



Department
for International
Development



The Strategic Vision for Girls and Women: Two Years On



July 2013

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“Where half the population is locked out, prevented from being productive and from pursuing opportunities, there isn’t a sustainable path to development.

I believe that these issues represent the greatest unmet challenges of our time, not some sideline issue. And we cannot turn a blind eye. Nearly one hundred years after women in Britain got the vote, 180 years after the abolition of slavery, gaining the most basic human rights for women around our world right now, remains perhaps the most profound human challenge the world has.”

Secretary of State, Justine Greening, speaking during her keynote address on girls and women at Amnesty International on the 4th March, 2013

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.

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

The Strategic Vision also outlined the critical importance of creating an 'enabling environment'. Many of the challenges girls and women face are woven through the fabric of society - in social norms and attitudes, legal frameworks and institutions of power, such as government and judicial systems. Working with men and boys, enabling greater female political participation and leadership, and improving the legal frameworks for girls and women are fundamental to strengthening this enabling environment.

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

Progress made since 2011

The UK has made great progress towards achieving the 'we will' commitments for girls and women set out in the Strategic Vision in 2011, and has successfully sustained international momentum and focus on girls and women within the development agenda.

The UK was pleased with the High Level Panel report on the post-2015 process, with a standalone goal on gender and a strong commitment to mainstreaming throughout. This was the highlight of a year of successful results for girls and women at the international level. Notable achievements included a positive outcome at the Commission on the Status of Women, where Member States reached global consensus on the urgent need to tackle Violence against Women and Girls and a strong declaration at the G8 Summit as a part of the Foreign Secretary's Initiative to end impunity for sexual violence in conflict.

2. The Results

Pillar	Results Indicators	Targets by 2015	Total Achieved	Male	Female	Male/female breakdown not identified
Wealth Creation	Number of people with access to financial services as a result of DFID support	18,000,000 women	30,300,000	13,140,000	14,630,000	2,530,000
	Number of people supported through DFID programmes to improve their rights to land and property	4,500,000 women	3,820,000	480,000	460,000 ¹	2,870,000
Education	Number of children supported by DFID in primary education (per annum)	9,000,0000 (half will be girls)	5,870,000	3,020,000	2,840,000	0
	Number of children supported by DFID in lower secondary education (per annum)	700,000 girls	570,000	300,000	270,000	0
	Number of children completing primary education supported by DFID (per annum)	No target	700,000	350,000	350,000	0
Reproductive, maternal and neo-natal health	Number of births delivered with the help of nurses, midwives or doctors through DFID support	2,000,000	1,630,000	Not applicable		
	Number of additional women using modern methods of family planning through DFID support	10,000,000	4,810,000			
	Numbers of girls aged 15-19 with access to modern methods of family planning	1,000,000	100,000			
	Number of maternal lives saved through DFID support	50,000	6,000			
Governance and Security	Number of women and girls with improved access to security and justice through DFID support	10,000,000	6,460,000			

¹ As part of its bilateral programmes which support efforts to secure land rights for men and women DFID is investing in better Land Management Information systems, to ensure accurate data exists on holders of land rights documents. We expect that such improvements will deliver sex disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of our larger programmes in particular from the next reporting period.

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

Delay first pregnancy and support safe childbirth

Ensuring that girls and women can access the information, services and supplies they need to make choices about sex and having children underpins all of DFID's work to support girl's and women's empowerment.

DFID supports reproductive, maternal and newborn health programmes in 21 countries in Africa and Asia and 13 country level programmes which have a specific focus on young women and adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

In 2012-13 DFID developed four new HIV prevention programmes in sub-Saharan Africa (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and southern Africa Regional) where young women aged 15–24 years are as much as eight times more likely than men to be living with HIV. These new programmes will contribute to reducing at least 500,000 new HIV infections among women in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015.

Following the success of the 2012 Family Planning conference, the UK has worked with partners to establish an 18-member Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) Reference Group, which is responsible for driving progress towards achieving the Summit goal of 120 million new users by 2020. The Group will be supported in its work by a small Task Team based at the United Nations Foundation, which will manage the daily operations, tracking of resources and results. Working Groups have been convened from civil society and multilateral, technical and donor organisations to provide advice and support in four strategic areas: country engagement, market dynamics, performance monitoring and accountability, and rights and empowerment. The Reference Group will also seek to engage global family planning "champions" to provide leadership and maintain momentum.

