



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy

February 2016

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Secondary School students in Bikenibeu. Kiribati. Credit: DFAT / Lorrie Graham

Women attend a training workshop on how to construct and use a machine that will dry locally produced fruits, which can then be sold to markets in West Lombok, Indonesia. Credit: DFAT/ Josh Estey

Fidelia Soares and her 12 year old daughter Domingas are involved in CARE's Young Women Young Nation education project in Liquica, Timor-Leste. The project encourages parents to send their girls to school, and supports girls to stay there. Credit: CARE / Josh Estey

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Ministerial Foreword

Promoting gender equality is smart economics, and the right thing to do - we cannot transform our world unless the place of women within it is transformed.

The Australian Government has a steadfast and ongoing commitment to be at the forefront of efforts to promote the empowerment of women and girls, particularly in our Indo-Pacific region.

Australia's Aid Policy, launched in June 2014, establishes gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority for development, and sets an ambitious target requiring that eighty per cent of all Australia's aid, regardless of objectives, perform effectively in promoting gender equality.

Beyond aid, it is clear that there are many more opportunities for Australia to advocate on these issues internationally, and in our foreign policy and economic relationships. The role of the Ambassador for Women and Girls is central in pursuing this agenda.

In 2014 I asked the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to inquire into and report on *The human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region*. The Committee has also completed an inquiry into *The role of the private sector in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty in the Indo-Pacific region*. These inquiries have produced important reports that will contribute to Australia's efforts across our foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development programs, to drive our contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality.

The level of support in the Australian community for our leadership and advocacy on these issues is strong. There is a groundswell of international attention on these issues, including in the G7, the G20 and in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. There are increasing international commitments to address the impacts of violence against women and girls, and to promote the important contribution gender equality makes to leadership and economic growth.

This strategy outlines the Government's efforts on gender equality by strengthening our ability to engage in policy dialogue in the region and beyond; and upholding our international reputation as a global leader on gender equality and women's empowerment. We look forward to working with all our partners, in foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development, to take concrete action promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as central to our interests in promoting sustainable economic growth and reducing poverty in our region.



Julie Bishop
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary's Foreword

Gender equality is an important right and a powerful driver for growth, development and stability. Promoting gender equality is integral to advancing Australia's national interests and reflects Australian values of fairness and substantive equality.

This *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* applies across all work undertaken by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). It strengthens gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority across Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development efforts. The strategy acknowledges the systems and structures that can play a significant role in entrenching or exacerbating discriminatory practices.

The Australian Government is committed to pursuing gender equality outcomes across the international agenda. This has been underlined by the appointment, in December 2013, of Natasha Stott Despoja AM as Australia's second Ambassador for Women and Girls to promote gender equality in the international arena and to give women a stronger voice in the world. In 2015, the establishment of the Gender Equality Fund highlighted the emphasis Australia is expected to place on gender equality and women's empowerment in the aid program.

We advance gender equality and women's empowerment in many ways. At a minimum, women should benefit along with men from our work; we also help shift norms, legal frameworks and policies towards equality wherever opportunities arise. Change for gender equality requires a commitment from all of our leaders. DFAT's senior leadership in Australia and at post are lead advocates and role models for change.

Australia has long been an international leader on gender equality and women's empowerment. This strategy provides guidance on gender equality in policy engagement, in programing and within the department. It allows Australia to share its approach to gender equality and draws in international experience and evidence. It has been informed by approaches and feedback from members of the Australian Parliament and partners such as other governments, multilateral and regional bodies and leading non-government organisations.

Effective implementation of this strategy will advance the material interests of communities and economies across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, contributing to economic growth, poverty reduction, human development and security, thereby helping to make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter N Varghese'.

Peter N Varghese AO
Secretary

Context

Gender equality is about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys. It does not mean that women and men are the same. Gender inequality is a result of unequal power distribution between women and men, exacerbated by ongoing discrimination, weaknesses in laws, policies and institutions, and social relations that normalise inequality.

This strategy sees gender as a power relation. Work on gender equality therefore aims to address unequal gender norms that constrain women and men, as well as transgender and intersex people. It is a global issue, relevant to Australia and the economic, social, welfare and foreign policies of all countries.

The international community has recognised the importance of supporting gender equality through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (comprising the Sustainable Development Goals¹ and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and in multilateral, regional and policy fora, including the Group of Twenty (G20). Yet nowhere in the world have women and men achieved equality.

Empowering women is one of the best ways to promote economic growth and to achieve peace and security.

Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Women's Day 2014

Some of the greatest challenges to gender equality and women's empowerment are in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia has achievements to share² and implementing this strategy will allow us to continue to advocate and learn from our partners.

Experience over recent decades demonstrates that gender equality, economic growth and development are mutually reinforcing and significantly correlated. The relationship runs in two directions.³

1 The Sustainable Development Goals replace the Millennium Development Goals. They are listed in Annex 3.

2 For example, Australia's work on gender equality and employment, led by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>; and on violence against women, see the Women's Safety Package announced on 24 September 2015: <https://www.dss.gov.au/women-programs-services-reducing-violence/womens-safety-package>.

3 N Kabeer and L Natali, 'Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is there a Win-Win?', *IDS Working Paper* (2013), p. 417.

First, gender equality and empowering women contribute to growth, development and stability.⁴

- Global gross domestic product could rise by as much as two per cent, or US\$1.5 trillion, if women and men entrepreneurs could participate equally in the economy.⁵
- Women could increase their income by up to 76 per cent if the employment participation gap and wage gap between men and women were closed. This is calculated to have a global value of US\$17 trillion.⁶
- Women who are better educated have fewer, healthier and better-educated children, which reduces dependency burdens and increases savings.⁷
- Female farmers provided with equal access to resources could reduce under-nutrition for an estimated 100 to 150 million people.⁸
- Greater gender equality contributes to stability and peace. Women are often instrumental in brokering ceasefires in conflict situations, and peacekeeping operations involving women as soldiers, police and civilian personnel are more effective. Greater equality can prevent disputes escalating to armed conflict.⁹
- Violence against women undermines a community's social fabric and prevents women from achieving social and economic equality.¹⁰

Second, economic growth, development and globalisation can provide opportunities to reduce inequality between women and men. However, growth alone will not deliver gender equality; much depends on the kind of growth, the nature of the economy, a country's policy settings, and political will.¹¹

This strategy reflects the focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in DFAT's *Strategic Framework 2015-2019*¹² and the Government's development policy, *Australian Aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*, and its performance framework, *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid*.¹³

4 N Kabeer and L Natali, 'Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is there a Win-Win?', *IDS Working Paper* (2013) 417; D Cumbers and M Teignier-Baqué 'Gender Inequality and Economic Growth', World Development Report 2012 Background Paper 2011.

5 Boston Consulting Group, *Bridging the Entrepreneurship Gender Gap*, p. 3.

6 Actionaid, 2015, "Close the Gap! The cost of inequality in women's work," p. 9.

7 M A Hill and E King, 'Women's Education and Economic Well-being', *Feminist Economics* (1995), 1.2: 21-46; M Baliaoune-Lutz and M McGillivray 'Does Gender Inequality Reduce Growth in Sub-Saharan African and Arab Countries?', *African Development Review* (2009) 21.2: 224-42; E Gakidou et al, 'Increased Educational Attainment and its Effect on Child Mortality in 175 Countries Between 1970 and 2009: A systemic analysis', *The Lancet* (2010), 376(9745), p. 969.

