies that projects that may foster participation within other sectors (such as agriculture, education, health, etc.) are disregarded. Nonetheless, they provide an indication as to what weight the topic receives on the political agenda.

II) Identification of projects with a focus on gender equality

To assess what share of the funds identified in the first step contribute to gender equality, the projects were further filtered by the OECD gender equality policy markers (known as gender markers). The markers identify whether a project has gender equality as its principal objective (gender marker G2) or whether gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the main reason for undertaking the project (gender marker G1). All projects marked by donors with one of these markers (G1 or G2) were used to identify projects with a focus on gender equality. All projects that do not have gender equality as an objective (G0), or which the donors did not evaluate against the gender marker at all (blanks) were excluded from further analysis.⁶

⁵ The sub-sector “ending violence against women and girls” (15180) was first introduced in 2016, therefore data for it is only available for 2016.

⁶ Although it is possible that projects relevant to the topic were present in those left blank, these represented only a small share (3%) of the total funding allocated to the topic over the three years. In addition, as projects left blank are indicative of donors failing to place importance on tracking funding allocated towards gender equality, and each project would have needed to be screened individually for its relevance to the topic, these were excluded from the scope of the analysis. See section on considerations and limitations for further details.

III) Identification of projects with a focus on girls and young women

The gender markers show whether a project targets gender equality. However, it cannot be concluded whether the project is designed to specifically support girls and young women. To this end, a keyword search was performed for all projects which had gender equality as a principal (G2) or a significant objective (G1) to identify only those political participation projects with a focus specifically on girls and young women. The words featured in the keyword search include: girl, child, kids, youth, young, adolescent, teen, daughter, minor and juvenile. Annex 3 contains a list of all keywords used. Due to donor countries reporting their projects to the OECD in various languages, the keyword search was carried out in English, German, French and Spanish. Other languages were excluded, as preliminary checks found that no significant number of projects was missed with the keyword search carried out in these four languages.

2. Qualitative analysis: Desk review and expert interviews to identify and examine good practice countries

Secondly, a qualitative analysis was conducted. The donors selected for this second step were selected, firstly, based on their level of contributions for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women as identified in the quantitative analysis. Secondly, donors' relevant development strategies and initiatives were screened to identify whether the countries with the highest financial contributions in fact had practices in place that target the promotion of political participation of girls and young women. Through a desk review, key government documents were scrutinized to find out to what extent their relevant strategies address this area. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with international experts on the topic and with experts and civil society representatives from selected donor countries, with the purpose of identifying which countries have strong policies and initiatives for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women in their development policy. See Annex 1 for a list of experts interviewed.

The qualitative analysis focused on the following key questions:

- I) National strategies: How does the promotion of girls' and young women's empowerment and political participation fall into the country's overall development approach and strategies?*
- II) Engagement and special initiatives at the global level: Does the country pursue any flagship initiatives at the global level, for example through the UN, G7, G20 or other international fora?*
- III) Bilateral programs and implementation: Can any particularly successful projects or implementation and evaluation approaches be highlighted?*

Based on the quantitative analysis, the desk research and the interviews, three best-practice countries for promoting political participation of girls and young women were selected. Our overall evaluation found these to be: Sweden, Canada, and the Netherlands.

3. Considerations and limitations

Several limitations for the financial analysis must be taken into consideration. The most notable limitation is that no specific OECD CRS sub-sector for political participation exists. Given the scope of this report, it was not possible to filter the entire OECD CRS to identify projects across all sectors that also target political participation. Instead, this report selected five sub-sectors within the sector "government and civil society" and used these as proxies for political participation. The donors' financial support to political participation of girls and young women, as measured in this report, should thus be considered an approximation.

Secondly, the latest sector-specific data available through the OECD database is from 2016. Therefore, the numbers do not reflect more recent developments that may have occurred in individual donor countries. For example, it may be that Canada's contributions toward the political empowerment of girls and young women will have increased since it introduced a feminist foreign policy in 2017. Alternatively, interviewees argued that the United Kingdom's (UK) contributions have decreased significantly since 2016 following a shift of priorities.

Thirdly, this report is reliant on self-reporting by donors to the OECD. This results in variance in the length of project descriptions: donors generally using brief project descriptions are less likely to appear in the keyword search results (such as France); variances in languages used for reporting might have led to a few omitted projects (despite preliminary checks conducted); and spelling errors in the project descriptions may have reduced the number of keyword hits. Also, divergences in the frequency and approach of applying the gender marker may have affected the amount of funding considered as targeting gender equality and, consequently, the number of keyword search hits. Moreover, all projects that remained blank along the gender marker were excluded, which may imply that some projects relevant to the topic were not considered.

Lastly, relevant core contributions made by donors to multilateral institutions were excluded from this analysis, due to the difficulties in assessing imputed multilateral contributions to this topic – that is, how much of what a donor provides to a multilateral institution is allocated precisely to this topic. Consequently, it is likely that all donors' contributions to political participation of girls and young women are higher than the bilateral ODA numbers presented in this report.

The EU institutions were included as a donor in this report, despite not being a country. The EU institutions are the fourth-largest donor of the OECD DAC (in terms of net ODA in 2017), receiving its budget from its member states. The contributions by the EU institutions to the topic could thus be indirectly attributed to the member states' contributions. At the same time, EU member states have significant influence on the strategies and direction of EU development policy, which gives them additional leverage to increase commitment to the political empowerment of girls and young women.

3. COMMITMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY

To assess best practices in the international donor community for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries, the first section of this report analyzes the ODA of 30 OECD DAC donors. Through screening and analyzing the donors' development projects relevant to this topic, financial commitments, trends, and key players were identified.

The analysis had the following key findings:

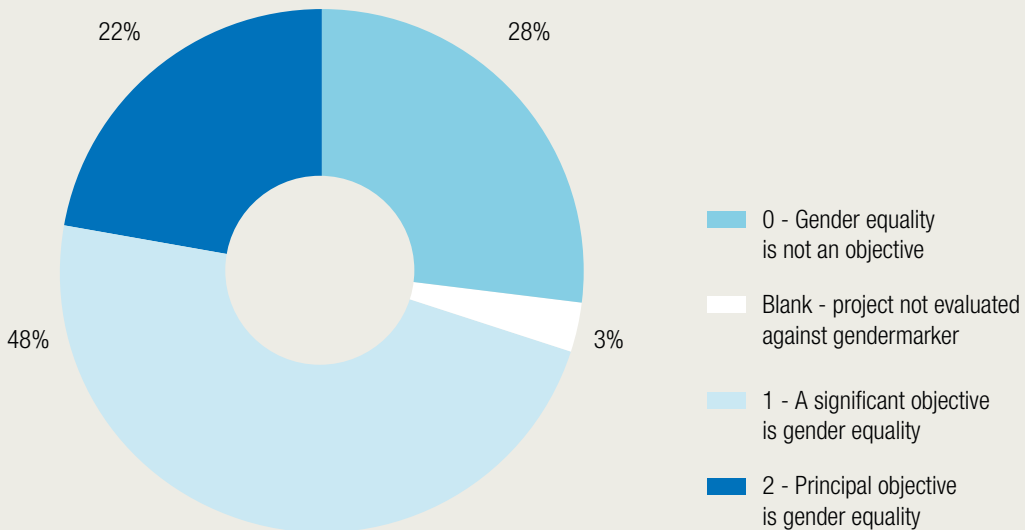
Donor support for strengthening political participation does not sufficiently focus on gender equality and girls' and young women's empowerment

Out of total donor support targeting areas related to political participation in the period between 2014 and 2016, only 22% of funding was allocated to projects which had gender equality as the primary objective (G2). Considering the large barriers girls and young women face when it comes to political participation, this share is disproportionately low.

A further 48% of funding was allocated to projects in which gender equality was one of several significant goals (G1). In total, more than two-thirds (70%) of all projects thus had gender equality as a main or secondary objective. 27% of funding was allocated to projects in which gender equality was not an objective (G0); and 3% were not evaluated against the gender marker (blanks) (see figure 1).⁷

FIGURE 1

Bilateral ODA for projects related to political participation, by gender focus 2014-2016

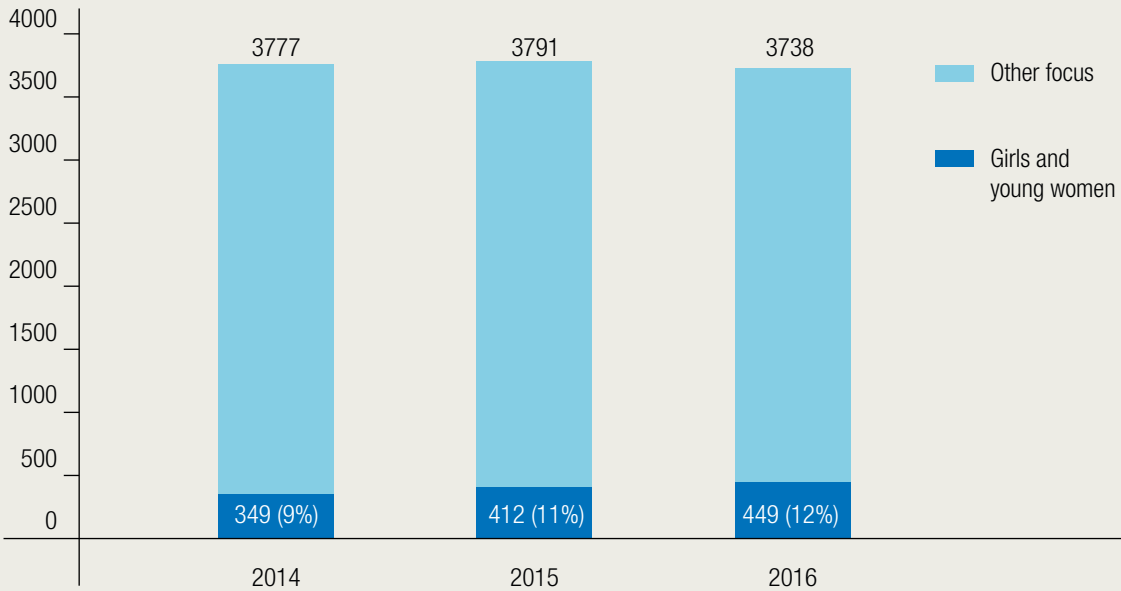


Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System.

⁷ When considering the number of projects, rather than total funding levels, only 57% of all projects had gender equality as one of their objectives (23% with G2 and 34% with G1), while 39% did not target gender (G0). This shows a concentration of funding in fewer projects when gender is one of several significant goals.

FIGURE 2

Bilateral ODA related to political participation with focus on girls and young woman (in US\$ millions, as a share of total bilateral ODA for political participation, 2014-2016)



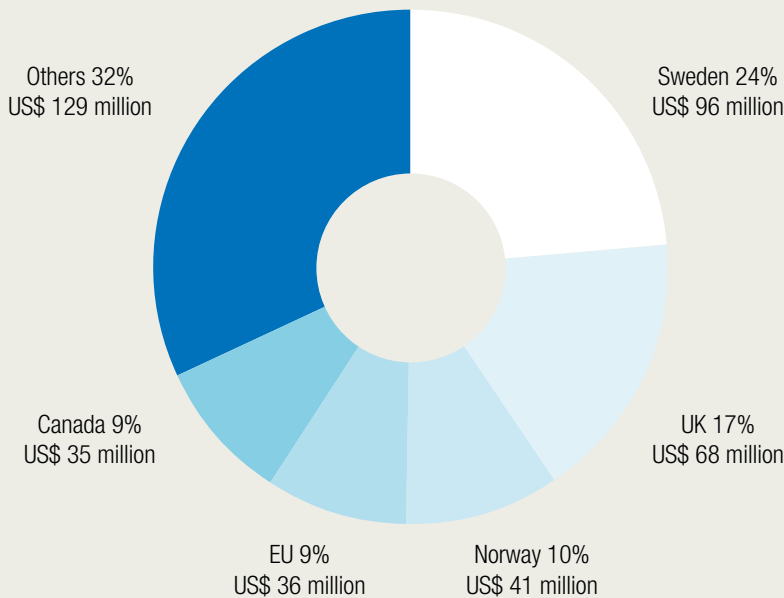
Strengthening the political participation of girls and young women is not a focus of donor funding

Though political participation of women is increasingly emphasized on a political level by the international donor community, support for strengthening girls’ and young women’s access to political processes is marginal. Taken together, the 29 OECD DAC donor countries and the EU institutions spent US\$403 million in ODA per year on the topic between 2014 and 2016; this corresponds to 0.46% of their total bilateral development (see figure 2 for yearly contributions). Of all funding going to political participation, 11% specifically targeted girls and young women. This underscores how underfunded efforts to politically empower girls and young women are.