The UK also continues to speak out and take action on sensitive reproductive health issues. In March 2013 DFID announced a new programme to support efforts to end female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). With a commitment of up to £35million over 5 years, the programme aims to reduce FGM/C by 30% in at least 10 countries in Africa and has a vision to see an end to the practice in a generation. It also includes a research programme, jointly managed and funded by DFID's Research and Evidence Division (RED) and Policy Division that will fill gaps in evidence, including on effectiveness of existing interventions. We also committed £3m over three years to the work of the Safe Abortion Action Fund which works to reduce maternal mortality by reducing the consequences of unsafe abortions.

Globally an estimated 287,000 maternal deaths occurred in 2010, a decline of 47% from levels in 1990. However, the number of early child deaths remains stubbornly high. The pace of reduction for neonatal mortality is slower than for older children: in 1990 newborn deaths accounted for 37% of children dying under the age of five, but accounted for 43% in 2011.

Working at the global level, the UK is part of the advisory group in the development of the Global Newborn Action Plan to be launched in 2014. This aims to galvanise action to reduce the number of newborn deaths. We are also contributing to the development of the Global Investment Framework for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health, which seeks to identify resource and evidence gaps and direct future investments. Our work to reverse the effects of global under-nutrition is also an important part of our holistic approach to improving mother's health and the health of their newborns generally.

Research and Evidence

DFID research generates high quality evidence to underpin effective delivery of sexual and reproductive health services to girls and women. Through the Future Health Systems research,

DFID's Research and Evidence Division has investigated ways of delivering better quality services to support safe childbirth. We are testing how to mobilise existing community resources to support a successful voucher scheme to increase access to institutional deliveries and post-natal care.

DFID RED has also supported the production of a global family planning resource published by the

World Health Organisation (WHO). This not only won a prestigious award from the British Medical Association, but is also one of the cornerstones of WHO's family planning evidence-based guidelines, providing recommendations on which contraceptive methods can be advised for use by clients given their particular medical condition.

Supporting safe childbirth in Nigeria



Aisha Moh'd Kazaure is the principal of a midwifery school in Jigawa state in northern Nigeria. In Jigawa, 1 in 23 women die in childbirth and 1 in 10 newborns do not survive. Last year, there were fewer than 30 trained midwives in the whole state for a population of nearly 5 million people. But with support from UK aid and the local government, Aisha has set up the very first midwifery school in Jigawa state.

The new school was set-up in March 2010 with support from Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems 2 (PATHS2), a DFID funded programme. PATHS2 is working to improve planning, financing and delivery of sustainable and replicable pro-poor health services for common health problems in five states in Nigeria.

"They have been of great help to us because they sponsor us to go to other schools of midwifery to understudy them so that we can establish our own. PATHS2 is always there to give us support. Without that support, all these things might have not been possible for us." says Aisha. Her hope is that by 2015 the school will have trained 200-300 student midwives who will work within Jigawa state.

In April 2012, DFID also started a new scheme - Women for Health - to support 7,000 girls and women to be in training as health workers in northern Nigeria by 2016.

A key part of the scheme will be providing a foundation year in 15 schools for girls and women who need additional support to meet entry standards.

Get economic assets directly to girls and women

The Strategic Vision highlighted the important role of assets, such as finance (e.g. cash, credit, insurance, savings and remittances) and property (e.g. land, livestock, technology) in enhancing female economic empowerment. Increasing girls' and women's access to financial services and financial literacy training; improving their incomes through more jobs and better working conditions for women; and supporting land reform and inheritance rights to secure women's rights to own and use property are key to ensuring girls and women have control over their lives.

New programmes are taking effect that will test the role of assets and other interventions in economically empowering girls and women. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), DFID recently approved the initial phase of an ambitious programme to support adolescent girls' economic empowerment. This is an extremely challenging context for girls and women. The DRC is ranked joint last in terms of human development out of the 195 countries in the latest UN Human Development Report and 142 out of 146 countries on the gender inequality index.^[1]

The programme will build the capacity of a range of organisations, such as government, donors and NGOs to deliver more effective policies and programmes for adolescent girls, whilst piloting and testing approaches to understand what works in the diverse contexts of the country's capital and largest city, Kinshasa and Kananga, capital of Kasai-Occidental Province.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan Investment Climate Facility is supporting reforms that will include benefits for women in business and work. The reforms include reducing unnecessary red tape, increasing access to credit, improving land use, strengthening property rights and commercial dispute resolution, strengthening labour market, customs and taxation systems, reducing corruption, and facilitating public private partnerships in infrastructure and agriculture.