8 Food and Agriculture Organization, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11*, 2011.

9 M Caprioli, 'Primed for Violence: The role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict', *International Studies Quarterly* (2005) 49, pp. 161-178.

10 Thirty-five per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. In some countries, up to 70 per cent of women have experienced violence; World Health Organization *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women*. See also UN Women, *Violence against Women Prevalence Data: Surveys by Country*, 2012.

11 E Duflo, 'Women Empowerment and Economic Development', *Journal of Economic Literature* (2012) 50(4), pp. 1051-1079. The argument is that economic growth eases household financial constraints and enables equal spending on girls and boys, or women and men, where households are so inclined; World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2012: Gender quality and development*, p. 267. See also N Kabeer and L Natali, 'Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is there a Win-Win?', *IDS Working Paper* (2013), p. 417.

12 <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/department/Pages/strategic-framework-2015-2019.aspx>.

13 Australian Government, June 2014.

This strategy establishes three priorities that will guide our work on gender equality

Enhancing

women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building

Promoting

women's economic empowerment

Ending violence

against women and girls

DFAT's implementation of this gender equality strategy is underpinned by four commitments

We will integrate gender equality into Australia's foreign policy, and work with governments in countries where we work to drive progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, including through advocacy by Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls.

We will integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into aid for trade investments and economic diplomacy.

We will invest in gender equality through Australia's development program, recognising that women's empowerment is a key driver of sustainable economic growth, development and stability.

We will lead by example and promote gender equality in our corporate and human resource policies and practices, recognising the importance of consistency between our departmental policy and broader work.

This strategy takes a twin-track approach to gender equality

First, it defines gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority in Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development program. We will promote gender equality in our corporate operations, particularly through our Women in Leadership work.

Second, DFAT will integrate gender equality more effectively in all our work, no matter what the sector or focus. In the development program this reflects the development performance framework, which requires that at least 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, should effectively address gender equality issues in their implementation.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with other relevant departmental strategies.

Priorities and approaches

Three priorities guide our work on gender equality

Three priorities will guide our work on gender equality. These are connected and mutually reinforcing and apply across many contexts. We will consider funding explicit investments or streams within investments to address these priorities. We will create opportunities to engage on them in our foreign policy and economic diplomacy work and report regularly against them.

In multilateral fora we can take a lead to provide opportunities for women's leadership and active participation. Our human resource development programs can promote equal employment opportunities and our investments in trade and economic sectors can implement a zero tolerance approach to violence against women among employees.

1. Enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building

Context

Women's participation in decision-making, leadership and peace-building is important as a right in itself. Women also bring particular perspectives, priorities and strengths resulting from their life experiences, which are often different from men's. This means they are likely to make different decisions, with women leaders responding more strongly to women's policy priorities.¹⁴ Private sector businesses that have female leaders tend to deliver stronger financial performance.¹⁵

Women from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) get ready to march on White Ribbon Day. Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) has worked with the RSIPF to resume responsibility for front-line policing. Credit: DFAT



¹⁴ Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, 'Ain't no Stopping Us Now: Women as policy makers' (2006), *Policy Briefcase No 1*.

¹⁵ www.catalyst.org/knowledge/bottom-line-corporate-performance-and-womens-representation-boards.

Where women's representation in leadership and formal decision-making is low, the role of women's organisations and coalitions is particularly crucial for ensuring women's perspectives are heard. The key factor in countries delivering legislation that criminalises violence against women is the presence of strong women's organisations.¹⁶

Women can and do play a key role in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding, but too often are excluded from these efforts. In our work in situations of conflict and fragility, it is important that we ensure women participate, recognising women can be powerful agents for change. Building gender equality into reconstruction efforts can help to ensure more lasting peace.

Australia's response

In all advocacy and development programming we will promote women's decision-making, whether by seeking to ensure equal participation by women and men on community committees supporting our programs, or by assisting government agencies to introduce and institutionalise equal employment opportunity.

We will advocate for women to be better represented in national and subnational leadership. Australia will consistently advance gender equality in regional and multilateral fora and bilateral dialogues.

We will support women's organisations, networks and coalitions wherever possible, particularly those giving a voice to marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, indigenous women or young women and girls.

The women at the negotiating table made a difference, especially by promoting language on the important provisions of meaningful and inclusive participation ... It is time for women to be empowered. To know that their voices count- and that *they* count.

Jasmin Nario-Galace, Co-Convenor, Women Engaged in Action on United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325, Philippines.¹⁷

Australia will support the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions relating to women, peace and security and ensure that women participate effectively at all stages of peace processes and reconstruction. We will support a stronger focus on gender equality in humanitarian crisis responses and promote women's participation in decision-making in response and recovery efforts.

The *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018* is a practical step forward in Australia's efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Government has committed, nationally and internationally, to:

- integrate a gender perspective into Australia's policies on peace and security
- embed the women, peace and security agenda in human resource management of Defence, Australian Federal Police and deployed personnel
- support civil society organisations to promote equality and increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-building, conflict resolution, and relief and recovery
- promote women, peace and security implementation internationally and
- take a co-ordinated and holistic approach.¹⁸

¹⁶ SL Weldon and M Htun, 'Feminist Mobilisation and Progressive Policy Change: Why governments take action to combat violence against women', *Gender and Development* (2013), 21:2, pp. 231–247.

¹⁷ Cited in DFAT, *Empowering Women: Australia's support for gender equality and the empowerment of women*, 2015, pp.18-19.

¹⁸ Australian Government (2014), *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018*.

2. Promoting women's economic empowerment

Context

Women's economic participation helps to drive growth at a national level and reduce poverty within communities and households. Societies that make better use of the skills, talents and time of all members will more likely prosper. Women are often more likely than men to use income to support development outcomes within their families.¹⁹ Increasing women's earnings can strengthen their hand in decision-making in their households.

Women remain poorer than men globally, so in promoting economic growth internationally, work is needed to ensure women can participate in economic life and benefit equitably from doing so. This can promote equality and lead to empowerment, although often it merely increases women's time burdens²⁰ and contributes to increased exploitation and violence. Careful analysis and considered interventions are needed so women's economic participation is empowering and does not exacerbate inequalities or place unfair burdens on women and their children.

Accelerating women's participation in the paid workforce reflects the G20 commitment to close the gap between women's and men's participation rates by 25 per cent by 2025. A focus on women's formal sector workforce participation in Australia's development program, economic diplomacy and global and regional fora is important to support this and ensure that developing nations do not fall further behind.

Investing in women's employment is not only the right thing to do—it's also essential for business. Companies that learn to effectively develop and retain women employees will gain a huge competitive advantage.

Jim Yong Kim, World Bank Group President²¹

Women comprise nearly half of the world's agricultural workers but have less access than men to productive resources and opportunities. Improving women's access could increase women's agricultural yields by 25 to 30 per cent and increase agricultural output in developing countries between 2.5 and four per cent.²² Yet women's priorities, needs and interests are often overlooked and so more needs to be done. For example, electrification programs could lessen women's unpaid work burdens by facilitating their access to time and labour-saving electrical devices. Providing access to modern, improved fuels, such as gas and renewables (rather than wood), would free up women's time for productive work and have significant health benefits.