Nonetheless, there has been progress. Development assistance supporting girls and young women’s participation has progressively grown in the three-year period. While in 2014, donors collectively allocated US\$349 million to the area, the amount rose to US\$449 million in 2016, an increase of 28% (see figure 2). The lion’s share of this increase came from eight donors (Canada, the EU institutions, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK). Overall, 15 of the 30 OECD DAC donors included in this report increased their funding between 2014 and 2016.

FIGURE 3

**Top donors for strenghtening political participation of girls and young women
(average funding levels and share of total, 2014-2016)**



Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System.

Five donors provide more than two-thirds of all resources for participation of girls and young women

Most funding for political participation of girls and young women comes from a few donors only. Between 2014 and 2016, more than two-thirds (68%) of all funding was provided by five players: Sweden, the UK, Norway, the EU institutions, and Canada (see figure 3). These key donors have remained largely unchanged over the three-year period.

Some of these donors have stepped up their funding considerably in the 2014-2016 period, particularly Sweden, Canada, the UK, and the EU institutions (see figure 4 below). Norway is the only exception.

Such a concentration of funding amongst few players results in a strong dependence on these donors for continued support. As such, government changes or shifts in political strategies or financing priorities in one of these donor countries could have a major impact on overall funding available for girls and young women.

Only five donors spend more than 1% of their ODA on strengthening political participation of girls and young women

The Nordic countries and Canada contribute the most to political participation of girls and young women when comparing funding in this area to their overall bilateral development assistance. Relative to their total bilateral ODA, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Canada, and Iceland all provided over 1% of their ODA to promote political participation of girls and young women. Sweden (2.4%) and Finland (2%) are the only two countries to provide over 2% of their total bilateral ODA to political participation of girls and young women (2014-2016 average). All other countries provide less than 1% (see figure 5).

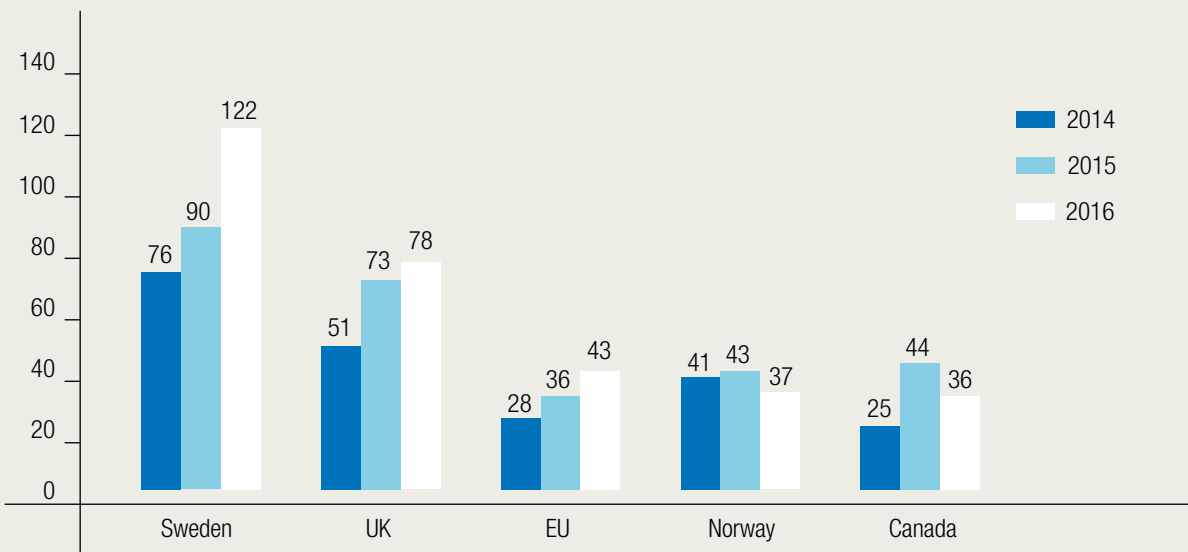
Germany is the seventh-largest donor in absolute terms to political participation of girls and young women, but falls behind when comparing funding levels to its overall development assistance

Between 2014 and 2016 Germany ranked seventh in absolute terms, contributing an average of US\$22 million per year to strengthening political participation of girls and young women. Funding from the German government increased in the period analyzed. In 2016, Germany allocated US\$31 million, a 65% increase compared to 2014, when funding stood at only US\$18 million.

FIGURE 4

Top donors for strengthening political participation of girls and young women (in US\$ million, 2014-2016)

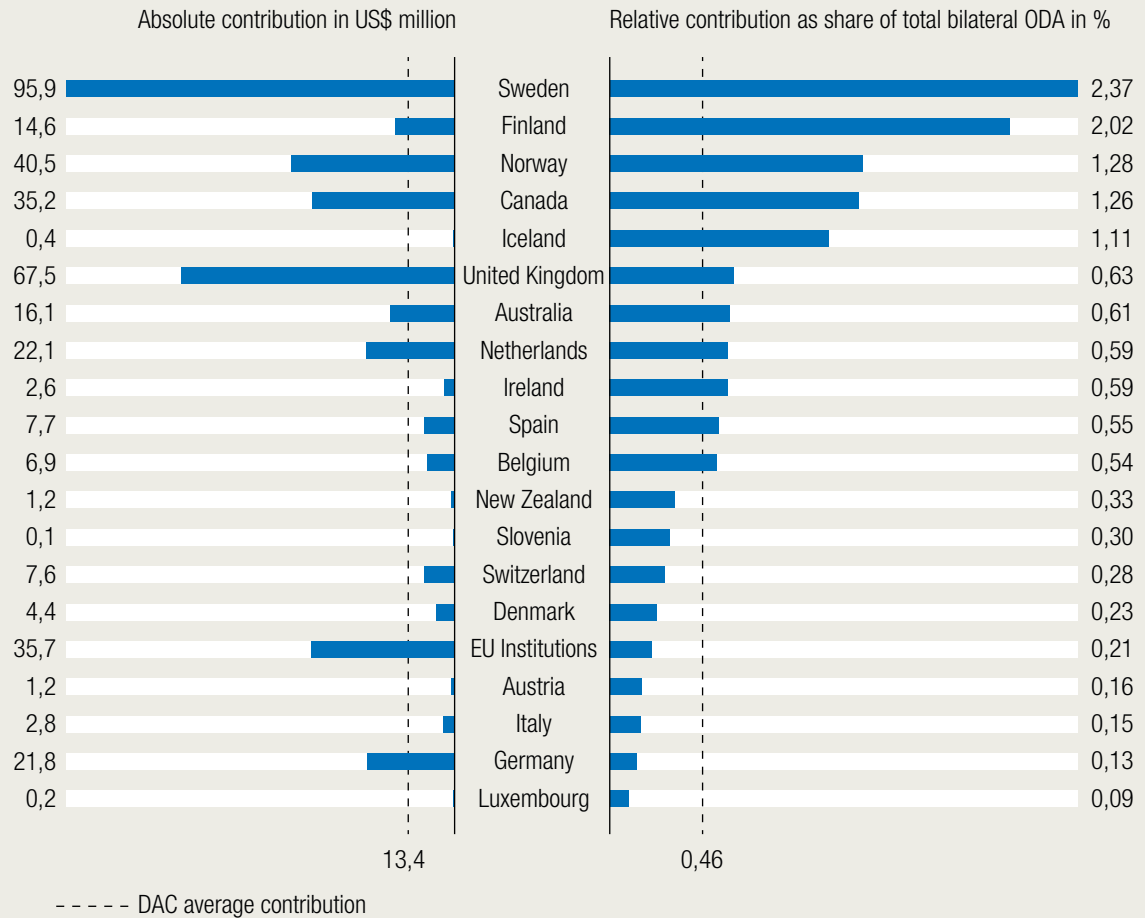
US\$ million contribution (per year)



Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System.

FIGURE 5

Top 20 DAC donors for strengthening political participation of girls and young women (2014-2016)



Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System.

However, these amounts are very small when compared to Germany’s overall development assistance. Only 0.13% of Germany’s bilateral ODA is invested in the political empowerment of girls and young women (see figure 5 above and annex 4 for complete list). This places Germany as the 19th donor out of the 30 DAC donors analyzed.

Most donor funding is allocated to measures that directly promote political participation of girls and young women, and to human rights-related measures

The analysis of projects across five OECD sub-sectors shows that the largest area of funding between 2014 and 2016 went to projects focusing on democratic participation of girls and young women, which received an annual average of more than a third (34%) of all funding. This was closely followed by projects focused on strengthening human rights (32%). On average, a quarter of funds (24%) were allocated to supporting women’s equality organizations. Remaining funds supported efforts to end violence against girls and women (9%) and media projects and free flow of information (1%).

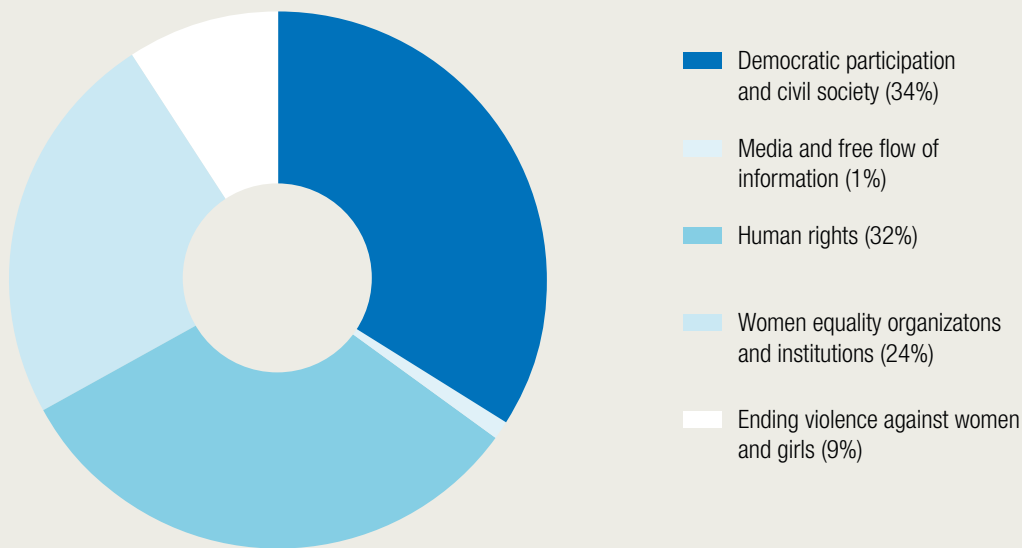
Most of the funding for girls' and young women's political participation goes to sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa consistently receives a large majority of funding dedicated to strengthening the political participation of girls and young women. From 2014 to 2016 an average of 37% of all funding went to this region. Almost a fifth (19%) was allocated to Asia. Beyond this, the Middle East and North Africa (10%), North and Central America (5%), Europe (4%), South America (3%), and Oceania (1%) receive much smaller shares of the funding.⁸

The large share of funding going to sub-Saharan Africa correlates with donors' overall development priorities; each of the top five donors in 2016 allocate at least 26% of their funding towards political participation of girls and young women to the region each year. Sub-Saharan Africa harbors a high number of low-income countries and has one of the fastest growing youth population globally. Moreover, many donors are increasingly focusing on addressing crises and root causes of migration and displacement in the region. These factors, amongst others, lead to increased investments in the growing youth and in promoting democracy in the sub-Saharan region.

