



Department  
for International  
Development



## The Strategic Vision for Girls and Women: One Year On



July 2012

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# 1. The Strategic Vision for Girls and Women

## Introduction

The Department for International Development's (DFID) Strategic Vision for Girls and Women was launched on the centenary of International Women's Day in March 2011.

It identified four 'game-changing' pillars of work for the Department, challenging us to be more innovative and bold in our programming for girls and women. These four pillars were to;

- Get economic assets directly to girls and women
- Get girls through secondary school
- Delay first pregnancy and support safe childbirth
- Prevent violence against girls and women

Underpinning these four pillars and vital to ensuring maximum returns for girls and women in everything we do is our work to improve the 'enabling environment'. This requires action to understand and address the attitudes, behaviours and social norms which constrain adolescent girls' and women's lives, and which perpetuate exclusion and poverty.

To mark progress against these pillars we committed that by 2015 we will have:

- helped to save the lives of at least 50,000 women during pregnancy and childbirth,

- enabled 10 million more women to use modern methods of family planning by 2015 (of which 1 million will be girls aged 15-19)
- supported 2 million births attended by a skilled birth attendant
- improved access to financial services for over 18 million women
- secured access to land for 4.5 million women
- supported over 9 million children in primary school by 2014, of which at least half will be girls
- supported 700,000 girls in secondary education
- helped 10 million women to access justice through the courts, police, and legal assistance

One year on it is time to look at the results so far and reflect on what we have achieved, the challenges and the way forward.

The Strategic Vision did not make specific commitments relating to the 'enabling environment'. We recognise that the work DFID supports in this area is critical to delivering transformational change for girls and women. We will therefore also report qualitatively on our work in the area.

Read the [Strategic Vision for Girls and Women](#)

## 2.The Results

Pillar	Results Indicators	Total Achieved <sup>1</sup>	Male <sup>2</sup>	Female <sup>3</sup>	Male/female breakdown not available
<b>Wealth Creation</b>	Number of people with access to financial services as a result of DFID support	11,900,000	140,000	740,000	10,970,000
	Number of people supported through DFID programmes to improve their rights to land and property	1,100,000	210,000	210,000	660,000
<b>Education</b>	Number of children supported by DFID in primary education (per annum)	5,300,000	2,730,000	2,540,000	0
	Number of children supported by DFID in lower secondary education (per annum)	600,000	320,000	260,000	0
	Number of children completing primary education supported by DFID (per annum)	500,000	260,000	260,000	0
<b>Reproductive, maternal and neo-natal health</b>	Number of births delivered with the help of nurses, midwives or doctors through DFID support	500,000	Not applicable		
	Number of additional women using modern methods of family planning through DFID support	1,000,000	Not applicable		
	Number of maternal lives saved through DFID support	Not currently available			
<b>Governance and Security</b>	Number of women and girls with improved access to security and justice through DFID support	300,000	Not applicable		

<sup>1</sup> Total results achieved have been rounded to the nearest 100,000. Male/female breakdowns have been rounded to the nearest 10,000. The sum of individual columns may not equal total due to rounding.

<sup>2</sup> Please see Section 4 in this report for analysis of DFID reporting of disaggregated data.

<sup>3</sup> Please see Section 4 in this report for analysis of DFID reporting of disaggregated data.

### 3. Reporting back on the pillars: the stories behind the results

#### Delay first pregnancy and support safe childbirth

The Strategic Vision has supported a greater focus on adolescent girls in DFID's reproductive, maternal and new-born health (RMNH) programmes, underpinning the commitments DFID made in its 'Choices for Women' the RMNH Framework for Results.

It has also encouraged a more holistic approach to programming to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes for adolescent girls, encouraging DFID to improve its understanding of the wider factors that affect adolescent girls' sexual, reproductive and maternal health. The age of first pregnancy is closely linked to the age of first marriage, widespread coerced sex, girls' education and overall, to what it means to be a girl in a given society. DFID has increased the priority it places on tackling female genital cutting and is currently exploring what more it can do to support efforts to abandon the practice.