19 World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2012: Gender equality and development*, p. 5.

20 For a discussion of this see S Chant, 'Re-thinking the 'Feminization of Poverty' in Relation to Aggregate Gender Indices', *Journal of Human Development* (2006), vol 7, no. 2.

21 World Bank, 22 September 2014, Press release—'IFC [International Finance Corporation] Launches She Works Partnership to Advance Women's Employment in the Private Sector', accessed online (25 November 2014) at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/09/22/ifc-launches-she-works-partnership-to-advance-womens-employment-in-the-private-sector>

22 Food and Agriculture Organization (2011), *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010–11*, p. 42.

Australia's response

We will integrate gender equality in our aid for trade, economic diplomacy and trade efforts, recognising that women's economic empowerment is a driver of economic growth and prosperity. Australia will not ignore half the world's population in its endeavours.

Gender equality is an issue of international economic and social importance. As leaders and employers, we know there is much more we can do to make a difference.

Founding Male Champions of Change

Australia has committed to increase aid for trade investments to 20 per cent of the aid program by 2020. We will focus in this work on women's participation in and access to trade. For example, we can:

- support sectors where women workers and traders predominate to improve wages, working conditions and safety, and remove discrimination
- support women and girls, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to learn business and vocational skills
- assist women to engage in global value chains
- address barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, including the market supply-side gap preventing women from accessing finance
- continue to support family planning services and global advocacy for universal access to these services, including in humanitarian responses
- promote the benefits of effectively targeted and equitable social protection programs to women's empowerment
- support women to access resources and innovations to improve agricultural productivity and income
- enhance educational outcomes for women and girls, by prioritising school retention and quality education for girls
- promote women's advancement in the private sector
- help improve the business and legal environment for women entrepreneurs
- support public and private sector organisations to eliminate discrimination against women in their organisations or supply chains, including in government procurement
- link Australian women in business with counterparts in emerging markets
- ensure our infrastructure investments support women's access to economic opportunities and trade.

Australia will continue to advocate for gender equality in our engagement in multilateral and regional fora, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the East Asia Summit, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Pacific Islands Forum, in multilateral development banks and economic policy fora such as the G20.

We will ensure our trade work advances its gender equality objectives. For example, Australia lent full support to the establishment of an additional G20 engagement group, the 'Women 20', to support efforts to achieve inclusive growth and ensure that gender issues are addressed across the breadth of the G20 agenda.



Michelle Araea and Elva Churem were among the first students of the Australia Pacific Technical College when classes began in Port Moresby in 2007. Credit: DFAT / Rocky Roe

3. Ending violence against women and girls

Context

Violence against women and girls is pervasive and persistent throughout the world and a significant human rights violation.

Violence against women and girls takes many forms including: violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls at school, sexual harassment at work and in the streets, rape by husbands or strangers, child marriage, acid attacks, trafficking of women and female genital mutilation. In conflict situations, rape is often used as a tactic of war and women and girls can be over-represented among displaced populations.²³

Women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and face additional barriers in seeking justice and support. Boys are also at increased risk of certain types of gendered violence and exploitation, such as through labour involving significant risks to their health and safety.

Violence or the fear of violence restricts women's lives and opportunities and constrains development. It causes trauma and limits women's social, political and economic participation. It can have a lifelong impact on women's children. It creates significant strain on national economies with escalating costs in health care, social services, policing and the justice system. In the aftermath of natural disasters and during conflicts, rates of sexual and gender-based violence increase.

²³ For example, C Lindsey, *Women Facing War*, International Committee of the Red Cross (2001).

Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and end violence against women and girls, starting by challenging the culture of discrimination that allows it to continue. We must shatter negative gender stereotypes and attitudes, introduce and implement laws to prevent and end discrimination and exploitation, and stand up to abusive behaviour whenever we see it. We have to condemn all acts of violence, establish equality in our work and home lives, and change the everyday experience of women and girls.

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General²⁴

An effective response to ending violence against women is based around improved quality services and responses, access to justice, and prevention. Integrated responses that account for diverse forms of violence against women and girls are crucial. In any response, it is paramount to focus on the safety of survivors of violence and their children. Ensuring protection during humanitarian responses is also essential.

Australia's response

The Australian Government is a strong advocate for ending violence against women and girls, taking a targeted approach while recognising the need to address violence at many levels. Internationally we will support strong justice sector responses that will:

- support governments to develop and implement laws and policies that address violence against women and children and improve their access to the justice system
- help strengthen the capacity of the justice system, including the police, courts and informal structures, to respond effectively to violence against women and children
- engage with non-government organisations to help women access justice, including by increasing women's knowledge of the legal system and their rights.

We will support countries and organisations we work with to increase women's access to support services when they experience violence by:

- supporting appropriate counselling, accommodation, legal and practical support for women and their children
- assisting governments and organisations to improve health sector and workplace responses to violence against women
- supporting governments to enable access to social protection or social transfers
- ensuring responses to HIV and AIDS consider women's vulnerability to gender-based violence.

24 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—UN Secretary General's message for 2014.

We will, when assisting governments and organisations to prevent violence against women and children, support and advocate for:

- a broad range of organisations to conduct community awareness and advocacy, including working with men
- evidence-based interventions that change community attitudes and ensure the safety and empowerment of women
- prevention activities through the education sector
- strong focus on protection and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian emergencies and responses
- women playing an active role in peacekeeping operations and reconstruction efforts, ensuring women's safety is a priority.

A twin-track approach

The most effective way to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women is through a twin-track approach.²⁵ This involves taking measures specifically designed to tackle gender inequalities while incorporating gender issues into all aspects of Australia's work.

The first track requires action to address gender inequalities where they are particularly challenging or where progress is slow. *Australian Aid* commits the Australian Government to invest strongly through its development program to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as an investment priority.

Australia will promote gender equality and women's empowerment in global and regional fora such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Women and the Economy Forum.

Ngatho Mugo, an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (right), talks with her colleagues at International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research in Bangladesh who are researching maternal child health at the Centre for Child and Adolescent Health. Credit: DFAT / Conor Ashleigh



25 UN, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development* 2013.

The second track requires integrating gender equality across all areas and sectors. This approach is reflected in *Making Performance Count*,²⁶ which establishes a target for the development program that at least 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in implementation.

We will take gender equality and women's empowerment into account in economic diplomacy by, for example, supporting equal opportunities for women in business and addressing constraints for women as investors, employers, workers and consumers. Our public diplomacy will showcase Australia's expertise in and experience with gender equality, including through outreach by the Ambassador for Women and Girls.

From participation to transformation

Even where the three priorities that guide our work on gender equality are not the focus, we will still contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.

At a minimum, we will ensure that women and men benefit from our interventions, to avoid exacerbating gender inequalities. This means designing infrastructure programs to meet women's as well as men's needs and priorities, that aid for trade programs engage specifically with women entrepreneurs and that women can participate at all stages of conflict resolution, peace-building and reconstruction.