FIGURE 6

**Funding to political participation of girls and young women breakdown by focus
(Average annual allocation, 2014-2016)**

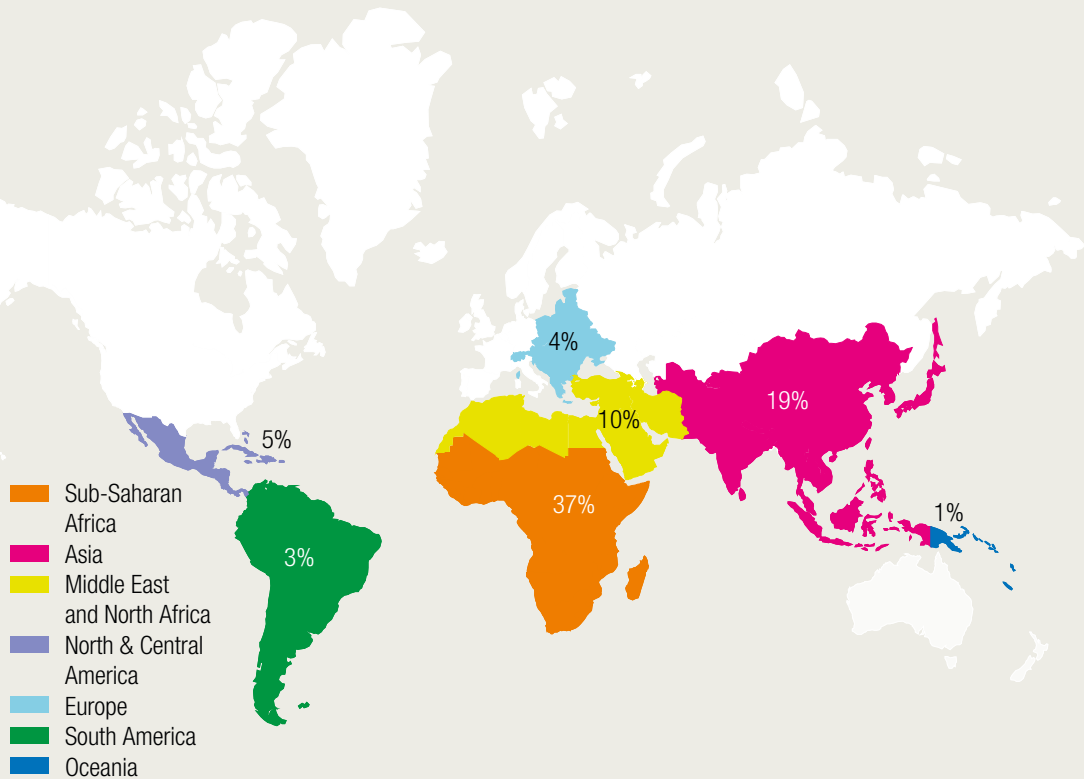


Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System

⁸ A fifth of all funding is allocated to "unspecified" regions; this includes funding to multilateral organizations or regional projects that cannot be allocated to one particular country.

FIGURE 7

Regional breakdown of funding allocated to political participation of girls and young women (2014-2016)



The remaining percent were allocated regionally or to unspecified regions

Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System



Photo: Plan International

4. BEST PRACTICE COUNTRIES

The second section of this report identifies best practices in the international donor community for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries. The top three performers, Sweden, Canada, and the Netherlands (see box 1), were selected based on their financial contributions as well as the policies and initiatives⁹ they have in place for this purpose.

BOX 1: OVERVIEW OF BEST-PRACTICE COUNTRIES AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS

	Sweden	Canada	The Netherlands
ODA flows (2014-2016 annual average)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US\$ 96 million • 2.4% of total bilateral ODA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US\$ 35 million • 1.3% of total bilateral ODA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US\$ 22 million • 0.6% of total bilateral ODA
Strategic focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist foreign policy (2015-2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Outlines political participation of girls and women as one of six strategic priorities • Strategy for global equality and women and girls rights (2018-2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Targets structural barriers to political participation of girls and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist development policy (2017) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as the only core action area > Girls' and women's agency and participation to be strengthened across all sectors and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development policy (2018-2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as a cross-cutting goal > Political participation featured as the first goal related to gender equality
Engagement and special initiatives at the global level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates internationally for disaggregated data by age and gender • Driver and financial supporter of SheDecides and SRHR • Largest country contributor to UN Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G7 Presidency 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Placed gender equality and women's empowerment at the core of G7 agenda • Holds a seat on the UN Commission on the Status of Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Actively involves Canadian CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made UN Security Council Resolution 1325 a priority during non-permanent UNSC membership in 2018 • Initiator and supporter of SheDecides movement
Bilateral programs and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality goal is a prerequisite for partnerships • Programs focus on giving girls and young women agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of Canada's bilateral ODA should benefit girls and women by 2021-2022 directly, and 80% indirectly • Supports the disaggregation of data by gender and age across all bilateral development efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support to CSOs working on political participation of girls and women, especially local NGOs • Flexible funding along 5-year periods

⁹ Depending on the strategies' focus, the wording in the following chapters varies between „girls and women“, „girls and young women“, and „women“.

4.1 SWEDEN

Sweden is an international champion for promoting the political participation of girls and young women

Sweden is the most important donor to strengthening political participation of girls and young women in developing countries. Between 2014 and 2016, Sweden allocated on average US\$96 million in ODA to projects dedicated to political participation of girls and young women. This makes it the largest donor to the area, both in absolute and in relative terms. Sweden spends an average of 2.4% of its total bilateral ODA on this topic, a much larger share than the OECD DAC average of 0.46%. Sweden's financial contribution has been consistent over the years, with the country ranking as top contributor in absolute terms each year since 2014.

The prioritization of political participation of girls and young women in Sweden's ODA levels is also reflected in the policy focus of the Swedish government. Pushed by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Sweden announced in 2014 the formation of "the world's first feminist government".ⁱⁱⁱ According to the government, the promotion of gender equality is the decisive factor in all priorities, decisions, and resource allocations, both domestically and internationally.^{iv} The government has also integrated gender equality into its foreign policy and development agenda.

1) What political strategies underpin efforts towards political participation of girls and young women?

Sweden uses its feminist foreign policy and its strategy for global equality to guide its work towards increased rights and freedom for girls, young women, and women

BOX 2: SWEDEN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY LISTS 6 STRATEGIC TARGETS, ALL SPECIFICALLY TARGETING GIRLS AND WOMEN:

1. Full enjoyment of all human rights
2. Freedom from physical, mental, and sexual violence
3. Participation in the prevention and solving of conflicts, and in building peace post-conflict
4. Political participation and influence within all areas of society
5. Economic rights and empowerment

The Swedish government has two key national strategies that focus on gender equality in its development policy. First, Sweden's foreign policy (2015-2018) details six strategic priorities (see box 2), all of which target girls and women, while one of these priorities ("political participation and influence within all areas of society") specifically targets their political participation.^{iv} Within this priority, specific targets shift from year to year, with 2018's emphasis being placed on:

- Improving girls' and women's representation, participation, and influence in institutions, organizations, and processes;
- Enhancing freedom of speech for girls and women;
- Strategically incorporating girls' and women's participation in the shaping and implementation of the Paris climate agreement, and in other environment and climate funds.



Photo: Plan International

¹⁰ Nonetheless, despite this being the first expressively feminist government, the pursuit of gender equality has been present in past governments, dating back to the 2000s.

The second key strategy guiding Sweden's work towards gender equality is the strategy for global equality and girls' and women's rights 2018-2022, announced in 2018 by the government.^v The strategy does not specifically mention the promotion of political participation of girls and young women. Rather, it focuses on broader structural barriers to girls' and women's participation in political processes, such as reducing gender-based violence and sexual discrimination, and supporting feminist movements and organizations.

In line with efforts to maintain gender equality as central to its foreign policy, Sweden has set 'three R's' to guide its work with other countries and international organizations:

- **"Rights:** all undertakings must work towards girls' and women's full enjoyment of human rights, particularly through combating violence and discrimination";
- **"Representation:** all undertakings must work towards increasing women's participation and influence in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas";
- **"Resources:** all undertakings must ensure that resources are allocated in a manner that increases gender equality and all girls' and women's opportunities to enjoy human rights".

Sweden genders all government undertakings, making gender equality a key factor in all decisions

The Swedish government emphasizes the need to view gender equality both as an overarching objective and as a tool to guide decisions. To this end, all policies, strategies, budgets, and partnerships are "gendered".^{vi} When allocating resources, including the annual national budget and the development budget, equality analyses are carried out. These analyses evaluate proposals based on their effect on women and men as separate groups, as well as on their effect on strengthening gender equality.

The understanding that challenges and needs vary across lifecycles ensures that Sweden places special focus on girls and young women

Sweden's global development efforts place emphasis on the varying challenges individuals face across different stages of their lives. This means that projects and

proposals – in the development up to evaluation stages – are examined for their effect on various age groups. This "lifecycle" approach works from the standpoint that generic policies targeting women as a single group will fail to consider the unique challenges that girls, boys, or young women and men face.^{vii}

This approach is also applied to statistics used by the Swedish foreign services. The feminist foreign policy prescribes that, where possible, all key institutions involved in Sweden's foreign and development policy, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), should disaggregate statistics by gender and age group, in reporting and ongoing activities.

II) What initiatives is Sweden pursuing at the global level?

Sweden advocates on the international stage for gendered budgeting and for data disaggregated by age and gender

Sweden uses its presence in international organizations and initiatives to shape the global agenda toward the promotion of political participation of girls and young women.

Sweden advocates for gendered budgeting and use of age-disaggregated data to be implemented by international bodies, such as the EU, UN, and NATO, both through the organizations themselves and their individual member states.^{viii} This particularly relates to peace and security work, in which Sweden sees the involvement of girls and women as instrumental.^{ix} Sweden emphasizes the need for girls' and women's involvement in conflict-resolution to influence social norms and to normalize girls' and women's involvement in political processes and leadership.

Beyond this, the country also advocates for gender-disaggregated data through its role in international fora. This has particularly been pushed by the country at the UN, where advocating for gender-disaggregated statistics was one of the country's goals during its membership at the UN Security Council in 2017 and 2018.^x To spread the practice, Sweden also seeks this type of data to be provided by its partners, including bilateral and multilateral partners, and civil society organizations (CSOs) funded by the Swedish government.^{xi}

Sweden prioritizes sexual and reproductive health and rights in its development assistance, and spearheaded the “SheDecides” movement

Sweden prioritizes sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in its development assistance, seeing it as an elementary requirement for girls and young women’s enjoyment of all human rights and participation in society. Sweden allocates between 6-7% of its ODA to SRHR.¹¹

In response to the reinstatement of the global gag rule by the United States (US) in 2017, by which the US government withdrew its funding to organizations supporting abortions and family planning in developing countries, Sweden – together with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark – launched the international initiative “SheDecides”. In the initiative’s first year, Sweden contributed US\$22 million. The movement aims to ensure the bodily autonomy of girls and young women, specifically the right to decide whether to have sex and when to have children. It places focus on the involvement of youth leaders both at its conference and in its governance, directly promoting the political participation and agency of girls and young women.