DFID supports or plans to support country-level programmes on reproductive, maternal and new-born health in 21 countries in Africa and Asia. In addition to this there are at least 13 new country-level programmes which have a specific focus on young women and adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In addition, a major multi-country programme to prevent maternal deaths through reducing unintended pregnancies was started in 2011 and is operating in 14 countries in Africa and Asia. Another programme, spanning 12 countries, was approved in early 2012 and will draw on the expertise of professionals in the UK to train doctors, midwives and other health professionals in lifesaving skills for pregnancy and childbirth. DFID is also working with UNFPA to improve availability and use of essential medicines and supplies necessary to improve women and girl's sexual and reproductive health – including modern contraceptive methods which will enable girls to delay first pregnancy.

The London Summit on Family Planning on 11th July demonstrated the UK government's huge commitment to this agenda. Donor commitments of \$2.6bn exceeded the target set to meet the unmet

need for contraception for 120 million girls and women and enable them to decide freely and for themselves, whether when and how many children to have. There was a strong focus on adolescents at the Summit.

#### Key Challenges:

Starting with the girl, rather than the health sector, is challenging because institutional structures, both our own and within partner governments, are organised around sectors. However; through innovative DFID-funded programmes such as Zambia's 'Safe Spaces' programme (see boxed text) we are working to improve our practice.

#### Zambia's Safe Spaces Programme

Social isolation, economic vulnerability, and lack of appropriate health information and services can stunt a young girl's development. The Safe Spaces programme is designed to intervene in these critical years, providing social, economic and health assets. The programme will reach 10,000 adolescent girls aged 10-19 in urban and rural Zambia.

At the core of the safe spaces component is a weekly meeting in which groups of 15 to 25 girls meet with a mentor – a young woman from their community – for short training sessions. These meetings help build girls' social assets; their number of friends, self-esteem, confidence and communication skills. Girls will also be given a savings account, financial management and reproductive health training and health vouchers for a range of age appropriate health services.

The provision of safe spaces is an innovative and new approach to empowering girls. Although the safe spaces model has been positively reviewed, the evidence is not robust. The project therefore includes a 2 year longitudinal study to test the longer term impact of the programme on the empowerment of adolescent girls and the sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

## Get economic assets directly to girls and women

The Strategic Vision underlined the importance of delivering economic assets directly to girls and women, recognising its potentially transformative impact and establishing it as a critical area of work across the Department.



This represents a new and challenging focus for DFID, and the past year has largely been spent building knowledge and developing new programmes which more explicitly reach girls and women with economic assets.

As a result of this work there are now 20 DFID supported programmes in the pipeline which include specific targets to provide economic assets to girls and women (building on an existing portfolio of at least 60 programmes that target girls and women). Many of these programmes focus on financial inclusion. For example, DFID will support a new Global Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Finance Initiative to provide additional finance to over 200,000 SMEs across 15 DFID priority countries, with at least 25% of loans reaching women-headed SMEs. It aims to help create over 1 million new jobs over 7 years

There is large scope for innovation in this area and DFID is also supporting exciting programmes, such as InfoDev's 'm2Work' Mobile Microwork Challenge. This explores the feasibility of microwork (small digital tasks people can perform anywhere to supplement their income) on mobile phones by inviting competitive applications for ideas. With 5

billion mobile phones in the developing world, this could have significant job creation potential, particularly for young people due to its flexibility.

### Key Challenges:

Key challenges include ensuring that those leading relevant programming (who may not typically lead on gender issues) are better supported to address the numerous and complex challenges for women and girls in our focus countries.

Pairing the focus on physical and financial assets with complementary human and social capital investments and the broader enabling environment is critical to ensuring that institutional barriers such as discrimination, lack of mobility, choice, control and decision-making power do not undermine the impact of new programmes in this area.

### Care International's Bangladesh Rural Sales Programme (RSP)

CARE's RSP brings employment to women from among Bangladesh's extreme rural poor through door to door sales of consumer goods such as nutritional food products in remote villages.

As a pilot project it attracted interest from multinational corporations, who saw it as a means to reach "Bottom of the Pyramid" consumers. As sales expanded the French dairy firm Danone offered to invest in RSP and spin it off into a social enterprise – "Jita" – to be co-owned by CARE and Danone. DFID supported this project through Programme Partnership Arrangement funding and through a grant from the Business Innovation Facility.

Jita now employs over 2,600 women and aims to employ 12,000 women by 2014. Jita is also inspiring interest in inclusive business models globally.