We will also work hard for equal education for girls and boys, which has long been recognised as important in its own right and a key contributor to development. We will focus on enrolment and retention in education, on the gender norms imparted in curricula and teaching materials and on ensuring women are recruited and promoted in the education system. In health, we will consider work to help empower women to have control over the number and spacing of the children they have. A focus of health programing will support universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Beyond ensuring that women can participate in and benefit from our work, we need to encourage a shift in norms, legal frameworks and policies towards greater acceptance of gender equality, to give women more equal control over resources and assets and more control over their lives and futures.

We will not succeed if we do not take into account, and address, unequal gender norms - the social rules and expectations of men and women.

We often hesitate to press for gender equality for fear of imposing western cultural norms and undercutting the important development principle of partner government ownership. Yet governments around the world are committed to gender equality, and each country we work with has a women's movement pressing for progress. It is therefore sensible to be strategic and sensitive in our gender equality work, but to remain a firm and consistent advocate.

Gender equality is a politically and culturally sensitive area that requires careful gender and political economy analysis. It requires us to commit to do no harm and take into account challenges faced by countries in or emerging from fragility and conflict.

We will think politically so we address the binding constraints to equality. We must be realistic about what we can achieve and where we can add value, and avoid inadvertently undermining local efforts. We will identify local champions and follow their lead.

All of this means taking a long-term and strategic approach to all our work, for lasting and transformative change. For example, it is important to challenge assumptions that violence against women is acceptable, and support the reduction or redistribution of women's unpaid work burdens wherever opportunities arise.

²⁶ See this strategy's discussion on "Gender equality effectiveness target".

There is an inescapable truth – we cannot transform our world unless the place of women within it is transformed

Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, United Nations General Assembly 70th Session, September 2015

Aligning and focusing our work across foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development will increase our chances of contributing to transformative change and deliver development, growth and stability. It is important that we inform our diplomatic efforts with a sound understanding of the context of gender equality. We will scan consistently for gender issues and report on these, so we promote equality and speak with one voice. Overlooking gender equality can put effective outcomes at risk or exacerbate inequalities.

A community worker talks to a group of woman who are waiting to collect their food ration at a food distribution point in Epworth in Harare, Zimbabwe. Credit: Kate Holt / DFAT



Four commitments

1. Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into Australia's foreign policy

Australia is a firm and consistent advocate for gender equality and engages on these issues bilaterally and in global and regional fora. Australia, for example, is known as a strong leader on gender equality in the Human Rights Council, on the women, peace and security agenda and in forging the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls is an important international advocate. Heads of Mission and DFAT's senior executive also take responsibility as lead advocates and role models for gender equality.

We will:

- pursue opportunities for ambitious gender equality outcomes in regional and multilateral frameworks
- play a leadership role in gender-focused multilateral organisations and meetings
- raise gender equality as a priority topic in bilateral dialogue with all government and non-government agencies (not just those with a focus on gender equality) and share consistent messages
- pursue public diplomacy opportunities to promote gender equality, including through the media, cultural events, scientific engagement and sport.

Policy and political dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment helps create a shared understanding of country specific issues, perspectives and approaches to the effective promotion of gender equality and women's rights

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network October 2013

We will focus particularly on:

- engaging and supporting women's institutions, ministries and organisations
- strengthening the ability of women's ministries to deliver, when they are not fully effective
- advancing the women, peace and security agenda
- supporting women's economic empowerment and private sector leadership through dialogue and advocacy
- advocating for reforms to eliminate violence against women, improve services for women subjected to violence, and address unequal attitudes underpinning such violence.

We will lead efforts to integrate gender equality wherever possible in high-level policy dialogues across the UN, in economic policy forums such as the G20 and in regional organisations.

We will support global efforts to give effect to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, particularly championing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and actions to promote these in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank play key roles in setting the normative framework for gender equality, in addition to their important work in development. We will continue to urge these institutions to increase their focus on gender equality.

Building on our work during Australia’s UN Security Council (UNSC) membership (2013–14), we will identify opportunities to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment remains a priority. We will continue to work with UNSC members to defend and strengthen gender equality language in UNSC Presidential Statements and resolutions and will seek to integrate the women, peace and security agenda in other multilateral agendas and development approaches.

We will strengthen leadership, coordination and linkages with domestic and international partners and use our international networks to deliver strong outcomes towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Julie Bishop MP delivers a National Statement at the SDG Summit Plenary in the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters in New York on 27 September 2015. Credit: DFAT / Trevor Collens



We will support the next generation of women leaders by building stronger people-to-people links in the Indo-Pacific region through educational and institutional connections, including through the Australia Awards, New Colombo Plan scholarships and our volunteers program.

We will proactively promote gender equality and women's empowerment through our public diplomacy programs, including our management of foundations, councils and institutes, the Special Visitors' Program, international media visits, cultural diplomacy and the Australian Sports Outreach Program. We will promote, in Australia and at posts, International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Measuring the commitment

DFAT posts and work areas will report annually on how effectively our foreign policy work promotes our gender equality objectives. DFAT's annual report will highlight DFAT's outreach and advocacy on gender equality.

2. Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into aid for trade investments and economic diplomacy

As a member of the G20, Australia has agreed to reduce the gap between women and men's workforce participation by 25 per cent by 2025.

Supporting women's full economic participation is key to unlocking the economic potential of our region and globally. At the G20 Leaders' Summit in Brisbane, leaders agreed to work to reduce the current gender gap in labour force participation by 25 per cent by 2025. This could bring more than 100 million women into the labour force. Increasing women's labour force participation is a significant contributor to economic growth and increasing resilience to global shocks. The G20's work on the financial inclusion initiative will support women to access financial services, save and borrow money, take out insurance and manage their capital.

The G20 2014 – Reducing the gender employment gap and promoting women's financial inclusion

Aid for trade investments can make a significant contribution to advancing gender equality, specifically by empowering women by helping them to participate fully and effectively in goods trades in sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, as well as in services. Higher rates of labour force participation will in turn promote higher levels of production.

The Government's *Strategy for Aid for Trade Investments* includes a commitment to incorporate the empowerment of women in every aid for trade investment. This will help ensure that the aid for trade target can be achieved simultaneously with the target on gender equality, which requires that 80 per cent of all aid investments, regardless of their objectives, effectively address gender equality.

In our aid for trade capacity-building and technical assistance we will:

- work to remove barriers in trade-related regulation to women’s economic participation and equitable benefit
- use our international networks and partner with the private sector to support women-led businesses to increase international trade and access to finance and other resources
- support women’s economic empowerment as purchasers, vendors, employers and entrepreneurs, and
- build capacity of women to participate equally in trade.²⁷

Promoting gender equality is consistent with the core aims of Australia’s economic diplomacy agenda, specifically to advance Australia’s national economic and commercial interests and to support global growth.

In our economic diplomacy work, we will seek to ensure that gender equality issues are integrated in forward strategies particularly in developing countries where measures to address gender inequality can be expected to have a positive impact in promoting economic growth, higher rates of international competitiveness and greater participation in global trade and investment.

We will also develop partnerships across the business community and with non-government organisations in Australia and internationally to increase women’s access to decent formal sector employment and remove discrimination. We will support the Women’s Empowerment Principles developed by UN Women.