Sweden collaborates with UN Women to advance political participation of girls and young women

Sweden actively collaborates with UN Women to advance political participation of girls and young women, and has been the top government contributor to the organization since 2014. From 2014 to 2016, Sweden’s contributions to UN Women reached between US\$33-34 million each year. In contrast, Germany contributed US\$10 million in 2016, US\$3.5 million in 2015, and US\$4.6 million in 2014.

III) What is Sweden doing in its bilateral programs to promote the political participation of girls and young women?

Sweden provides funding to partner countries depending on their needs, with gender equality being a prerequisite goal

In its development assistance, Sweden requires its partner countries to ensure that funding targets gender equality. In practice this entails that partnerships are being created on the prerequisite that all parties share the understanding that culture, religion, and tradition cannot justify a divergence from equality, non-discriminatory behavior, and all humans’ freedom and equal worth.^{xiii} To match the efforts of partner countries, Sweden keeps its own focus on gender equality by evaluating project proposals for effects on gender, as well as on various age groups.

Allocation is dependent on partner country needs. The vast majority (63%) of projects (579) undertaken by Sweden during the three-year period within this topic focused on the sub-sector democratic participation and civil society; most of the projects carried out in upper-middle income countries were in this sector. The second-largest share (29%) focused on political empowerment through human rights projects; these were predominantly carried out in low-income countries.

Swedish development projects promote giving girls and young women agency, whether through education or SRHR projects

Sweden aims at giving girls agency through a variety of educational programs. Sweden places large emphasis on the education of girls and women. In terms of projects to directly promote political participation, this includes education on rights, democratic processes, and ability to voice opinions. In Tunisia in 2014, for example, Sweden invested US\$405,000 in a project to promote media literacy of girls and young women and strengthen democracy through the promotion of free speech and journalistic proficiency.^{xiv}

¹¹ This share was calculated by the NGO umbrella organization Concord, see report of Concord, 2017 “Hur feministisk är Sveriges feministiska utrikespolitik”. For more information see: <https://concord.se/rapporter/granskning-feministisk-utrikespolitik/>

BOX 3: PROJECT EXAMPLE “RAPARINGA BIZ”

Aiming to protect and promote SRHR in Mozambique, one innovative initiative from 2015 to 2020 views girls and young women as “change agents in their communities”. The project trains girls and young women as mentors, providing them with education in mentorship, SRHR, communication, as well as leadership, and participation skills. In its first year the project trained 783 youth mentors who mentored vulnerable girls aged 10-19. The project recognizes both the need to transform societal views on the roles of girls and women, and features consultations with community leaders and media representatives to ensure their commitment to the project’s values and success.^{xv}

IV) Conclusion

Sweden is a best-practice country, as it has integrated gender equality at all levels of government, both domestically and internationally

Sweden’s successes in promoting political participation of girls and young women is driven by its top- down approach, i.e. its integration of gender equality in all aspects of governance and project implementation. While Sweden focuses predominantly on structural barriers to political participation, such as SRHR, gender-based violence, and human rights, its political strategies and financial support to strengthen political participation of girls and young women are significant in international comparison. Sweden is a best-practice country that other donors in the international community can learn from if ambitions to meet SDG 5 on global gender equality are to be taken seriously.



Photo: Plan/Caitlin Indermaur

4.2 CANADA

Canada is amongst the top funders for the political participation of girls and young women; gender equality and empowerment of girls and women is a cross-cutting objective across all sectors of development assistance

In June 2017, Canada became the second country worldwide to adopt a feminist foreign policy, called the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).^{xvi} Through this new policy, the Canadian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, aims to become a global leader in promoting gender equality and empowering girls and women. Given that the OECD CRS has data on detailed ODA flows only until the year 2016, this report is only able to assess Canada's financial contributions to the political empowerment of girls and young women before the adoption of the new feminist policy. Nevertheless, already prior to shifting to its new policy in 2017, Canada had placed a focus on advancing girls' and women's rights and promoting their equal standing in society.

Based on the financial analysis underpinning this report, Canada provides 9% of global ODA supporting the political participation of girls and young women in developing countries.¹² It is the fifth-largest funder to the topic in absolute terms, providing US\$35 million per year (2014-2016 average). As a share of its total bilateral ODA, Canada provides 1.3% to the cause, ranking fourth amongst the 30 DAC donor countries analyzed. It invests almost three times as much as the OECD DAC average of 0.46%.¹³

If Canada successfully implements the commitments made under the FIAP, it is likely that its importance as an international donor to this issue will increase in the future.

1) What political strategies underpin efforts towards political participation of girls and young women?

The Canadian government places gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women at the heart of its development policy

Canada's FIAP, with the subtitle "#HerVoiceHerChoice", regards the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as paramount to eradicate poverty and build more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous societies.

One of the greatest strategic shifts associated with Canada's feminist approach is the recognition of gender-related issues and barriers across all sectors and across civil, political, economic, and social rights. As a result, "gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" is a core action area (in fact, the only core action area) of Canada's new development policy (see box 4). This requires that gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women are mainstreamed as cross-cutting and trans-vertical objectives within each sector that Canada supports, as well as being an objective in and of itself. This shift requires organizations that receive Canadian funding to design (or redesign) programs to the benefit of girls, young women, and women and to engage them at all stages of project development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Non-conformance can lead to not receiving funding. With its new policy, Canada has shifted from seeing girls and young women as beneficiaries to valuing them as the actual change-makers to drive lasting change across all development sectors that Canada engages in. Canada also commits to ensuring the agency and meaningful participation of girls and women throughout its development assistance.

¹² The financial analysis was conducted by SEEK Development based on OECD data. See chapter 2 for details on the methods of analysis.

¹³ The financial analysis of this report only reflects Canada's financial contributions to the five OECD CRS sub-sectors of the sector government and civil society, that were chosen as proxies for measuring funding for political participation. It is important to note that actual contributions to date are likely higher, given that Canada has made gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women an objective that cuts across all sector programs.

BOX 4: THE CANADIAN FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOCUSES ON SIX ACTION AREAS:

The core action area – which cross cuts all areas – is:

1. **“Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”**

The other action areas focus on:

2. **“Human dignity”**, covering humanitarian action, health and nutrition, and education
3. **“Growth that works for everyone”**, including sustainable agriculture, green technologies and renewable energy
4. **“Environment and climate action”** focusing on adaptation and mitigation, as well as on water management
5. **“Inclusive governance”**, including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance
6. **“Peace and security”**, by promoting inclusive peace processes and combatting gender-based violence

The development of the Feminist International Assistance Policy included an extensive consultation process

The development of the FIAP was itself a highly inclusive and open process. Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the government department that manages foreign and development policy, worked in close consultation with Canadian civil society and international practitioners and experts for a year and a half. The process, in which reportedly 15,000 people across 65 countries took part, was characterized by an intensive dialogue between stakeholders and government. Many of the recommendations that were brought forward in the process were taken up by the Canadian government. A key example is the establishment of a global fund for the support of local women’s rights and activist organizations, for which civil society strongly advocated throughout the consultation process. The Canadian government committed to spend CAD\$150 million (US\$113 million) over a five-year period (2017-2022) to such a fund. The fund, called “Women’s Voice and Leadership Program”, supports local women’s organizations and movements in at least 30 countries toward the advancement of the rights and the empowerment of girls, young women, and women.

Canada supports the disaggregation of data by gender and age across all its development assistance efforts

In order to ensure that the needs of girls and women are better understood and responded to, Canada intends to strengthen its evidence base by investing in policy research, better data collection and evaluation for gender equality across all its international assistance efforts. Simultaneously, it expects its partnering CSOs to do the same. Additionally, Canada plans to support national governments and public servants in partner countries to collect and analyze data and evidence disaggregated by gender and age to support better decision-making and programming. The Canadian government contends that disaggregated data will help it to design and implement initiatives that address the differential needs and opportunities of girls and women, including through gender budgeting.

II) What initiatives is Canada pursuing at the global level?

Canada actively leverages its role in international fora such as G7 to advance gender equality and empowerment of girls and women

In 2018, Canada has held the presidency of the Group of Seven (G7). Canada’s G7 presidency is unique in its approach. For the first time in history of the G7, a host country has placed gender equality at the core of what has traditionally been a forum to discuss economic policies. Canada integrated gender equality and women’s empowerment as a cross-cutting theme throughout its agenda, and featured it at all ministerial meetings to date. To ensure discussions were informed by the very people affected by it, representatives of youth, including young women, and civil society were invited to speak at the various G7 meetings.



Photo: Plan International

To ensure that a gender-sensitive analysis is integrated across all themes, activities, and outcomes of the 2018 G7, the Canadian government mandated a “Gender Equality Advisory Council”, composed of over twenty feminist leaders from around the globe.^{xvii} Ahead of the G7 Summit in June 2018, the Advisory Council released a comprehensive list of 60 recommendations for the G7, which detail actions and investments that would benefit the rights and opportunities of girls and women.^{xviii} The active participation of girls, adolescents and women is a recurring theme throughout the recommendations. Acting upon one of the central recommendations of the Council, the G7 (with the exception of the US) pledged almost US\$3 billion to improve access to education for girls and young women in crisis settings.^{xx} In this light, Canada is investing CAD\$400 million over three years.¹⁴ In addition, US\$3 billion was committed to stimulate business activities that benefit female entrepreneurs and workers in developing countries.

During the G7 Development Ministers’ meeting in June 2018, ministers agreed on a range of concrete measures to drive positive change in four key areas: advancing adolescent girls’ empowerment for sustainable development; combating sexual exploitation and abuse in international assistance; gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women in humanitarian action; and accelerating innovation for development impact. The importance of giving girls and young women a voice and promoting their active participation in decision-making and leadership, as well as shifting towards developing solutions with them, instead of for them, was a recurring theme across the declarations issued by the G7 Development Ministers in June 2018. In the spirit of supporting the political participation of girls and young women, six young female leaders from across the globe were invited to join the Development Ministers’ meeting and speak about the importance of involving girls and women in decision-making.

Young people are actively involved in global initiatives

Canada also uses other global fora to promote the topic of gender equality. In 2017, Canada was elected as one of 45 countries to hold a seat on the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) for the term 2017-2021. During the 62nd CSW Session in March 2018, the Canadian delegation engaged with global partners to address this year’s priority theme “challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”, and actively involved Canadian CSOs in the drafting of the CSW 62 Agreed Conclusions.^{xx} In this light, the Canadian government supports “WE Day UN”, an event which takes place during the UN General Assembly each year, with the aim of inspiring youth to challenge and encourage world leaders to live up to their commitments.^{xxi} In 2019, Canada will host “Women Deliver”, the world’s largest conference on women’s health and rights.^{xxii} Through its Young Leaders Program, the conference gives voice to youth advocates from around the world and provides them with opportunities to build and strengthen their advocacy capacity and skills.^{xxiii}

III) What is Canada doing in its bilateral programs to promote the political participation of girls and young women?

95% of Canada’s bilateral ODA should benefit girls and women directly or indirectly, by 2021-2022

Canada is a global leader when it comes to promoting the political participation of girls and young women through its bilateral programming across the world. The government aims to expand this further and therefore commits in its new Feminist International Assistance Policy to ensure that by 2021-2022 a share of at least 15% of all bilateral development assistance specifically targets gender equality and empowerment of girls and women, up from 2% in 2015-2016.¹⁵ These investments will be allocated to, among other areas, initiatives that enable the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, support women’s organizations promoting women’s rights, and enhance the institutional capacity of the public sector to address gender equality.