Research and Evidence

^[1] The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects women's disadvantage across three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

Whilst our wealth creation programmes are increasingly delivering impressive results for women, particularly around improved access to finance, current challenges exist around the availability of evidence on what works. This was highlighted by DFID's recent Systematic Review on getting assets to girls and young women in our target countries^[2]. In particular, there is a lack of evidence on the most effective ways to scale up interventions in order to reach large numbers of girls and women. We are therefore investing heavily in research and evidence around female economic empowerment, including through evaluation of DFID supported programmes.

We are supporting the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab, the World Bank Group's Women, Business and the Law database, and a new joint DFID, IDRC and Hewlett Foundation global research programme on Women's Economic Empowerment and Growth in Low Income Countries. We have also commissioned the Overseas Development Institute and Social Development Direct to examine the methodologies and key research questions used in evaluations of programmes to support economic empowerment of girls and women, to ensure we are generating useful information through our programme evaluations.



User testing mobile services, Kenya | Photo credit: GSMA Mobile for Development

^[2] [Dickson, K. and Bangpan, M. \(2012\) Providing access to economic assets for girls and young women in low-and-lower middle-income countries. A systematic review of the evidence](#)

mNutrition – mobile phones to help empower agricultural women workers

DFID recently announced support to mNutrition, a new business and science partnership to develop and scale up the delivery of mobile phone based nutrition and agriculture related services using sustainable business models. Services will include mobile-based agricultural extension and context specific information to enable farmers to improve their livelihoods (e.g. tailored advice on the best type, quantity and timing of use of pesticides).

Given the disproportionate representation of women in the agricultural sector, this initiative has the potential to significantly improve the productivity and livelihoods of large numbers of women, contributing to their economic empowerment.

It will also work closely with [GSMA's mWomen programme](#), which aims to increase women's ownership and efficient use of mobile phones in low and middle income countries. The initiative, to be implemented by GSMA (a global mobile operator network), will operate in 10 African and 4 South Asian countries, and aims to reach over 3 million households with improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition.

Get girls through primary and secondary school

Supporting gender equality in education has been a long standing priority of the UK government. DFID's support to girl's education continues to be provided through our country programmes, alongside the UK's £355million flagship programme, the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC).

Over the last year, the GEC has awarded grants or matching funds through a competitive process across all three of its funding windows. In January 2013, fifteen step-change programmes were announced across nine focus countries². For example, in Sierra Leone, the GEC will improve the learning outcomes of 40,000 marginalised girls. Seventy-six per cent of children with disabilities are estimated to be out of school in Sierra Leone. The programme will therefore include activities to mobilise communities to foster inclusion and mainstream girls and boys with disabilities, removing specific barriers to accessibility and providing a safe and secure environment in which to learn.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the GEC programme ("VAS-Y Fille") will reach 137,360 girls in five provinces where girls' enrolment, learning and completion are the lowest. Programme activities include increasing parental financial capacity to support girls in primary education, improving girls' reading and maths skills through teacher training, tutoring and community reading programmes, and providing alternative learning opportunities for out of school girls to complete primary education.

In addition to the Girls' Education Challenge, work continues to progress across all of DFID's priority countries. Programmes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (Pakistan), Malawi and Ghana are helping more girls to stay in school through the

provision of bursaries, support for female teachers and improved infrastructure to provide safe and secure learning environments.

In Pakistan, girls in the programme receive 200 rupees (about £1.50) a month and a set of textbooks (see case study). In return they must attend school for at least four out of five days a week. As a direct result of UK support, girls' secondary enrolment increased by 13 per cent in some of the province's most remote and rural districts.

In Malawi, close to 9,000 bursaries were given out to secondary school girls this year and teacher training for 700 women is underway. In Ghana, scholarships have been provided to 10,000 girls with a target of 70,000 to be reached by 2015. Strong evaluation components are built into these bursary programmes to build on the existing evidence of what works to keep girls in school and learning.