## Get girls through secondary school

Since the launch of the Strategic Vision there has been a step change in the prioritising of girls in DFID's bilateral education programme and more focus on primary completion and progression through to secondary school. At country level additional resources to increase secondary enrolment has had to be balanced with a focus on improving the quality of education at a basic level for both girls and boys. However over 70% of DFID country programmes (which work in the education sector) now have programmes agreed or in the pipeline to support girls beyond primary level into secondary school.

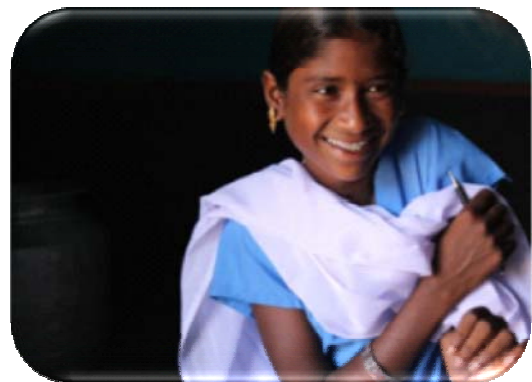
### Odisha Girls' Education Programme

DFID India will help the Odisha Government set up an incentive scheme to encourage *dalit* and tribal girls enrol in and complete junior secondary school. The project will register disadvantaged girls in the last year of upper primary school and support them to enter and complete junior secondary schooling. The allowance will be paid if girls attend secondary 75% of the time – and we expect this to drive up school attendance and increase completion rates (to 16 years).

Through research and evaluation OGIP will also add to the global evidence base on what works and why. It is intended that successful innovations will inform design of the national incentives programme that the Government of India plans to launch.

There are significant elements of innovation in the design of these programmes. For example the Girls Pass programme in Ghana will provide 60,000 girls with stipends or cash transfers to attend secondary school and the Odisha Girls Incentive Programme in India will support 240,000 Dalit and tribal girls in and through secondary school. These innovative approaches will be evaluated and we hope they will significantly improve the knowledge base on “what works” in keeping girls in school particularly at secondary level.

In addition to these country programmes, the first window of funding for DFID's new Girls Education Challenge opened on May 1st this year. By 2015, the Girl's Education Challenge will enable up to one million of the poorest girls in the world to enter and stay in school and most importantly receive an education which is of good enough quality to impact on their future. This programme will incentivise innovation both in approach and modality and will invest heavily in evaluation and lesson learning to support DFID's wider work in supporting girls to stay in school and improve their learning.



### Key Challenges:

Over the coming year the key challenge will be delivering the programmes within the tight timescales we have set. This will become more critical as many pipeline programmes move to implementation stage. Another challenging area requiring focus is the cross sector work needed to reduce dropout rates particularly around adolescence e.g. impact of climate change on girls' household responsibilities (water and fuel collection), addressing child marriage, violence within schools, etc.

## Prevent violence against girls and women

Since the launch of the Strategic Vision DFID has dedicated significant staff resources to work on violence against women and girls. This year the focus of this new policy area has been to support country programmes to scale up their ambition on tackling violence against women and girls, share best practice, develop guidance and improve data. The DFID team has recently developed a theory of change for violence against women and girls, as well as guidance notes on community level programming, and monitoring and evaluation of violence against women and girls programmes. In addition, the team has recently launched a new Community of Practice to support the growing network of DFID staff and partners working on this agenda. This facilitates debate, shares the latest evidence, provides guidance to encourage best practice and strengthens strategic planning across DFID and the UK Government.

DFID is scaling up its response on violence against women and girls and there are 20 country offices currently working on violence against women and girls programmes. The majority of these are in fragile and conflict-affected states. There are

also another 9 regional or global programmes, for example Programme Partnership Arrangement programmes, Global Girls Research Initiative and the Asia Regional Trafficking Programme.

### Key Challenges:

There are some big challenges as we take this important area of work forward. There are extensive evidence gaps in this pillar area, and we want to make a significant contribution to improving the global evidence base on what works to prevent violence against women and girls. We are working up an ambitious research and innovation programme which aims to be operational by the end of the year.

2011-2012 also saw a setback for women's rights on the international stage with the failure to agree conclusion at the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The 2013 meeting will focus on violence against women and provides an opportunity to build international commitment to address this issue, and other issues related to girls and women's rights and empowerment. However the rolling back of women's rights this year presents significant risks and challenges and we are working with UK and international partners to ensure a positive outcome.