¹⁴ This funding comes in addition to the CAD\$180 million Canada provided in January 2018 to the Global Partnership for Education for 2018-2020.

¹⁵ Calculation of the Canadian government

At the same time, Canada aims to enhance the integration of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women across all its international assistance efforts. The government commits that 80% of its bilateral development projects will integrate these objectives into their programming. Taken together, Canada pledges that by 2021-2022 at the latest, 95% of its bilateral assistance will either directly or indirectly benefit girls and women.

Strong support to CSOs working on advancing the political participation of girls and young women

Canada also provides significant support to youth organizations, with political participation being a strong element. For example, the Canadian government supports projects of Plan International Canada, particularly in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia that focus on empowering girls, young women, and men. These projects take place in close cooperation and partnership with local youth and girls' organizations. In its bilateral programming, Canada also works closely together with its High Commissions and embassies (see box 5).¹⁶

BOX 5: PROJECT EXAMPLE “#FEMPARL II: YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE”^{XXIV}

Canada is an active player in South Asia, with one central aim being the advancement of the political engagement and participation of girls and young women. Under the theme “Young Women Leaders as Agents of Change”, the High Commissions of Canada to Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan, as well as the Canadian Embassy in Afghanistan, together initiated a collaborative program in February 2018 that focused on empowering young women to become agents of change through leadership and meaningful participation in political and social life. Over four days, young female delegates participated in capacity-building sessions, seminars, and meetings with decision makers, as well as in panel discussions with CSOs, universities, think tanks, and youth organizations. The young women who participated are currently preparing joint papers for publication and are building a “Tool Kit for Basic Gender Training”.

IV) Conclusion

Canada’s new feminist development policy and political commitment make Canada a global front-runner with regard to advancing the political participation and agency of girls and young women

Canada is amongst the top funders for promoting the political participation of girls and young women, providing 9% of total ODA supporting the topic. Through its new Feminist International Assistance Policy, contributions are likely to increase in the coming years. The feminist policy has made gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women a cross-cutting and trans-vertical objective across all sectors. The government has outlined ambitious goals: by 2021-2022, 15% of bilateral development assistance must specifically target gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women, and a further 80% must ensure these objectives are integrated into their planning. Beyond these ambitions, Canada has several best practices it can share with the wider international donor community. The Feminist International Assistance Policy was developed through an extensive consultation process with civil society and experts. Moreover, data is disaggregated by gender and age across all development assistance efforts. And finally, Canada actively leverages its role in international fora, such as the G7 in 2018, to advance gender equality and empowerment of girls and young women.



Photo: Plan International

¹⁶ Canadian High Commissions are Canadian diplomatic missions in Commonwealth States. They are equivalent to embassies in non-Commonwealth states.

4.3 THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a longtime champion for gender equality and political participation of girls and young women; the new development policy is likely to increase attention to the topic

The Netherlands is a longstanding champion of gender equality and girls' and young women's empowerment, particularly in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). While its financial contribution to the political participation of girls and young women is not significant in international comparison, the country pursues innovative initiatives at the national and global level that distinguish it as a best-practice country on the topic. The country's new development policy is expected to further increase attention to gender equality and political empowerment of girls and young women.

The Netherlands screens all of its bilateral assistance projects against the OECD gender marker. In 2016, a 38% of all bilateral funding had gender equality as one of the significant objectives (G1), while a further 22% had gender equality as the project's principal objective (G2). The latter is more than five times higher than the OECD average of 4%. The Netherlands' gender-related ODA funding places particular emphasis on political participation. In line with this, the largest share of Dutch ODA targeting gender equality is allocated to the sector government and civil society (24%, US\$340 million in 2016).

The Netherlands ranks sixth in the international donor community regarding its financial support to political participation of girls and young women, providing on average US\$22 million per year (2014-2016 average). In relative terms, the Netherlands is the eighth-largest donor country, spending 0.6% of its bilateral ODA on girls' political empowerment (the OECD average is 0.46%).

Although the Netherlands' contribution to political participation of girls and young women is comparatively low, it is one of the leading donors with regard to the political participation of women as a whole.¹⁷ Between the period 2014-2016, the Netherlands allocated 11% of its ODA to the political participation of women, which is more than five times as much as the OECD DAC average of 2%. In total, it provided US\$412 million each year to the political participation of women (2014-2016 average). In 2014 and 2015, the Netherlands was even the largest funder of all 30 OECD DAC donors in relative terms, exceeding the latest (2016) front-runner, Sweden. In 2016, the Netherlands was the second-largest donor to political participation of women (in relative terms).

l) What political strategies underpin efforts towards political participation of girls and young women?

The new development policy makes gender equality and empowerment of girls and women a cross-cutting goal in all priority areas

Spearheaded by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands released its new policy on development cooperation, titled "Investing in Global Prospects: For the World, for the Netherlands" in May 2018. The new policy which will guide Dutch development cooperation under the current "Rutte III" until 2021, places gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women at the heart by making it a cross-cutting goal. The rights and the development of girls and women will be mainstreamed across all four priority areas, poverty, migration, terrorism, and climate change. This cross-cutting gender mainstreaming-goal encompasses four specific targets that had already been part of the previous development policy (see box 6).

¹⁷ This category includes girls and young women. It is difficult to say, within the scope of this report, whether this is due to project descriptions in the OECD CRS seldomly mentioning girls and young women, or if in fact few projects address this younger cohort of women.

BOX 6: GENDER EQUALITY TARGETS OF THE DUTCH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. "Increase women's participation in political and other decision-making, and strengthening women in leadership"
2. "Increase economic empowerment and improving the economic climate for women"
3. "Prevent and eliminating violence against women and girls"
4. "Strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and peace processes, and protecting them in conflict situations"

Nevertheless, the new development policy does not single out girls and/or young women as distinct groups, but instead bundles them together into the single group "women and girls".

II) What initiatives is the Netherlands pursuing at the global level?

Representatives of girls, young women, and women are often invited to take part in political and diplomatic consultations

With its new development policy, the Netherlands commits to include the interests of girls and young women in its political and diplomatic consultations on all areas of policy. It pursues this by, for instance, inviting groups of girls and young women to the political negotiating tables. In this light, the Netherlands collaborated with 11 other countries to set up in 2012 the Equal Futures Partnership, a multilateral initiative which aims to encourage member countries to economically and politically empower women.¹⁸ In this context, partner countries committed to legal, regulatory, and policy reforms to ensure the full participation of women in public life at the local, regional, and national level. Furthermore, since 1970, the Netherlands sends youth delegates to the UN General Assembly, allowing them to be full members of the national delegation for three weeks.^{xxv}

The Netherlands uses the UN and global initiatives like "SheDecides" to promote the political empowerment of girls and young women at the international level

Being a small country, the Netherlands leverages international fora and initiatives to have greater impact in promoting the political participation of girls and young women.

In 2018, the Netherlands has been a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). One of its priorities for its membership has been to promote the active engagement of women in preventing conflict and in peace negotiations (UNSC Resolution 1325). The Netherlands advocates internationally for the integration of women's perspectives into peace negotiations and peacekeeping missions, primarily through the substantive participation of local women's organizations at the mediation tables.^{xxvi} The Netherlands is one of the few countries that has a specific budget allocated toward ensuring its National Action Plan for the UNSC Resolution 1325 is sufficiently resourced. Girls and young women are a key target group of these efforts, whilst not always being separately addressed.

Additionally, the Netherlands had a leading role in the global initiative "SheDecides". In an immediate response to funding cuts by the US to organizations that support access to or provide information about safe abortion, the former Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lilianne Ploumen, launched the international initiative in January 2017. The initiative was joined by over 50 governments. Over the past year, "SheDecides" has grown into a global movement with strong support of many governments, activist groups, and global champions. As of January 2018, a total of €390 million has been raised by "SheDecides". The Dutch government is currently supporting "SheDecides" with €29 million. This comparatively low financial commitment shows that the Netherlands is not a huge financial contributor, but an important political actor for the rights of girls and young women.

¹⁸ The partnership is no longer active. For more information on past activity see: <http://www.equal-futures.org/country/netherlands>

III) What is the Netherlands doing in its bilateral programs to promote the political participation of girls and young women?

The Netherlands commits in its new development policy to include girls and women in decision-making around and implementation of its bilateral development programs. To make sure that the needs of girls and women are considered in the analysis, planning, and execution of activities, it obliges all recipient organizations to use the gender marker.

Strong support to civil society organizations working on the political participation of girls and women, especially local ones that work for and by girls and women

In order to support the participation of girls and women in decision-making in society and in politics, the Dutch government prioritizes funds to organizations that work for girls, young women, and women and which are led by women and youth. It places particularly strong emphasis on local organizations, given that they know best the needs, challenges, and approaches suited for the context. Moreover, women's organizations as well as youth-led organizations in the Global South play an integral role in influencing the local policies of their governments, communities, and other actors to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all girls, young women, and women.

With the aim of increasing the political participation of girls and women in low- and lower-middle income countries, the Netherlands established in 2016 a special fund (2016-2020) named "Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women" (FLOW). The fund supports nine development programs led by Dutch and international civil society organizations (together with their local partners) dedicated to political participation, combating violence against girls, young women, and women, and to their economic empowerment. This €93 million program was criticized by women's rights organizations given dissatisfaction with the majority of funds going to large Dutch and international organizations, as opposed to smaller organizations from the South. The Netherlands took this criticism seriously and, in response, created a fund in 2017 dedicated to funding activities that are devised, implemented, and led by women's organizations from the Global South. The "Leading from the South Fund" (LFS) offers grants to youth and women's organizations and movements around the world to lobby and advocate for girls' and women's rights.^{xxvii}

Flexible funding approaches allow greater dialogue and flexibility in working with young women and men

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation has a unique flexible funding approach, by which the ministry signs multiannual framework agreements with civil society organizations. Under such framework agreements, organizations are not required to submit a detailed five-year program outline matched with its expected results, but can adjust their planning throughout the course of the project life. Such funding makes space for more attentive programming, piloting, and learning. This is particularly important when working with young people, whose needs and desires can change significantly over just a few years, and ample dialogue and flexibility is indispensable. It is also particularly useful for the support of political advocacy work, in which it is more difficult to foresee results. Most donor governments, such as Germany and the UK, follow a more managerial approach in which more emphasis is placed on results-based programming, value for money, and compliance toward expected outcomes.

The framework agreements are provided through a funding scheme named "Dialogue and Dissent. Strategic partnerships for lobby and advocacy", which has a budget of €920 million for the period 2016-2020.^{xxviii} The fund puts an emphasis on advocacy work and strategic partnerships between 25 organizations and the ministry, with different alliances for different programs. All organizations selected for the framework must ensure gender mainstreaming in their advocacy programs. Four alliances have a specific focus on the political empowerment of girls and young women. Plan International Netherlands leads one of them: "The Girls Advocacy Alliance" (GAA), of which the active participation of girls and young women is a central element.

Interviews underlined the importance of the fund "Dialogue and Dissent", given the importance in developing countries of supporting advocacy from civil society in order to hold governments accountable and to make the voices of marginalized groups – such as women, youth, and girls – more heard. Dutch organizations are urged by the fund to focus their lobbying efforts on the Netherlands and the global level, as opposed to replacing the advocacy of organizations from the South. Instead, they are requested to strengthen Southern organizations, build capacities, and create space for Southern voices to influence private companies, national governments, and international decision-makers.