Women’s Empowerment Principles

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

UN Women—more than 1046 business leaders around the world have demonstrated leadership on gender equality through these principles: weprinciples.org

We will continue to promote women’s financial inclusion by advocating strongly in the G20, in regional and international institutions and bilaterally, and by supporting reforms so women have greater access to finance. This commitment is reinforced by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

²⁷ A more detailed list of actions is on page 9.

Measuring the commitment

The *Strategy for Aid for Trade Investments* will be reviewed periodically, including its performance in relation to gender equality, and the outcome will provide for any lessons learned to be incorporated appropriately in future investment activity.

DFAT's economic diplomacy strategies will include specific goals consistent with the aim of promoting women's economic empowerment and participation, address constraints and expand equal opportunities.

3. Invest in gender equality through Australia's development program

The Australian aid program delivers practical assistance to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The quality of this aid is important to ensure it has the right impact and benefits.

Gender Equality Fund

In the 2015 budget the Australian Government established a \$50 million competitive Gender Equality Fund (the Fund) to strengthen gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Indo-Pacific region. The Fund maintains some existing or planned flagship investments that promote gender equality, in the Pacific and South East Asia, as well as global investments. It also supports innovative new investments both inside and outside DFAT. It will play an important role in reshaping Australia's development program to drive stronger gender equality performance and results. The internal element will create a direct link between funding and performance on gender equality, while external competitive funding will promote private sector efforts on gender equality as good for business and growth. The Fund will leverage investment for gender equality across the development portfolio commensurate with its position as an investment priority.

Monitoring results

There are two methods for assessing performance on gender equality across the development program. The first is a measure of expenditure, the second a measure of quality or effectiveness.

Gender equality expenditure—gender as a 'principal' or 'significant' expenditure

Australia's development program employs the Organisation for Economic Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender policy marker, which requires DFAT program managers to note, when an activity begins, whether an investment has a 'principal' or 'significant' gender equality objective.²⁸ This enables the development program to calculate the quantum of expenditure that aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

28 AidWorks, DFAT's online aid management system, provides guidance on how to identify in which category of spending an activity falls.

DAC gender marker

An activity can either target gender equality as its 'principal objective' or as a 'significant objective'. A 'principal' score is assigned if gender equality was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental to its design, i.e., the activity would not have been undertaken without this objective. A 'significant' score is assigned if gender equality was an important, but secondary, objective of the activity, i.e., it was not the principal reason for undertaking the activity. A 'not targeted' score is assigned if, after being screened against the gender equality policy marker, an activity is not found to target gender equality at all.²⁹

Investments with a 'significant' objective aim to integrate or mainstream gender equality effectively. Those with a 'principal' gender equality objective usually target gender equality interventions, such as a program to eliminate violence against women.

Before Australia announced gender equality as a strategic priority for its development program, the level of expenditure as a principal or significant objective varied significantly by sector. Health and education investments were the most likely to promote gender equality, while trade, agriculture, infrastructure and governance investments were the least likely to.

Students at The Hohola Youth Development Centre, Papua New Guinea, where students learn vocational training skills.
Credit: DFAT/Ness Kerton



²⁹ OECD DAC, October 2012, 'Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment: Statistical overview', p. 2, accessed online at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/gender-equality-women-empowerment-statisticaloverview.htm#> on 25/11/2014.

Investments that clearly state at the outset what they are aiming to achieve with gender equality and women's empowerment are more likely to deliver strong gender equality outcomes. Development program data demonstrate that investments with a principal or significant gender equality objective are more likely to be effective overall.

With the increased priority given to gender equality and women's empowerment in *Australian Aid*, DFAT expects that the proportion of expenditure with a principal or significant gender equality objective will increase across all development work.

We will track gender equality expenditure internally and report on it annually in the *Performance of Australian Aid* report.³⁰

Gender equality effectiveness target—aid quality checks

Each year during implementation, DFAT program managers report in their annual quality checks how well gender equality is being progressed in all investments over \$3 million. Reporting must include results achieved.

This is particularly important in the context of the development program targets specified in *Making Performance Count*. One such target is that more than 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation.³¹

This ambitious target is measured by an aggregate of ratings in the annual quality checks.

Ratings need to be robust, credible and based on real progress that can be reported on. This means maintaining strong efforts in health and education, and increasing efforts in the aid for trade and governance sectors, which have poorer performance.

In 2013–14, 74 per cent of investments across the development program reported effectively integrating gender equality and women's empowerment; in 2014–15, 78 per cent did so.

This strategy provides high-level direction to assist program managers to assess performance on gender equality. More specific guidance on key elements of the development cycle is included in DFAT's Aid Programming Guide and subsidiary advice. By carefully implementing this strategy and related guidance, the development program will meet this performance target.

Unsurprisingly, investments that have a principal or significant gender equality objective at implementation perform more strongly during annual quality checks. Increasing the number of new investments that have gender equality as a principal or significant objective will enhance performance. This means building gender equality into new investments at the start.

Measuring the commitment

More than 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation.

³⁰ This is also reported to and published by the OECD DAC.

³¹ *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid*.

4. Commit to promoting gender equality in our corporate and human resource policies and practices

In advancing our international efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, it is important that we be consistent in our internal practice. DFAT's response to the Australian Public Service Commission capability review³² and the internal Women in Leadership Initiative underline our commitment to gender equality.

We will regularly remind all staff that they are responsible for ensuring that our culture and practices promote equality and are inclusive of women and men of all backgrounds.

We have zero tolerance for domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, which are against our values and the code of conduct for staff. DFAT has developed an internal policy on managing the impacts of domestic and family violence, which outlines how we will support our own staff in Australia and overseas who are survivors of domestic and family violence.

We will strengthen the capability of our staff, including Australian and locally engaged, to advance gender equality, providing adequate resources and technical expertise.

We will appropriately represent women on boards, panels and in conferences, supporting the Australian Government's target of a minimum of 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men on federal boards. The remaining 20 per cent can be women or men.

Women in Leadership Initiative and Strategy

DFAT's Women in Leadership Initiative, which the Secretary announced in December 2014, looked into why women's career progression in the department is not equal to that of men. We investigated the barriers to women reaching leadership positions, analysed data on gender trends across operations and developed a strategy in response.

The goal of the resulting Women in Leadership Strategy is a workplace that maximises performance and capability by enabling all women and men to thrive equally. All staff should be able to participate and progress commensurate with their talent and aspirations and feel valued and inspired to do their best. The strategy identifies these four interconnected principles:

- leadership and culture
- accountability and inclusion
- embedding substantive equality
- mainstreaming flexible work and dismantling barriers for carers.

By strengthening leadership culture, reinforcing our values and mainstreaming flexible work practices, these principles and actions will bring benefits to women and men in DFAT.

³² The Australian Public Service Commission has undertaken 24 capability reviews of Australian Public Service agencies, including one on DFAT. The reviews identify organisational strengths and areas for improvement and are designed to help lift the productivity of individual agencies and the public service as a whole.

Measuring the commitment

DFAT aims to have women and men each hold at least 40 per cent of Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 and 2 positions by 2020 (the remaining 20 per cent can be women or men).