### Women's Empowerment and the Promotion of Rights through Paralegal Committees in Nepal.

Gender based violence is widespread, deep rooted, and hidden across Nepal. Approximately 34% of women aged 15–49 years have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 years, (Demographic Health Survey, 2011) with notably higher incidences of violence in remote and rural areas.

Paralegal committees (PLCs) are community-based mediation mechanisms to protect women, children, and socially-excluded groups from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. They give socially excluded women a greater role in Nepal's society, enabling them not only to access but also to help shape the kind of services they need in order to protect themselves from violence, exploitation and abuse.

They also run campaigns aimed at the social norms and values that drive harmful and discriminatory practices and work to raise awareness of the legal safeguards available to women and children that can protect them, or through which they can seek remedial legal action.

DFID funds have supported UNICEF to scale up the number of PLCs to extend their reach into every district in Nepal, reaching 8.5 million people.



## Creating a positive enabling environment for girls and women:

The enabling environment underpins the Strategic Vision's four pillars of action. The term refers to the understanding that in order to empower girls and women it is also critical to:

- work with boys and men to re-dress unequal gender relationships
- support girls and women's participation in national and local decision making processes and promote women's leadership
- ensure national and local policies, planning and budgeting processes include girls and women and respond to their needs
- support locally-led action for social change
- improve legal frameworks that protect girl's and women's rights

The Strategic Vision has provided a framework by which to identify entry points within programmes where it is possible to strengthen the enabling areas of DFID's work. For example, DFID is working to ensure that water and sanitation programmes are able to use women's membership of local committees as an entry point to deepen women's political participation and strengthen voice in local decision making processes. This does not just apply to the specific focus areas outlined under the Vision's four pillars of action, but extends across DFID's work. For example, ensuring that women can be drivers of change in climate adaptation and mitigation programmes.

In addition to this there are three large scale programmes in the pipeline that explicitly focus on the enabling environment; encompassing innovative projects such as using sport as a vehicle for strengthening the position of girls in society or exploiting new media platforms to amplify powerful voices for change.

### Key Challenges:

Research on the enabling environment is vital. A key challenge is the need for more robust evidence to strengthen effective programming in this area. Each of the above pipeline programmes contains research components. This work, alongside the additional research programmes outlined in the 'Research and Evaluation' section overleaf, should go some way to addressing these critical gaps in understanding.

Another challenge is the longer time frame that should be expected when looking to deliver results that depend on social change. Often changes in social norms, patterns of behaviour and cultural perceptions take longer to materialise. They are also difficult to measure and quantify. The real possibilities for impact with these programmes might only be realised beyond the timeframe of the Strategic Vision. However, as we develop new programmes we are drawing on evidence and best practise and developing our expertise on how to best design, implement and monitor such programmes. This work is vital in order to support country offices to develop more programmes that strengthen the enabling environment and encourage greater recognition that this work is the foundation for empowering girls and women.

### Nigeria's Voices for Change Programme

Being born female is an indicator of major disadvantage in Nigeria. The aim of the Voices for Change Programme is to support society and girls themselves to believe in their potential to drive positive change for her family, society and country.

The programme will do this through supporting grassroots level innovations that foster women's leadership, establishing 'safe spaces' and mentoring schemes for girls, rolling out communications that will engage and enable two-way dialogue on negative cultural practices to spur new thinking and pushing for the implementation of international law in domestic legislature.

The programme will look to pilot innovative approaches with the potential to go to scale thereby finding the best approaches with which to have the greatest impact on the enabling environment.

## Research and Evaluation:

DFID's Research and Evidence Division (RED) is supporting research, uptake and evaluation programmes to generate the evidence needed to advance the Strategic Vision for Girls and Women.

RED has commissioned systematic reviews and literature reviews which will provide evidence of 'what works' for each of the Vision's four pillars. RED has supported research programmes to generate evidence on context, effective interventions and new technologies to improve the lives of girls and women. This research is already highlighting new ways forward for our programming. For example:

- The World Health Organisation led Human Reproduction Programme has successfully developed interventions targeting maternal health, such as use of magnesium sulphate to reduce deaths from eclampsia, now used in 95% of 58 countries surveyed
- World Bank evidence has demonstrated that land titling reform pilots in Rwanda have increased female land ownership and tripled the proportion of women who invest in their land
- The Pathways to Women's Empowerment Programme has generated evidence on effective strategies to strengthen women's legal and political empowerment; sexual and reproductive rights; and work and economic empowerment. Findings from this research

have been used to design and roll out a large cash transfer programme in Egypt.