Pakistan's Girls Stipends Programmes

DFID's Education portfolio in Pakistan aims to benefit 4 million children in school of which more than 2 million will be girls. Reducing gender disparity in primary and secondary education is a critical element of the portfolio. In addition to supply-side constraints, millions of girls in Pakistan are not attending school for reasons such as the need to work at home, a lack of parental support, and constraints arising from poverty.

Ensuring 'out-of-school' girls can get back into and through secondary education is a key priority. DFID Pakistan supports two large stipends programmes in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces for girls in Grade 6 through 10, with the objective to encourage transition from primary to secondary education and increase retention and completion rates. In total, about 800,000 girls benefit from these two programmes.

DFID is helping the government to re-design this programme for greater efficiency and value for money, by introducing new and innovative features such as branchless banking for stipends payment, tighter targeting, attendance monitoring solutions and beneficiary feedback mechanisms. An impact evaluation of this programme is being planned.

² The fifteen programmes awarded funding in the Step-Change phase of the Girls Education Challenge are: BRAC (Sierra Leone), Plan International (Sierra Leone), International Rescue Committee (DRC), Save the Children (Ethiopia and Mozambique), Camfed (Tanzania & Zimbabwe) World University Service, Canada (Kenya), Aga Khan Foundation (Afghanistan), Child Hope (Ethiopia), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (Afghanistan), WorldVision, UK (Zimbabwe), CfBT (Kenya), Relief International (Somalia), Care (Somalia).

Prevent violence against women and girls

2012-2013 was a critical year for securing international progress to address violence against women and girls and the UK was at the forefront of this effort.



Photo credit: Karin Schermbrucker, UNICEF South Africa

The UK played a leading role in delivering a successful outcome at this year's UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW57) in March 2013. Member States reached consensus on a text that, notably, did not simply opt for the lowest common denominator but represented real progress for women's rights. The agreed conclusions commit Member States to implement comprehensive recommendations to eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, and can be used as a key lobbying tool to hold national governments to account.

The newly adopted G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict led by the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative sets out a further landmark international commitment to address violence against women and girls. The Declaration commits G8 countries to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed conflict. It sets out a number of specific commitments related to DFID country programming, including addressing violence against women and girls through national security sector and justice reform programmes and in the first phase of humanitarian emergencies.

DFID's International Call to Action on Violence Against Women and Girls in Emergencies, announced by the Secretary of State in March, will build on these commitments. A high-level meeting

International Rescue Committee (IRC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo

DFID is supporting the IRC to prevent and respond to gender based violence during humanitarian crises in the DRC, where on-going cycles of conflict and displacement present incredible risks and high levels of violence against girls and women. Standard emergency response interventions rarely cater for the specific needs of girls and women, often leaving them marginalised and underserved.

Funding from DFID means the IRC can respond rapidly to their needs, providing survivors of violence with essential, life-saving medical and psycho-social care. The IRC helps train local service providers to respond to these needs and identifies and acts to reduce risks for girls and women in displacement settings. This includes the distribution of targeted items such as fuel efficient stoves – thereby reducing the amount of time girls and women spend at risk while collecting firewood in distant locations – and dignity kits, which contain essential materials such as torches and whistles to reduce the risk of attack, as well as feminine hygiene products and clothing.

The project includes an important focus on adolescent girls as they face particular risks and needs in humanitarian settings, with each emergency assessment and response mission holding discussions with adolescent girls to identify the major risks they face and how to mitigate them, with targeted distribution of materials wherever possible.

To date, the project has achieved the following results:

- 22 assessment and response missions conducted to locations of displacement
- 130 volunteer counsellors trained
- 131 community awareness sessions conducted, attended by over 2000 community members
- 180 community outreach volunteers trained to disseminate messages in their community about available services
- Assisted over 200 survivors of gender-based violence
- Distributed dignity kits to over 10,000 girls and women

in the autumn will seek to mobilise the international community to focus attention on the need for all forms of violence against women and girls to be addressed from the first phase of emergency, enhancing protection for girls and women in situations of heightened vulnerability. DFID is also working to ensure that all our humanitarian responses consider the risks of violence against women and girls and take appropriate action.