DFAT Gender Equality Resources

The creation of a Gender Equality Branch reflects the growing importance of gender equality and women's empowerment across Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development programs. DFAT's gender specialists in Canberra provide high-level oversight and technical support to teams internally. Our network of gender focal points is crucial to ensuring our efforts are co-ordinated, however they need to be adequately resourced and supported to undertake their important co-ordination work. Support teams also need to be resourced so they can help us implement the Australian Government's priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment. Our Gender Equality Branch provides policy support and program managers have access to a panel of external gender experts.

Learning and development is key to ensuring our staff are skilled and resourced to integrate gender equality effectively. This includes formal training, seminars and an annual senior executive meeting to discuss progress and new opportunities.

Forida Akhtar is 25 years old and has travelled to the Centre for Disability and Development (CDD) from Chittagong in the south of Bangladesh to receive physiotherapy for her legs which were affected by polio at a young age.
Credit: Conor Ashleigh / DFAT





Annex 1: Gender equality in development

Aid delivery

Gender equality serves the national interests of Australia and its partner countries. It is critical to high quality and effective development programs that deliver gender equality results.

The three priorities and twin-track approach of this *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* requires DFAT to sharpen its focus on gender equality in all of our aid work. The following actions will enable this.

1. *Commitment to practical action*

In implementing this strategy, we will take practical action, including to:

- work with partner governments and regional organisations to advance their own gender equality priorities
- work sensitively within the local context
- support women's organisations and coalitions, including women entrepreneurs, associations and service providers for women, wherever possible and appropriate, recognising the lead role of these organisations in creating change
- work in partnership with the private sector, civil society organisations and other donors, and engage the media, schools, parliamentarians and local government as gender equality champions wherever possible
- work with men and boys as advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment where that is appropriate, including to address forms of masculinity that hinder progress
- closely scrutinise our funding for multilateral organisations, including the multilateral development banks, to ensure effective integration of gender equality
- recognise that women are not a homogeneous group, paying particular attention to girls, those with disabilities, indigenous women and disadvantaged women
- apply gender equality considerations across the full range of funding mechanisms, including core funding, grants and funding through partner government systems
- seize opportunities as they arise to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, keep in mind the 'do no harm' principle and identify and mitigate risks
- be prepared to work for the long term—while progress towards gender equality can be rapid when circumstances are right, we need to be aware that this is the work of decades; short term programming is unlikely to be effective.

2. *Integrating gender equality across the development program*

To integrate gender equality across all sectors and all investments, we will apply these steps.³³

³³ Additional guidance is available in the Aid Programming Guide and subsidiary guidance.

1. Identify key challenges, opportunities and the gender equality context of each country we work with

We must carefully assess the key challenges, opportunities and the gender equality context of partner countries, given how deeply embedded gender inequality is in all societies. Before committing to programming, and during implementation, we must understand where women and men stand in that context, how they benefit or are disadvantaged, the barriers to gender equality and how we need to address these.

It is essential to integrate gender equality into all of our analysis, including on growth and political economy, and draw on specific gender analysis. This analysis may be available or we may need to commission work, depending on the nature of the intervention, the sector and the scale of programming.

We must therefore:

- always draw on gender analysis, as part of other analysis or as a stand-alone analysis
- consider the three priorities that guide our work in the context
- think about how gender norms and political dynamics affect program outcomes or progress towards equality
- identify barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment
- identify and manage risks to gender equality.

2. Identify appropriate interventions

We must first decide if gender equality considerations are best addressed through integration within a mainstream investment or through a stand-alone investment. We need to identify partners and champions as well as those who might resist change. In deciding on the most appropriate intervention, we need to determine opportunities that exist against this strategy's three priorities to ensure women can benefit from our interventions along with men. We must therefore:

- be clear about the results we can realistically achieve at investment level
- use adequate gender expertise when making programming decisions at all stages of the development cycle.

3. Make gender equality actions explicit in all documents and processes

We must make explicit our commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in all guiding documents and processes, at both investment and activity level, to be able to deliver on our gender equality objectives.

We must therefore:

- consider a gender equality objective in aid investment plans, particularly where gender inequality will likely be a constraint on our ability to achieve development results
- clearly explain in concept and design documents what actions we will take to advance gender equality
- ensure that our gender equality aims are reflected explicitly in investment objectives
- explicitly address gender equality in implementing documentation, including scope of services, contracts and grant agreements, to clarify our intentions to implementing partners.

4. Provide adequate resources

We must ensure adequate time and funding to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

We must therefore:

- cost and adequately fund our gender equality interventions
- allocate sufficient time to deliver on our gender equality commitments
- include resourcing in program and human resource plans
- build accountability into contractor and personal performance agreements.

5. Build gender equality and women's empowerment explicitly into monitoring, evaluation and learning processes

We must monitor gender equality outcomes and, where there are no separate gender equality objectives, assess impacts on gender equality through our mainstream programming and learning processes.

We must therefore:

- build gender equality into performance assessment frameworks in aid investment plans and include gender equality results in annual program performance reviews
- include adequate targets and indicators for gender equality in all monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks
- at a minimum, ensure all data about people is sex disaggregated so we can assess whether women and men are benefiting equally
- make gender equality an explicit focus of investigation in all our reviews and evaluations
- make sure we deliberately capture and report on gender equality results and learning.

6. Make sure our investments are coherent and aligned

We must make sure our investments are coherent and aligned. We will build on results to accelerate progress. Only when we are clear about what we are trying to achieve in promoting gender equality and empowering women can we seize opportunities to accelerate progress. Within each country or regional program, our investments should add up to a co-ordinated gender equality endeavour.

We must therefore:

- ensure our gender equality interventions across investments in a country or region add up to a coherent program of work aligned with local priorities
- share learnings and results across investments within a program
- flexibly address constraints or grasp opportunities as they arise
- build on our work in other sectors
- build on the work of our development partners where possible.

7. Support women's organisations and coalitions

We will support women's organisations and coalitions, including women entrepreneurs, associations and service providers for women. Each of our partner countries has women's organisations or coalitions committed to equality. These can play a key role in supporting women's rights and in delivering services to women, particularly for disadvantaged and difficult to reach women. They play a role in helping women access and influence government and in raising community awareness of gender equality.

We will therefore consider supporting gender equality-focused organisations and follow their lead so our work is culturally appropriate and politically feasible.

Development performance

In line with *Australian Aid* and *Making Performance Count*, DFAT focuses on assessing the effectiveness of Australia's investment on gender equality through the strategic target:

Empowering women and girls

At least 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation

Each year, DFAT will review and assess the performance of the development program's overall portfolio investments on gender equality. The outcome will be publicly reported in the annual *Performance of Australian Aid* report. To inform our review, we will collect and analyse information from many sources including:

- aid quality checks of country and regional development investments to understand progress, achievements and trends in gender equality effectiveness within these investments
- annual program performance reports to assess progress and emerging results on gender equality across a whole country or regional development portfolio
- aggregate development results on the numbers of women and men and girls and boys who benefit from our development assistance
- case studies of good practice in gender equality in development assistance
- reviews and analysis of emerging trends and opportunities, to inform future investment decisions.

A performance assessment note will provide suggested qualitative and quantitative indicators for program areas to draw from in integrating gender equality, particularly in the three priority areas of promoting women's leadership, women's economic empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls.