IV) Conclusion

Innovative initiatives at the national and global level distinguish the Netherlands as a best-practice country in the promotion of political participation of girls and young women

Whilst the Netherlands is not amongst the top three financial donors to the political participation of girls and young women, the country is an important proponent of the topic, pursuing laudable initiatives at the national and global level. With its new development policy, it has made gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women a cross-cutting goal in all priority areas. The Netherlands ensures that girls and young women are

included in decision-making around and implementation of its bilateral development programs, and frequently invites representative groups – amongst others of girls and young women – to take part in political and diplomatic consultations on the national and international level. The government has an innovative funding approach that greatly facilitates working with young women and men: it prioritizes working with local civil society organizations, and offers sustained and flexible funding mechanisms that allow for attentive programming, piloting, and learning. This engagement can serve as examples for other countries that aim to expand their efforts toward strengthening the political participation of girls and young women.



Photo: Plan International/Johanna de Tessières

5. COMMITMENT OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

Despite some increases in recent years, Germany continues to spend less than 0.2% of its development assistance on promoting political participation of girls and young women

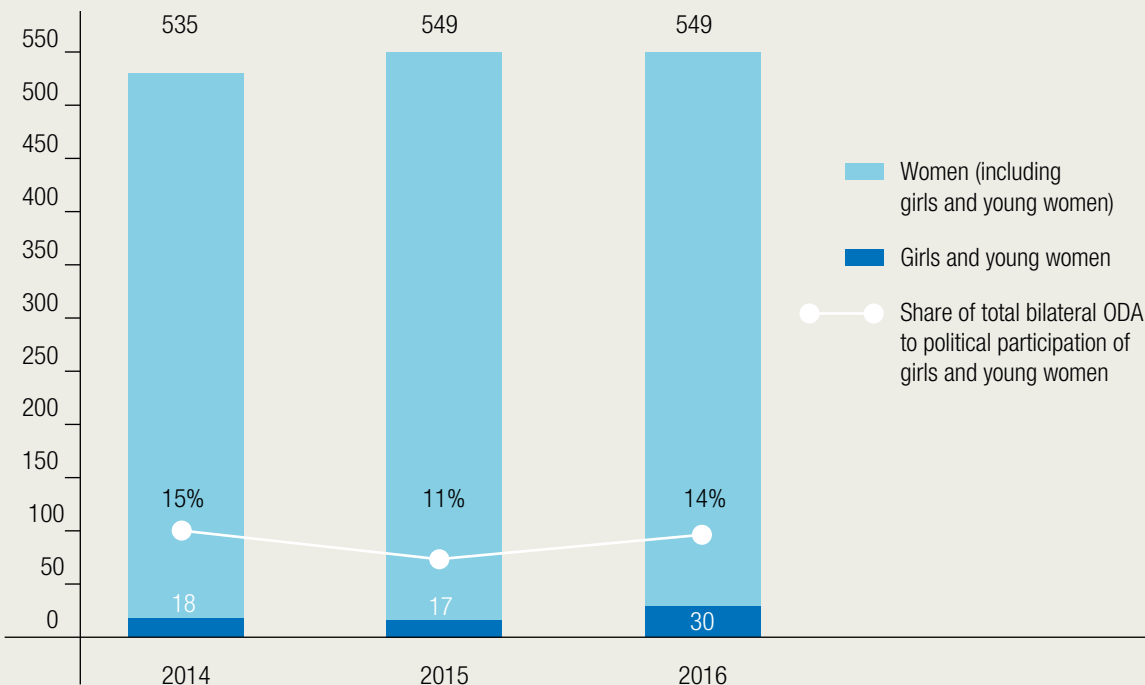
Given Germany's size as an international donor (Germany was the second-largest OECD DAC donor country in 2017, following the US), the country's contribution to promoting the political participation of girls and young women is substantial in absolute terms. However, when regarding its contribution in relative terms, the prioritization of the topic decreases significantly.

Germany ranks seventh in the international donor community regarding funding to political participation of girls and young women. Between 2014 and 2016, it provided US\$22 million on average per year for this area. However, this is well below what the top donors spend. For example, top-ranking Sweden allocated more than four times as much (US\$96 million). In 2014, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) adopted its first cross-sectoral strategy on Gender Equality in Development Policy.^{xxix} The strategy set strengthening gender equality and women's rights in the field of social and political parti-

FIGURE 8

Germany's ODA for political participation of women (total) and for girls and young women

in US\$ million



Source: SEEK Development estimates based on OECD Creditor Reporting System

icipation as one of its key objectives. Partly as a result, Germany scaled up its contributions over the three-year period, from US\$18 million in 2014 to US\$30 million in 2016, an increase of 65%. Also, the total number of projects within this area increased, growing from 114 in 2014 to 172 in 2016. This is a sign of growing political will and commitment.

While in absolute terms Germany is among the top donors, a look at the importance of this area compared to Germany's overall development assistance portfolio paints a different picture. Germany allocates only 0.13% of its bilateral ODA to the empowerment of girls and young women (2014-2016 average), ranking only 19th among the 30 OECD DAC donors analyzed in this report. This share largely remained the same in the 2014-2016 period (see figure 8) and is far less than the average 0.46% spent by all 30 OECD DAC donors analyzed.

A look at the geographic dispersion of financial support to this topic shows that almost one-third of Germany's funding in this area is channeled to sub-Saharan Africa (31%, 2014-2016 average). This was followed by the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), which received on average 14%. This correlates with Germany's prioritization of these two regions in its overall development policy.¹⁹ The German government is placing an increasing focus on "fighting the root causes of migration" in the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. It is thus likely that larger portions of Germany's ODA will go to these regions in the coming years.

Looking at the five OECD sub-sectors that were used as proxies for measuring financial support to strengthening political participation, Germany allocates the largest share of its funding to human rights-related projects (annual average of 46%) and democratic participation and civil society (42%); 11% was used to support governmental and non-governmental organizations specifically working on gender equality and women's empowerment.

While Germany's support to political participation of girls is low, Germany is a top donor to the political participation of women in general

Although Germany's contribution to the political empowerment of girls and young women is poor in international comparison, the financial analysis and expert interviews painted a much more positive picture with regard to the

political participation of women as a whole. In absolute terms, Germany is the top donor here, spending on average US\$544 million per year from 2014-2016. In relative terms, Germany is the 10th-largest donor, allocating on average 3% of its ODA to this cause, higher than the OECD DAC average of 2%.

Overall, Germany applies the gender marker to almost all of its projects across all sectors (94% in 2016). This is a positive message, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of gender equality and the monitoring of its progress. In 2016, only 1% of all bilateral funding had gender equality as a principal goal (G2), while 37% included gender equality as one of its significant goals (G1).^{xxx} Unfortunately, still more than half (56%) of all ODA does not have any goals related to gender equality (G0).

l) What political strategies underpin efforts towards political participation of girls and young women

BMZ's Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Action Plan prioritize political participation of girls and women

Despite Germany's limited financial contributions toward the political empowerment of girls and young women, the government and its implementing agencies for development cooperation do have strategies and guiding principles for strengthening the political participation of girls and young women, both domestically and internationally. Particularly at the domestic level, Germany boasts strong political participation of girls and boys; in fact, the current government's coalition agreement commits to anchoring children's rights in the basic law of Germany, which reflects a growing recognition of children as active agents.^{xxxi}

The political strategies guiding Germany's development cooperation are less pronounced on this; however, they do include several goals related to strengthening the political participation of girls and women. BMZ states on its website that the realization of "equal rights, duties, opportunities and power for women and men" is an explicit goal and principle of German development cooperation.^{xxxi} In 2014, the ministry adopted its first cross-sectoral strategy on Gender Equality in Development Policy^{xxxi}; this strategy is the foundation for Germany's efforts toward gender equality and women empowerment in developing countries. It follows a three-pronged approach aiming for:

¹⁹ Asia receives 18%, the Americas receives 19%, 14% remains in Europe, while 7% is "unspecified".

- “Gender mainstreaming in all development policies and projects”
- “Empowerment of women and girls through women-specific support measures”, and
- “The systemic anchoring of women’s rights and equality in development policy dialogue with partner countries”.

Political participation and strengthening women’s voices and leadership are among BMZ’s key priorities for promoting gender equality, but girls are not specifically in focus

The concrete priorities and measures through which BMZ intends to implement these overarching goals are set out in its Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, or Gender Action Plan (GAP II).^{xxxiv} The responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Gender Action Plan sits with BMZ’s division ‘Human rights, gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities’ (402).

The Gender Action Plan outlines nine priority issues that were selected in alignment with the SDGs and BMZ’s own sector-specific priorities. Strengthening the political participation of girls, young women, and women is the first priority. Concretely, BMZ plans to increase “access to justice and legal services for women and girls, political participation, participation and representation” (“participation, voice and leadership”). This overarching goal is split up into three strategic objectives that BMZ aims to achieve by 2020 (see box 7). This is a positive development and shows that BMZ recognizes the importance of promoting women’s equal access to political participation, however, it does not mention girls’ political participation specifically.

However, based on interviews, there are two central concerns regarding the Gender Action Plan:

- The GAP does not single out girls as a stand-alone target group. All measures described are related to adult women, while girls or young women are not mentioned at all. This is problematic, as the specific needs of girls and young women are not adequately considered at the strategic level, nor, consequently, in program implementation.

**BOX 7:
ACTION FRAMEWORK TO IMPLEMENT THE GAP’S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ON „PARTICIPATION, VOICE AND LEADERSHIP“^{xxxv}**

Strategic objectives to promote participation, voice, and leadership by 2020:

- “Strengthen access to justice and legal services for women and girls”
- “Ensure women’s political participation, voice, and leadership, including efforts to help governments meet their responsibility to guarantee political participation by women, to make participatory processes inclusive, and to place participatory rights on a sound legal and institutional footing”
- “Support civil society advocacy of women’s rights and protect human-rights defenders”.

Goals	Measures
Multilateral Development Policy Discourse	Improve standards for institutional frameworks and democracy procedures in the international community.
Bilateral Development Policy Discourse	Improve legal frameworks for gender equality, especially in family, property, and inheritance law. Dismantle discriminatory laws and procedural regulations in order to strengthen women’s access to justice. Build and strengthen legal-aid systems that are accessible and sustainable and meet the specific needs of women.
Empowerment	Promote vocational training, professional development, and capacity building for women and women’s rights organizations so that women participate much more visibly at all levels of policymaking (including local government) and have direct influence on decision making. Commission projects that focus on promoting political participation by women and by self-advocacy organizations, including representatives of ethnic minorities and women with disabilities.
Gender Mainstreaming	Within civil society, strengthen women’s rights and human rights organizations, incl. national human rights institutions and organizations for LGBTI, as strategic partners of democracies that represent all and treat all genders equally.

- The Gender Action Plan is not underpinned by a dedicated budget, as BMZ channels its gender equality-related funding through its regional divisions. This is problematic, as the Plan consequently lacks the financial backing to start initiatives of its own to advance its objectives, and instead relies on other stakeholders and ministry divisions for implementation.

The 2017 annual roadmap included the action area “participation, voice and leadership” for the first time. This action area is maintained in the 2018 roadmap

The Gender Action Plan is complemented by annual roadmaps that provide an overview of priority measures and concrete impacts to be achieved. The roadmaps illustrate measures across the GAP’s priority issues that should be achieved during the timeframe of the roadmap; the measures are framed in the form of flagship projects and milestones.²⁰

In contrast to the 2016 roadmap, the roadmaps for both 2017 and 2018 are closely linked to the sector-specific issues of the GAP II.^{xxxvi} This is a welcome development, as it permits insights into concrete projects BMZ is supporting to achieve its objectives set in the Gender Action Plan. The action area “participation, voice and leadership” was included for the first time in the annual roadmap in 2017 – a positive development, particularly as this goal was maintained in the 2018 roadmap, published in June 2018. In latest roadmap (2018), “participation, voice and leadership” is underpinned by 11 milestones and two flagships; only two of them specifically mention girls or young women.²¹ This is a negative development, given that the 2017 roadmap had included 17 milestones and three flagships related to political participation, of which three projects had specifically targeted girls or young women. According to BMZ, the listed projects are not exhaustive and only give an exemplary impression of Germany’s engagement in this field. This is unfortunate, as it impedes serious external monitoring of the implementation of the roadmap and the Gender Action Plan. Also, the lack of indicators to substantiate Germany’s planned engagement hinder effective monitoring.