- DFID commissioned five pieces of research to inform 2012 World Bank's first [World Development Report](#) dedicated to gender equality and development.

There are also a number of programmes existing or in the pipeline looking at what works to strengthen the enabling environment.

New programmes are also being developed on adolescent girls, increasing assets and economic empowerment, education, and women's political empowerment. RED also supports initiatives to strengthen the capacity of women researchers and evaluators. Alongside this the Policy Division are leading an evaluation of the Strategic Vision, looking at its short and longer term impact to inform better programming and policy.

### Challenges:

One of the key challenges is ensuring greater research uptake to ensure that research is used to inform policy and programming. Another challenge will be targeting research to ensure that limited resources are well deployed to support research that targets key areas and interventions to lead to transformative change in gender equality.

## 4. Disaggregated Data

Data sets disaggregated by sex and age give a much better picture of the reach of our impact, bringing some of the most vulnerable and marginalised to the fore. Without them it is impossible to know if development assistance is reaching those who need it most.

That is why the DFID Results Framework committed to report disaggregated results for the following five indicators:

- Number of children supported by DFID in primary education (requires sex disaggregation)
- Number of children supported by DFID in lower secondary education (requires sex disaggregation)
- Number of people with access to financial services as a result of DFID support (requires sex disaggregation)
- The number of people supported through DFID programmes to improve their rights to land and property (requires sex disaggregation)
- Number of additional girls aged 15-19 who are using modern methods of family planning through DFID support (requires age disaggregation)

For the two **education indicators** the results are disaggregated and we are able to see progress against these targets. Gathering data on number of children in school, and their sex, is not complicated as this information is gathered routinely on school enrolment.

However, we are reporting limited disaggregation for the **financial services** and **land rights indicators**, with only 7% and 38% of these results disaggregated respectively. Whilst this means progress against the targets set in the Strategic Vision is almost certainly under-reported, without the data this cannot be assumed.

Looking at the number of projects delivering against these targets helps to see what's happening. There are nine programmes delivering against the financial

services indicator, six of which have reported disaggregated data sets. The three which haven't, however, account for the greater proportion of the target. A similar picture is true of the land rights indicator, with three out of five programmes reporting disaggregated data but the remaining two programmes accounting for the larger proportion of the target. For one of these two programmes disaggregated data has just come on stream for the last quarter, which will contribute to next year's reporting, therefore only one programme under this indicator is not reporting disaggregated data.

Lastly, **the family planning indicator** also requires us to report using age disaggregation, reporting on the number of additional 15-19 years old girls who have been able to access family planning services as a result of our work. Three out of the seven programmes reporting against this indicator are reporting disaggregated data. For the remaining four programmes the problems are both methodological and logistical.

The logistical problems, for both age and sex disaggregated data, can be broken down at two levels:

**Project level:** Some DFID projects were designed without specifying a commitment to report disaggregated data and therefore the programmes do not have a baseline to report to and the systems established are not designed to capture the relevant data.

**National level:** Due to scale and logistics, sometimes we extract data from national surveys or national management information systems but this can present several problems. Firstly, in many cases, disaggregated data is gathered but not reported and therefore even though the data may exist we do not have access to it. Secondly, national surveys are rarely annual but can have a three to six year cycle – therefore even where the data is available it will not enable annual reporting. And finally, the logistics of gathering in and reporting comprehensive data sets can be further hampered by lack of IT and power infrastructure at sub national centres where the data is collated.

## Action to address gaps in disaggregated data sets

There are a number of things we are doing to address these problems:

- Having identified the programmes which are critical to meeting our targets for girls and women we are working with partners to correct the initial omissions of sex disaggregated data in log frames and project design.
- To address the methodological problems country offices are facing to report age disaggregated data we are currently working with research institutes to develop robust

methodologies to monitor the number of additional 15-19 years old women who received access to family planning in DFID priority countries. We are assessing a number of alternative methodologies that will allow us to monitor annual progress against this target.

- We have statisticians who work with national governments to improve national statistics infrastructure in our partner countries. This is a long term investment in improved methodologies, systems and IT, and covers both periodic national level surveys and more regular management information systems.

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