This performance assessment note will draw on international experience and good practice in monitoring and evaluation. It will include recommendations for strategic evaluations to assess our progress based on these questions:

- Are our development investments in economic sectors promoting women's economic empowerment?
- Are our development investments supporting national and regional efforts to end violence against women and girls?
- Are our development investments promoting women's leadership and participation in decision-making?
- Have our investments drawn on quality gender analysis to set priorities for assistance, and integrated gender equality effectively in their designs?
- Have our development investments integrated gender equality in their monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and is this information being used to improve investment performance on gender equality?

The performance assessment note will highlight that our program areas should:

- disaggregate all data relating to people by sex and where possible by age, indigenous and disability status
- pick qualitative indicators to ensure the impact of assistance is captured, especially on discriminatory social norms
- pick quantitative indicators to ensure the scale of outputs and assistance is captured
- ensure monitoring and evaluation information is used regularly to refine and update programming assistance, to learn quickly and efficiently from what is and is not working
- build on baseline assessments, so progress can be assessed throughout the investment against the starting point.

Annex 2: Examples in Practice

Vietnam— promoting women’s economic empowerment and leadership

The seven Australian Government agencies operating within the Australian Embassy in Vietnam are working together to promote women’s economic empowerment and leadership in all development assistance programs.

The Government of Vietnam values this strategic approach, recognising that to reach its full potential and achieve prosperity, the country needs to ensure women and men have the same levels of access to education, safety, fulfilling work, income and decision-making.

The Vietnam Women’s Union continues to be an important partner for Australia. When its President, Madame Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa, visited Australia in March 2015, she expressed strong appreciation for the support Australia has provided since the 1990s on a range of diverse projects, such as in reproductive health, agricultural development, micro-credit and vocational training.

Australia’s Aid Investment Plan for Vietnam has set a key objective of promoting women’s economic empowerment. The Embassy is integrating gender into all development assistance programs. Importantly, this includes the Australian Federal Police supporting women’s leadership training in police and the Australian Centre for Agricultural Research empowering ethnic minority women to generate more income.

The seven agencies in the Embassy are also working closely with each other to pursue the common goal of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in other areas.

Microfinance at work in Vietnam. Credit: DFAT / Lorrie Graham





The Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, meets with women community leaders and girls in Harijan Basti, Vasant Kunj in India, one of the target communities under the DFAT-funded 'Swachh Dilli Swasth Dilli' (Clean Delhi Healthy Delhi) project. Credit: WaterAid/Mohammad Naveed

India— the many benefits of gender equality

The many benefits of gender equality are on India's radar as it maps its future. To make positive change, India is concentrating on boosting the health and welfare of its people. This includes changing cultural norms, tackling violence against women and children, addressing a falling female labour participation rate, promoting girls education, and discouraging child marriage.

The Australian High Commission in New Delhi has put in place a comprehensive strategy to embed gender equality across the full range of DFAT's interactions — aid, trade, people-to-people, diplomacy, reporting and management. It is also stepping up its advocacy on gender equality and supporting local women's organisations.

Over recent years, the post has used high-profile Australian women to build links with Indian women and underline the importance of gender equality. In 2012, then Prime Minister Gillard held a town hall meeting with youth, Foreign Minister Bishop met university students in 2013 and our Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, spoke at a conference on child marriage in October 2015 alongside the United Nations and local researchers from the Tata Institute. A new trade connectivity program, the South Asia Regional Trade Facilitation Program, has economic opportunities for women stitched into its design. The post has established strong links with female members of the Indian Parliament, providing modest financial support for some of their own gender equality projects. Gender equality is also now a specific objective in all small grants funded through the Direct Aid Program. The Australia Sports Outreach Program has allowed girls in Delhi's slums to play netball, improving both their fitness and their social confidence.

All agencies at post now systematically factor gender equality into their work. The team at post also considers gender equality in its approach to issues such as selecting delegations and management and leadership approaches.

Japan— gender equality on the move

Gender equality is an important right. It's also a powerful driver for increasing social equity, lifting productivity and revitalising a country's economy. Recognising this, Japan has made significant efforts in recent years to promote gender equality. It has become a prominent theme in the country's foreign policy. Indeed, Prime Minister Abe has announced that women's empowerment will be a key focus of Japan's G7 presidency in 2016.

Australia and Japan continue to work together on new gender equality initiatives that are making a difference. One such initiative is Japan's World Assembly for Women (WAW!). Another is the launch of a Male Champions of Change program in Japan.

In pursuing gender equality outcomes across its international agenda, Australia has also joined the Advisory Board of Japan's Gender Diversity Network. This network brings together representatives from government, private sector and non-government organisations to promote gender diversity in Japan's workforce and encourage social reform.

The Australian Embassy in Japan has played a key role in identifying other areas in which Australian and Japanese interests intersect. For example, senior Australian visitors, including Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, the Minister for Women, and former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, have shared learnings on gender equality and helped shape Japanese thinking about the role of women in leadership.

With a mutual focus on mainstreaming gender equality, the Embassy will continue to exchange views with the Japanese Government and promote our shared gender equality objectives.

Minister for Women, Minister for Employment and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash at a business lunch at the World Assembly of Women, Japan, with Male Champion of Change and former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Martin Parkinson and Embassy staff. Credit: PMC/ Kate Wallace.



Austrade— gender equality for business, trade and growth

Austrade signed on to UN Women’s global Women’s Empowerment Principles in 2015, reflecting Australia’s commitment to promote gender equality as good for business, trade and growth. The Women in Global Business (WIGB) program, a joint initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, supported by Austrade, assists Australian businesswomen to take their products and services to the world. It increases the participation of women in international trade and investment with opportunities to raise their business profile and network. It brings together women involved in international trade and investment from across Australia with our key trading partners, to help them develop sustainable businesses and join international networks that create business opportunities.

The first WIGB international chapter – WIGB Indonesia – was launched in Jakarta in March 2015. It brings together Indonesian and Australian women-led businesses to promote trade, investment and business best practice. It delivers skills and capacity building workshops, facilitates mentoring, provides business matching for export, runs networking events, and connects Australian and Indonesian women doing business in each other’s countries with women-led SMEs in that country. The second international chapter is due to be launched in China in early 2016.

More information: <http://www.wigb.gov.au/>

Launch of Women in Global Business Indonesia. Credit: Austrade



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

A major Australian aid initiative is promoting gender equality across the 14 countries that form the Pacific region.

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) has a 10-year plan in place to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women.

Through the initiative, Australia's High Commissions work with Pacific governments, civil society organisations, private sector organisations, and multilateral and regional organisations to advance the plan's three priorities:

1. increase the effective representation of women, and women's interests, through leadership at all levels of decision-making
2. expand women's economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets
3. reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and justice for survivors of violence.

A plan for each country is now in place to support a broad range of activities in the important gender equality arena. Work underway includes building the capacity of Pacific women members of parliament, parliamentary staff and institutions to better address gender inequalities; implementing programs to reduce barriers to women's economic empowerment; funding services for survivors of domestic violence; improving law enforcement, justice systems and the coordination of service providers; and working with communities to change attitudes and behaviours on violence against women.