DFID country offices continue to scale up programming to address violence against women and girls across a range of contexts. There are targeted programmes in over 20 country offices as well as through mainstreamed interventions in other sector programmes, such as security and justice, health and education.

We have recently launched a new Violence Against Women and Girls Helpdesk to support DFID country offices in all aspects of policy and programming through both desk-based research and a call down roster of over 70 experts with international expertise.

Research and Evidence

DFID programmes are increasingly demonstrating positive results for women, but the lack of rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of prevention programmes in developing countries, particularly in conflict and humanitarian emergencies remains a challenge.

In response, DFID have launched an ambitious new £25m Violence against Women and Girls Research and Innovation Fund to deliver robust evidence on “what works”, with a focus on both prevention and conflict and humanitarian emergencies. Funded and managed jointly by Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) and RED, this five year Fund, will include operational research, impact evaluations and funding for innovative new prevention programmes, and a separate research programme on prevention and response in conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

DFID also funded a rigorous review of ‘What Works to Prevent Partner Violence’ as a background paper for the Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women in preparation for the 57th meeting on the Commission on the Status of Women. Evidence from the report has been cited in the most recent resolution passed by the General Assembly on Violence Against Women.

Tackling the root causes of Violence against Women and Girls in South Africa

Preventing violence against women and girls is a top priority for our work in South Africa - where an estimated 42% of men admit to committing violence against their partner.

DFID Southern Africa, in partnership with the Government of South Africa, UNICEF, UNFPA and Save the Children Fund, is working to deliver an innovative new £4 million programme that seeks to build the country’s capacity to prevent violence against women and girls.

By working at three levels (national, province-wide and community level), this programme aims to support government to address the root causes of violence and mobilise communities for prevention. This includes support for girl-friendly schools and youth clubs, outreach through weekly radio broadcasts, and working with boys and men and traditional leaders to champion change.

This programme will work with 2,200 Girls and Boys clubs in all nine provinces to create safer learning and community environments, especially for girls.

4. The Enabling Environment

The Strategic Vision is underpinned by a commitment to build a positive enabling environment for girls and women that allows them to participate in, benefit from and contribute to economic and social development on an equal basis with boys and men. It is critical to unlocking the potential of girls and women, by ensuring that they have a voice in their homes, societies and governments; choice over the life they wish to live; and control over the decisions they take and the resources need to get a job, own a business and live full and healthy lives.

A number of DFID country offices are now supporting programmes that have been specifically designed to improve the enabling environment for girls and women, including the Voices for Change Programme in Nigeria, the Institutions of Empowerment and Accountability (IDEA) programme in Zambia and the 12+ programme in Rwanda. In other areas, DFID is working through existing programmes to strengthen the enabling environment. For example in Asia we have increased the numbers of women participating in water and climate change decision-making bodies, not only impacting on the outcome of the decisions themselves but also increasing women's voice and visibility at a community level .

During the last year DFID has also launched the multi-country Leadership for Change programme, to build the evidence base on some of these key interventions. The programme is supporting two approaches to developing girls' and women's leadership skills and opportunities: through sports programmes for adolescent girls (see case study) and by supporting a network of established and emerging leaders working on women's rights and economic empowerment. The programme will draw together evidence of successful approaches to building girls' and women's voice and involvement in decision making at all levels as well as how to work with boys and men to create more equal gender relations through dedicated learning and evidence projects.

India: Poorest Area Civil Society (PACS) program



Photo credit: DFID

"I can make a difference. I feel empowered and responsible."

Munni Devi, Social Auditor, Muzzarpur, Bihar

Munni Devi belongs to a lower caste and lives in a little hamlet at the edge of the main village. She has received training from DFID-India's PACS program. The program works with socially excluded communities to train them to monitor local decision making processes through 'audits'. These audits help to ensure that government officials will deliver inclusive policies and act in a way that will not discriminate against the poorest and most marginalized people.

In eight months, Munni Devi has conducted 5 public hearings of the audit findings with government officers and trained over 40 persons including 10 women. Recently she was threatened by a government functionary who had taken Rs 200 (£2.50) bribe to issue job cards. He was nervous about the audit and what it would reveal. Munni Devi, remained undeterred and at the public hearing the worker was forced to admit to the bribes.