Additionally, each year BMZ publishes a report on the implementation of the roadmap. The latest report covers the year 2016, highlighting the overall prioritization of the areas conflict and peace building, as well as employment and economic empowerment of women – though not of girls and young women specifically.^{xxxvii} While political participation was not a concrete action area of the 2016 roadmap, the report describes six projects that were implemented in 2016 which relate to the political participation of girls and young women, including measures to eliminate female genital mutilation and to ensure safer cities for girls and young women. The roadmaps and implementation reports are frequently criticized for merely illustrating selected projects, rather than providing an exhaustive list of relevant projects including funding, indicators, and progress. Due to a lack of disaggregated data, BMZ is not able to pinpoint the funding volume going specifically to the political empowerment of girls and young women, among others, because it does not know which percentile of funding of a G1-marked project actually benefits girls’ and young women’s empowerment. To allow for external monitoring and accountability, future roadmaps and implementation reports should not only describe several milestones and flagships, but rather provide an overview of all projects and their funding for each priority area.

Germany’s development agencies, GIZ and KfW, have strategies for women’s empowerment, though none specifically mentions girls and young women

Germany’s two state-owned development agencies, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), responsible for planning and executing Germany’s technical cooperation with partner countries, and the KfW Development Bank, leading on Germany’s financial cooperation, each have their own strategies for gender equality and strengthening women’s rights. However, neither GIZ’s^{xxxviii} nor KfW’s^{xxxix} strategies specifically mention political empowerment of girls and young women. The strategies were last updated in 2012 and 2011, respectively. While having their own strategies, both implementing agencies are guided by BMZ’s Gender Action Plan.

²⁰ Milestones can encompass projects, pilots, trainings or events. For areas with many milestones, the roadmap illustrates flagships that represent the focus area and its related milestones particularly well.

²¹ These milestones relate to “1) Informing female voters, especially young ones about the municipal and parliamentary elections in Cambodia through online- and radio shows as well as public discussion fora. 2) Using music, theatre, literature and film as instruments to foster the political participation of women and girls in Africa and the Middle East.”

GIZ engages in government consultations with partner countries, during negotiation of partnership agreements as well as during the implementation of programs. While these are tailored to the needs and interests of partner governments, GIZ could use their government consultations and projects to promote the inclusion of girls and young women in government decision-making processes. According to the experts interviewed, this is still insufficiently done by GIZ.

BMZ's youth action plan "Agents of Change" emphasizes children and youth rights in German development cooperation, but no mention of the specific vulnerabilities and needs of girls

Children and youth rights are claimed to be an integral component of German development cooperation. The introduction of the BMZ action plan "Agents of Change", published in 2017, emphasizes that "young people have a right to active involvement in decisions that affect them – be it at the social, political or economic level".^{XL} Therefore, "their voices need to be heard if their ideas and suggestions are to be put to effective use. That is why German development cooperation policy takes child and youth participation seriously". The action plan, which has been formulated on the Agenda 2030 principle "leave no one behind", highlights children as "critical agents of change". It contains the priorities and goals that Germany has set itself to promote children and youth. Although the action plan highlights gender equality as an underlying principle and recognizes the different needs and vulnerabilities of girls, its "action areas" that guide BMZ's activities until 2019 almost exclusively group girls and boys together, except for the special protection of girls against violence and abuse.

During the development of the youth action plan, BMZ actively involved young volunteers of civil society organizations, such as Plan International Germany, UNICEF, and Terre des Hommes. Moreover, it held a youth consultation with 24 young people aged 14-24 over a period of five months. This consultation process was strongly welcomed by civil society and could serve as an example for future updates of other key strategies of the ministry.

II) What initiatives is Germany pursuing at the global level?

Germany uses its leadership in international fora such as the G7 and G20 to advance gender equality

Germany has at several occasions used its standing in global fora to elevate the topic of gender equality and girls' and young women's rights to an international level. During the negotiations toward the 2030 Agenda, the German government advocated that gender equality and self-determination of all women should be anchored as a separate SDG, as well as a cross-cutting theme of the entire agenda.

Germany has also used its recent presidencies for G7 and G20 to promote gender equality. Given the economic nature of these fora, the focus was primarily on economic – and thus not political – empowerment of women. In 2015, Germany used its G7 leadership in Elmau to champion issues of gender equality, violence against women, and barriers to women's economic participation. Germany launched an initiative the same year focused on women's economic empowerment with the goal of increasing girls' and women's participation in technical and vocational education by one third

In 2017, Germany used its G20 presidency to again place the topic high on the agenda: the G20 Leaders' Declaration included women's economic and financial inclusion, as well as education, as a key way to improve sustainable livelihoods. Germany's positive global engagement for girls and young women should be continued beyond its G7 and G20 presidencies. According to interviews, engagement at the global level depends to a great extent on the personal commitment of Chancellor Angela Merkel but has not been supported with increased commitment from BMZ nor with additional funds for implementation. This must be addressed, should Germany aspire to play a stronger role internationally for the rights of girls and young women.

On the sidelines of the latest G7 summit in Canada, several countries committed additional development funds and strengthened political will for education in crisis and conflict regions, particularly of girls, with Germany announcing an additional US\$75 million²² to the issue in 2018.

²² How these funds will be distributed remains to be seen.

In 2019 and 2020, Germany will take over one of the non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas promised to make the agenda on “Women, Peace and Security” a priority of Germany’s membership.^{xii} This agenda entails the active participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict peacebuilding, as well as the special protection of girls, young women, and women from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict (UNSC Resolution 1325). It remains to be seen during the 2019/2020 membership whether girls and young women will receive special attention in this agenda point.²³

To tackle the existing gender digital divide in low-income countries, Germany launched the G20 initiative #eSkills4girls under its presidency in 2017

Several interview partners emphasized that many donors – including Germany – have recognized the importance of digital skills and technologies for the political, economic, and social empowerment of youth, and specifically of girls and young women. In this light, as part of the German G20 presidency in 2017, BMZ drew attention to the gender-specific digital divide and launched the initiative “#eSkills4Girls”. The initiative is supported by all G20 heads of state, as well as UNESCO, UN Women, OECD, and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

As part of #eSkills4Girls, BMZ has implemented a range of activities, including a global ideas competition (“hackathon”) on practical solutions to overcoming the digital divide between men and women, a network meeting of women from all over Africa that are involved in initiatives to teach girls programming, and a study showcasing female role models from the digital economy. While #eSkills4Girls is an important and laudable G20 initiative, its name does not adequately reflect its program. A close look at the programs initiated by Germany under the initiative’s umbrella reveals that most programs are directed towards adult women and less to girls specifically.

III) What is Germany doing in its bilateral programs to promote the political participation of girls and young women?

Gender equality projects are frequently screened for their relevance to girls, but few specifically target girls and young women and/or political participation

According to the analysis of the OECD data for funding targeted to the political empowerment of girls and young women, Germany had 173 projects directly committed to this cause in 2016. On average, each project was worth US\$180,000 per year.

Although Germany’s engagement toward strengthening political participation of girls and young women is limited, according to BMZ, projects relevant for gender equality are frequently screened for their relevance for girls. For example, projects against domestic violence are screened to ensure the participation of girls and women, while projects against female genital mutilation place an emphasis on enabling a dialog involving girls and young women. Several projects that pursue the aim of empowering girls focus on building female role models and mentors, and thus target women rather than girls and young women directly. Another challenge emphasized by the interviews is the difficulty of reaching girls and young women living and working in the informal sector.

Projects specifically targeting girls and young women, as well as those specifically targeting youth participation, are adapted according to different geographic regions and partner countries. While many projects in the conflict-affected regions (such as Afghanistan and MENA) focus on enhancing formal political participation and leadership in peace dialog, projects in other regions range from mobilizing young voters, engaging young artists or ethnic minorities, or improving the rights of young workers. Efforts in Latin America tend to focus on strengthening the political participation of young people through use of new media to address difficult topics such as youth crime and sexuality and extend the reach to rural areas.

²³ In addition, Germany takes part in the UN Commission on the Status of Women every year; during the 62nd CSW Session in March 2018, two young women were part of the German delegation to ensure the representation of the interests of girls and young women at global level.

Gender-sensitive planning of objectives, strategies, and activities are mainstreamed

More generally, BMZ commits to ensure gender-sensitive and human rights-based planning and management of all its projects. This includes using explicit gender-sensitive impact indicators when designing projects, as well as gender-sensitive budgeting and human-resource planning. Moreover, BMZ underlines the importance of equally involving women and men in design and decision-making processes and in the management bodies of a project. These progressive approaches could be expanded to include a sensitivity to age.

Good cross-ministerial collaboration

Within the area of youth participation and specifically political participation of girls and young women, BMZ states it collaborates well with other ministries. It works in close coordination and consultation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), for instance on international conventions and annotations of UN resolutions or parliamentary requests. Collaboration with the Foreign Ministry focuses on advancing the implementation of Resolution 1325 and strengthening the role of young women in peace negotiations and peace building. The Ministry of Justice, on the other hand, leads Germany's efforts to eliminate child marriage and to anchor children's rights in the German basic law. BMZ also collaborates closely with GIZ, involving the agency's thematic or geographic units in new projects and receiving consultative support and expertise from GIZ regarding gender equality.

IV) Conclusion

Germany has some good initial approaches to support political participation of girls and young women, but must significantly increase political and financial commitment to be a global player

Considering that Germany is the second-largest donor in the OECD's DAC, its financial contribution to support political participation of girls and young women is negligible. In international comparison, Germany falls far behind with regard to the share of its ODA going to the topic. Nonetheless, BMZ has recognized the importance of political participation to empower girls and women, and has prioritized this in its cross-sectoral strategy for gender equality, its Gender Action Plan and the 2017 annual roadmap to implement the GAP II. If Germany aims to expand its engagement in this area, it must ensure to regard girls and young women as separate target groups that have unique needs and desires from "women and girls" as a single group. It must also dedicate funding to the implementation of its objectives and measures outlined in their key gender strategies. Germany has had first successes in positioning the empowerment of girls and young women at the international level; it is strongly advised to continue these efforts beyond its earlier G7 and G20 presidencies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT



Photo: Bas Bogaerts/Plan International

1 Expand financial support for political participation of girls and young women

The German government, and BMZ in particular, should significantly increase funding to support political participation of girls and young women in developing countries. Current government spending, €22 million per year or 0.13% of Germany's total bilateral ODA, is far from sufficient to advance this key element of SDG 5, and to help address the specific needs of girls and young women.

To do this, BMZ should consider backing its Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP II) with a dedicated funding envelope. A specific amount or share of the envelope should be allocated to girls and young women. The GAP II outlines priorities and measures to promote the political participation, voice, and leadership of girls and young women. However, currently, the GAP II "lacks teeth", as BMZ channels its gender-related funding through regional divisions. Additionally, BMZ should

ensure that both the annual roadmaps for the GAP II and the reports on the implementation of the roadmap include figures regarding the total number and funding volume of projects funded to support political participation of girls and young women. Currently, they focus on describing individual flagship projects. Increased transparency on funding would allow for external monitoring of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

Furthermore, BMZ could ensure that a certain share or total amount of bilateral funding has gender equality as its principal objective (i.e. be marked with the OECD gender marker G2). The German umbrella organization of development NGOs, VENRO, calls for €200 million of Germany's bilateral funding to be reserved for G2 projects.^{XLII} Germany could also learn from Canada's commitment outlined in its feminist international assistance policy to ensure that 15% of all its bilateral development assistance investments specifically target gender equality and empowerment of girls and women.