Pacific Women demonstrates Australia's commitment to making gender equality an integral part of aid, foreign policy and economic diplomacy in the region.

Business leaders part of the Papua New Guinea delegation at the second Pacific Women in Business Conference in Nadi, Fiji in November 2014. Photo: Pacific Women / Shazia Usman





A woman peacemaker from WE Act 1325 in the Philippines participating in the Speak Out For Peace Campaign, which aims to enhance awareness of women's participation in peacebuilding. Credit: WE Act 1325

Global advocacy on women, peace and security

Women can play a key role in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peace-building to support lasting peace.

Despite the obvious benefits and ongoing calls for change, women continue to suffer disproportionately in conflict and post-conflict situations. They suffer high levels of physical and sexual violence in such situations and perpetrators face few consequences for their actions. Women are also often excluded from formal decision-making roles and from peace processes, with peace agreements often failing to recognise their particular needs.

Australia believes that women must be provided with opportunities to play a role in responding to situations of conflict and fragility. During its term on the UN Security Council (2013–14), Australia played a key role in the drafting and adoption of Security Council Resolution 2106 on women, peace and security. Australia also led the way in integrating a gender perspective into mainstream resolutions, including those on small arms and light weapons and the role of police in peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Australia is now the lead donor in UN Women's Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. The instrument will strengthen the capacity of women's organisations to participate in peace processes and respond to crises and emergencies.

In seeking a position on the UN Human Rights Council in 2018-2020 and on the Security Council in 2029–30, Australia will ensure the women, peace and security agenda is a priority for our campaigns and, if successful, for our terms.

International perspectives

United States

In 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry directed all American embassies and bureaus to prioritise gender equality in all diplomatic, development and operations activities. This included enhancing efforts with established priorities that promote women's economic and political participation. Such priorities include supporting strategic initiatives relating to gender-based violence and women, peace and security; empowering adolescent girls; prioritising gender equality in international fora; and leading by example, by integrating gender equality in the department's strategic planning. In 2015, Secretary Kerry appointed the first Special Envoy on the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons, highlighting the importance of sustained advocacy on these issues.

<http://www.state.gov/>

Chile

In 2015, Foreign Minister Heraldo created a new gender equality unit in the Chilean Foreign Ministry. The Directorate of Consular Services is incorporating gender perspectives into its work with migrant women, particularly looking at needs for shelter and promoting women's involvement in participatory dialogues in field programs, including those aimed at victims of domestic violence. The General Directorate for International Economic Relations is also actively strengthening the participation of women entrepreneurs, helping them to reach foreign markets.

<http://www.minrel.gob.cl/foreign-minister-munoz-highlights-progress-in-gender-equality-agenda-during-commemoration-of-international-women-s-day/minrel/2015-03-10/102405.html>

European Union

In 2015, the European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) launched a new gender equality framework. It establishes four pillars for foreign policy and development efforts: combating violence against women and girls; facilitating economic and social empowerment; empowering inclusion in decision-making; and promoting shifts in institutional culture. The head of the EEAS, Federica Mogherini, noted how important it was that the framework emphasises women's social, cultural, political, and economic empowerment, as well as the fight against violence. The Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, emphasised that the new framework was bottom-line driven and will translate into 'real improvements in the livelihoods of women and girls in third countries'.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5690_en.htm

United Kingdom

In 2013, the United Kingdom launched a new global campaign, Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. The campaign recognises that sexual violence in conflict destroys lives and damages communities. It aims to address the culture of impunity that exists for crimes of sexual violence in conflict; increase the number of perpetrators held to account; and ensure better support for survivors by raising awareness, promoting international co-operation and increasing the political will and capacity of states to do more. The UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly and the G8 have all adopted new declarations on this issue.

The United Kingdom also spearheaded the Global Summit on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict on 10-13 June 2014, attended by more than 120 countries and 900 delegates, including many from conflict-affected countries. The summit agreed on the practical steps needed to end impunity for the use of rape as a weapon of war and begin to change global attitudes to these crimes.

In 2015, the Foreign Office Minister of State, Baroness Anelay, was appointed the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/sexual-violence-in-conflict>

Pacific Islands Forum

Pacific Islands Forum leaders signed a Declaration on Gender Equality in 2012, establishing a new commitment across the region to promoting women’s empowerment. In 2013, Dame Meg Taylor became the Forum Secretariat’s first female Secretary-General. In 2015, Pacific leaders re-affirmed the declaration and struck new commitments to take collective action. One commitment relates to addressing cervical cancer, recognising that women and their families across the region are experiencing pain and suffering at the hands of an illness that can be prevented.

<http://www.forumsec.org/>

Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Julie Bishop MP with Pacific Islands Leaders and Ministers before the Welcome Dinner of the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting at the Australian Museum, Sydney, on 9 July 2015. Also pictured is Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum (front row, second from the right). Credit: DFAT.



APEC

APEC's Women and the Economy Forum provides important opportunities for Ministers to advance gender equality and economic empowerment for women in the Asia-Pacific region. At the 2014 APEC Women and the Economy Forum in Beijing, the Ministerial statement outlined a course of action for the region focusing on five pillars of women's economic empowerment: access to capital; access to markets; skills and capacity building; women's leadership; and innovation and technology. The statement covered topics such as women and green development, women and regional trade and economic cooperation, and policy support and women's economic empowerment. Song Xiuyan, Chair of the 2014 APEC Women and Economy Forum, said this important work means '...improving access to markets and capital as well as promoting skills development and capacity building, women's leadership, and more effective use of innovation and technology.'

<http://www.apec.org>

African Union

The African Union declared 2015 as the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063, which aims to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation within the next 50 years. Importantly, the African Union also adopted a common position on ending child marriage in Africa. Under the new agreement, the AU is urging its Member States to establish comprehensive action plans to end child marriage, including by establishing and enforcing laws which set the minimum age for marriage at 18. The African Union is monitoring progress toward this goal as part of its Agenda 2063 strategy. Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, African Union Goodwill Ambassador for Ending Child Marriage, and General Secretary, World YWCA, emphasised the importance of this transformation when she said:

"We know that ending child marriage can break the cycle of poverty and unleash the potential of girls. However, it's equally important to empower and support young women and girls who are already married, many of whom are also young mothers. We need to provide them with the information, education and services they need to live healthy and empowered lives."

<http://au.int/en/>

Woman weaving in Ethiopia.
Credit: Lucy Horodny / DFAT.



Annex 3: The Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting. The second part details the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The third part presents the findings of the study, highlighting key trends and insights. Finally, the document concludes with recommendations for future research and practical applications of the findings.

The study was conducted over a period of six months, during which time a large amount of data was collected and analyzed. The results of the study are presented in the following sections.

The first finding is that there is a significant correlation between the variables studied. This suggests that the factors being investigated are closely related and may influence each other. The second finding is that the data shows a clear trend over time, indicating that the phenomenon being studied is dynamic and changing. The third finding is that there are notable differences between the groups being compared, which may be due to various factors such as demographics or environmental conditions.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are made for future research. It is suggested that further studies be conducted to explore the underlying causes of the observed trends and correlations. Additionally, it is recommended that the findings be applied in practical settings to see if they can be used to improve outcomes or inform decision-making.