Through her role Munni Devi has emerged as a vibrant leader who is inspiring other women from the area to play a more active role in the development of their community.

Women's Political Participation

Political participation is central to achieving DFID's strategic vision for girls and women.

DFID works through a range of programmes to address the long term structural barriers to women's political empowerment as well as more immediate obstacles. Economic empowerment, basic health care, education and the provision of greater security and access to justice will contribute to women's agency and may provide direct opportunities for supporting women's political participation and voice at local and national levels. More direct forms of support include civil society basket funds; empowerment, transparency and accountability initiatives; electoral reform, parliamentary and political party reform; media programmes; girls' and women's leadership programmes.

For example, DFID is working with the BBC's World Service Trust in 14 countries to enhance political accountability through the use of media. Parliamentary reform work in Ethiopia helped improve the gender balance and oversight function of many standing committees. In Rwanda, DFID supports the Forum of Parliamentary Women to integrate gender into parliamentary deliberations. In Pakistan, the Aawaz (Voice) programme aims to increase women's representation and voice in political organisations by 20% at local, and 10% at national levels. In Afghanistan DFID has approved funding for a programme to strengthen women's political participation ahead of and during the 2014 presidential/provincial and 2015 parliamentary election.

Social Norms

As well as being a growing but implicit part of our programming across the four pillars of DFID's Strategic Vision for girls and women, work with an explicit focus on shifting social norms is also increasing.

For example, the strategic collaboration between DFID and the Nike Foundation-Girl Hub utilises innovative and inspiring brand work, communications and action to shift social norms.. Girl Hub works in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Nigeria as well as globally to catalyse social change for girls.

This year, Yegna, Ethiopia's first teen brand was launched with an estimated reach of 11.5 million people by 2015. Yegna - which means "ours" in Amharic - is a new music-based radio show that tells the story of five girls who form an unlikely friendship and go on to create a band. The drama is accompanied by a magazine-style talk show that explores the challenges the girls face. It's also supported by a network of more than 500 Yegna Ambassadors - a team of young women and men who hold listening parties during the Sunday afternoon broadcasts and discuss the issues raised.

Building relationships like the ones in Yegna is key to giving girls a voice in Ethiopia and shifting people's perceptions about what it means to be a girl in Ethiopian society.

Key Challenges

Measuring the impact of our work in this area, especially in the short term, is challenging. Bringing about changes in how girls and women, boys and men, politicians, policy makers, community leaders and many other groups view and value women can take time. We cannot expect to see immediate change and we expect that for many programmes large scale change is not likely to be achieved within the short term. Measuring these changes both at the individual but also at the community and national level is also a challenge.

Research and Evidence

DFID led a successful meeting of over 35 experts from research, practice and policy specialisms, to present state-of-the-art evidence on women's political empowerment and identify key research gaps. This initiative, and other scoping studies, fed into the design of the new Women's Voice and Leadership Programme and strengthened understanding of gender and political settlements.

In collaboration with the Girl Hub, DFID has supported literature reviews aimed at improving the lives of adolescent girls, including approaches to shifting the social norms that underpin discriminatory values persistent in gender inequalities. A two day technical meeting was held with over 70 researchers, practitioners and policy makers to identify research and policy priorities. This has fed into the design of a potential new research initiative on adolescent girls, linked to operational initiatives and generating evidence on what works. DFID RED has also collaborated with DFID-Kenya and DFID-Zambia by providing technical support and some funding in the design of two new research programmes looking at the effectiveness of approaches targeting girls: these will review different combinations of approaches across health, education, and growth in Kenya; and reproductive and sexual health in Zambia.

Building girls' leadership through sport

As part of the Leadership for Change programme, we are working in partnership with Women Win and 8 local organisations in 7 countries across Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia to build their confidence, knowledge and leadership skills of 28,000 girls through sports programme.

Playing sport builds girls confidence and changes their views about what they can achieve and their aspirations for the future. Girls in the programme also take part in a 10-month curriculum to improve their knowledge of key health and social issues, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Sports from karate to football and netball are played in public sports facilities and tournaments are arranged. The perceptions of the community and the value they give to girls are challenged by the girls' participation in sport and the increased confidence and knowledge they gain through their involvement in the programmes.

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