2 Define girls as a stand-alone target group in all strategy documents, especially in the Gender Action Plan

Across all political strategies, global initiatives, and bilateral projects of the German government, girls must be singled out as a distinctive target group. Currently, girls and young women are mostly lumped together into the single group “women and girls”. This makes it difficult to take into account their specific needs and challenges to participate in political processes. Moreover, the GAP II highlights the importance of political participation of women, but does not mention girls.

Specifically, BMZ should ensure that in the next update of its two key strategy documents – the Strategy on Gender Equality in Development Policy from 2014 and the GAP II 2016-2020, with its annual roadmaps – explicitly mentioning principles and measures tailored for girls and young women as stand-alone groups. As a guiding star, Germany can learn from Sweden’s use of a lifecycle approach, which aims to systematically evaluate, where possible, all development projects based on their effect on various age groups and genders. This ensures that the differing needs of girls and women throughout their life stages can be consistently integrated into development policy. Canada can also be taken as an example, as it is currently elaborating concrete measures for each priority area within its Feminist International Assistance Policy, with age being a key variable for defining appropriate measures.

3 Ensure an inclusive and transparent consultation process with civil society during the next update of key strategies

During the next update of the Strategy on Gender Equality in Development Cooperation from 2014 and the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, BMZ should ensure an inclusive dialogue process with civil society and international experts and practitioners. Girls and young women, as well as organizations working with and for them, should be actively engaged in the process. Recommendations brought forward in the consultation process should be considered in a meaningful way by BMZ in the development of the new strategies. During the drafting of the Agents of Change youth strategy between 2015 and 2016, the German government had organized a youth consultation process; this could function as a model during the updates of the gender

strategy and action plan. The Canadian government has been widely praised for its highly inclusive and open process during the development of the Feminist International Assistance Policy, involving extensive dialogues with approximately 15,000 people from across 65 countries. BMZ could learn from Canadian experiences when preparing such a thorough consultation process.

4 Ensure the active and meaningful participation of girls and young women in all development projects funded by BMZ

The inclusion of the action area “participation, voice, leadership” in the Gender Action Plan’s annual roadmaps of 2017 and 2018 are a positive development; the roadmaps in the coming years should maintain this goal.

While it is critical that girls and young women systematically participate in democratic structures and decision-making processes at national, regional, and local level, their participation should not be confined to participation in political fora, as their voices need to be heard across all sectors of life and society. The Agents of Change youth action plan calls for the participation of girls and boys in Germany’s development cooperation. BMZ and its implementing agencies GIZ and KfW should hence ensure that girls and young women are actively and regularly involved in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development cooperation projects across all sectors. To do this, BMZ can get inspiration from Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, which requires all organizations that receive Canadian ODA to engage girls, young women, and women at all stages of their programs. To ensure a successful realization of this recommendation, sufficient funds and staff support must be made available. In addition, BMZ could also consider strengthening participation formats for young people in Germany on development policy issues.

5 Increase funding to girls' and women's organizations and allow more flexible funding

For projects to successfully and effectively engage young people, traditional funding models require some rethinking. Firstly, it requires closer collaboration with CSOs well-experienced in working with children and youth, particularly with girls. These organizations often work with local partners, especially girls' and women's organizations, who best know the situation on the ground. This is instrumental for reaching girls and young women and for having effective and lasting impact. Secondly, it requires funding that is sustained over a longer period, ideally for five years as in the Netherlands to increase the predictability of funding. Thirdly, more flexibility should be granted for the use of funding to give more space for attentive programming, piloting, and learning.

Along these lines, BMZ should increase dialogue and flexibility when funding organizations working toward the advancement of the rights and empowerment of girls and young women. Concretely, BMZ could take learnings from the flexible funding approach used by the Netherlands. The multiannual framework agreements between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and civil society organizations avoid the need for detailed five-year program outlines matched with expected results, and instead allow ample dialogue and flexibility for local partner organizations to adjust their planning along the way.

6 Use Germany's international standing to strengthen visibility for the political empowerment of girls and young women at a global level

The German government, being the second-largest provider of ODA in the world and an influential agenda setter, is in a unique position to promote international awareness for girl's rights and political participation and make it a priority of the global development agenda.

At the global level, Germany should sustain the political commitment shown during its G7 presidency in 2015 and its G20 presidency in 2017, in which it successfully kick-started several global women's initiatives focused on women's economic empowerment and digital skills of girls and young women. Concretely, the government should ensure that Canada's latest G7 efforts to

strengthen girls and women are sustained throughout its presidency. In addition, the German government should leverage its close political relationship with France to advocate for the empowerment of girls and young women to be placed high on France's G7 agenda in 2019.

In 2019 and 2020, Germany will be taking over a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC). It should commit to its promise to make the agenda on "Women, Peace and Security" (UNSC Resolution 1325) a priority of its membership. This agenda entails the active participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict peace building, as well as the special protection of girls, young women, and women from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict.

In addition, in its bilateral cooperation with partner countries, particularly during government consultations and negotiations, BMZ and its implementing agencies GIZ and KfW should promote the inclusion of girls and young women in decision-making processes.

7 Improve the quality of data on girls and young women

BMZ should require systemic disaggregation of data by age for all projects that include gender equality as a principal (gender marker G2) or significant (gender marker G1) objective in order to better identify funding targeted to girls and young women. Sweden already strives for all actors in its foreign services, including its development agency Sida, to use data disaggregated by age and gender. Additionally, GIZ should ensure better data collection at project- and country-level, as well as support partner countries in their data collection on girls and young women. Canada is strongly invested in supporting partner governments in collecting and analyzing gender- and age-disaggregated data.

In addition, data reporting to the OECD on development projects – by Germany as well as by other donor governments – requires improvement. Currently, donors' use of the gender marker is not aligned and project description lengths vary to a great degree. All donor countries should thus put coordinated efforts into improving their reporting to the OECD. This would significantly improve the comparability of donor funding to the area and facilitate efforts to monitor progress towards SDG 5 on gender equality.

1. List of organizations interviewed

Category	Organization
Government	BMZ – Division 402: Human Rights, Gender Equality, Inclusion
	KfW Development Bank - Competence Center Social Development and Crisis
Civil Society	Plan International, Head Quarter
	Plan International Germany
	Plan International Netherlands
	Plan International Canada
International experts	Equal Measures 2030
	ACTION Secretariat at Results Educational Fund
	UN WOMEN

2. Descriptions of relevant OECD CRS sub-sector codes

Descriptions of relevant OECD CRS sub-sector codes within the sector “government and civil society” (151), used as proxies for political participation

CRS code	Clarifications to the code
Democratic participation and civil society (15150)	Support to the exercise of democracy and diverse forms of participation of citizens beyond elections (15151); direct democracy instruments such as referenda and citizens’ initiatives; support to organizations to represent and advocate for their members, to monitor, engage and hold governments to account, and to help citizens learn to act in the public sphere; curricula and teaching for civic education at various levels. (This purpose code is restricted to activities targeting governance issues. When assistance to civil society is for non-governance purposes use other appropriate purpose codes.)
Media and free flow of information (15153)	Activities that support free and uncensored flow of information on public issues; activities that increase the editorial and technical skills and the integrity of the print and broadcast media, e.g. training of journalists.
Women’s equality organizations and institutions (15170)	Support for institutions and organizations (governmental and non-governmental) working for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Human rights (15160)	<p>Measures to support specialized official human rights institutions and mechanisms at universal, regional, national, and local levels in their statutory roles to promote and protect civil and political, economic, social, and cultural rights as defined in international conventions and covenants; translation of international human rights commitments into national legislation; reporting and follow-up; human rights dialogue.</p> <p>Human rights defenders and human rights NGOs; human rights advocacy, activism, mobilization; awareness raising, and public human rights education.</p> <p>Human rights programming targeting specific groups, e.g. children, persons with disabilities, migrants, ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual minorities, indigenous people, and those suffering from caste discrimination, victims of trafficking, victims of torture.</p>
Ending violence against women and girls (15180)	<p>Support to programs designed to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls/gender-based violence. This encompasses a broad range of forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence including but not limited to: intimate partner violence (domestic violence); sexual violence; female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); child, early and forced marriage; acid throwing; honor killings; and trafficking of women and girls.</p> <p>Prevention activities may include efforts to empower women and girls; change attitudes, norms and behavior; adopt and enact legal reforms; and strengthen implementation of laws and policies on ending violence against women and girls, including through strengthening institutional capacity. Interventions to respond to violence against women and girls/gender-based violence may include expanding access to services including legal assistance, psychosocial counselling and health care; training personnel to respond more effectively to the needs of survivors; and ensuring investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of violence.</p>

3. Keywords used to filter for age²⁴

English	German	Spanish	French
Girl	Mädchen	Niña	Fille
Child	Kind	Niño	Enfant
Youth	Jugend	Juventud	Jeune
Kids	Junge Frau	Joven	Mineur
Young	Minderjährig	Menor	
Adolescent	Jung	Hijos	
Teen		Hijas	
Daughter			
Minor			
Juvenile			

²⁴ The list of English keywords features 10 words, while the other three languages contain fewer. This is due to the results of an initial preliminary screening of the project descriptions, which found several keywords that were present in English not to be present in other languages.

4. Absolute and relative ranking of OECD DAC donors

Absolute contributions to political participation of girls and young women living in developing countries (2014-2016 average)			Relative contributions to political participation of girls and young women living in developing countries (2014-2016 average)		
	Country	Annual average contribution in US\$ million		Country	Contribution as % of total bilateral ODA
1.	Sweden	95.87	1.	Sweden	2.37%
2.	United Kingdom	67.46	2.	Finland	2.02%
3.	Norway	40.50	3.	Norway	1.28%
4.	EU institutions	35.66	4.	Canada	1.26%
5.	Canada	35.23	5.	Iceland	1.11%
6.	Netherlands	22.06	6.	United Kingdom	0.63%
7.	Germany	21.79	7.	Australia	0.61%
8.	Australia	16.14	8.	Netherlands	0.59%
9.	Finland	14.60	9.	Ireland	0.59%
10.	United States	10.06	10.	Spain	0.55%
11.	Japan	8.01	11.	Belgium	0.54%
12.	Spain	7.74	12.	New Zealand	0.33%
13.	Switzerland	7.55	13.	Slovenia	0.30%
14.	Belgium	6.94	14.	Switzerland	0.28%
15.	Denmark	4.41	15.	Denmark	0.23%
16.	Italy	2.83	16.	EU institutions	0.21%
17.	Ireland	2.61	17.	Austria	0.16%
18.	Austria	1.22	18.	Italy	0.15%
19.	New Zealand	1.18	19.	Germany	0.13%
20.	France	0.61	20.	Luxembourg	0.09%
21.	Iceland	0.42	21.	Slovak Republic	0.08%
22.	Luxembourg	0.24	22.	Czech Republic	0.07%
23.	Portugal	0.08	23.	Japan	0.06%
24.	Slovenia	0.07	24.	Portugal	0.04%
25.	Czech Republic	0.04	25.	United States	0.04%
26.	Poland	0.03	26.	Poland	0.02%
27.	Slovak Republic	0.02	27.	France	0.01%
28.	Korea	0.00	28.	Korea	0.00%
29.	Greece	0.00	29.	Greece	0.00%
30.	Hungary	0.00	30.	Hungary	0.00%

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