K4D | Knowledge, evidence and learning for development

Effectiveness of aid interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate women's political empowerment – Annotated bibliography

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Question

Please provide a selection of rigorous references about the effectiveness of aid interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate women's political empowerment. In particular, identify references that offer assessments of the evidence base for these interventions (i.e. strength of the evidence for different types of interventions). Where possible, highlight the types of interventions, as well as the effectiveness, challenges, and conditions required. If mentioned, note the role of donors in these interventions.

In the overview of the report, also present the evidence and a selection of references about the role of collective action in facilitating women's political empowerment and engagement, and the conditions necessary for this (including any contextual factors). Briefly discuss the strength of the evidence base on this.

Contents

1. Overview

There is significant rigorous evidence that **collective action can play an important role in facilitating women's political engagement, and in advancing women's empowerment** in formal and informal politics, in low-, middle- and high-income countries.

Certainly, collective action does not automatically lead to engagement and empowerment. Further, it does not always lead to all aspects of political empowerment being realised (e.g. voice, plus access, plus participation, plus influence, plus power in formal and informal politics), let alone success in obtaining all the political outcomes collective actors had aimed for. Conversely, women's political engagement and empowerment do not result only from collective action. For example, there are also individual pathways to engagement and empowerment. Moreover, women do not necessarily promote gender equality, and collective action by women (and men) does not necessarily lead to women's political empowerment (WPE).

Nonetheless, a range of rigorous empirical studies, spanning multi-country qualitative studies, ethnographies, in-depth literature reviews, and large quantitative studies, have found that collective action, under the right conditions, has been one important historical and contemporary way in which the women involved have successfully achieved voice, access, participation, influence, and power, and have advanced gender equality for their societies at large. Box 1 at the end of this overview provides a selection of references published in the last 10 years about the relationship between collective action and women's political empowerment and engagement. These references offer entry points to the nuances of the evidence base in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), showing when, how, and why collective action has contributed to WPE and their engagement.

Despite the importance of collective action for WPE, a rapid review of the literature conducted for this report found only **limited rigorous evidence about aid interventions** in low- and middle-income countries in this area. This small evidence base was encountered when looking at interventions focused on WPE that had a component on formal or informal collective action, and when looking at interventions focused on formal or informal collective action that, wittingly or not, resulted in WPE (see section 2 for details). In this context, the present annotated bibliography maps a selection of references available about the effectiveness of aid interventions for collective action that have facilitated WPE. It is based on a rapid review of academic, practitioner, and policy literature (this makes it subject to limitations – see the methodology section for details)[1].

The selected references show that aid actors have implemented, or supported the implementation of, several main types of interventions. Some centre on women or gender equality, others on collective action. The **types of aid interventions** most frequently undertaken include:

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[1] Within international aid, work for this report sought first and foremost evidence on interventions directly supported by bilateral or multilateral donors. However, as women-focused INGOs and networks play major roles in international aid for women's empowerment, the review also remained open to aid interventions where donor support was less direct (e.g. when a donor funded an NGO that itself funded or supported a local women's rights group).

For a narrative presentation of the evidence found through this rapid literature review, see the associated narrative review: (Combaz, 2018).

- **Funding** (to specific organisations, to networks, or to grant-making entities). This can include project-bound funding or, more rarely, core funding.

- **Networking** (i.e. putting relevant actors in touch with each other), **convening, facilitating, and brokering** between actors.

- **Capacity-building** (e.g. training, mentoring, peer learning) on both the issues the participants involved mobilise on, and on collective action.

- **Creating or supporting institutions that require collective action**. One frequent example is self-help groups for women's economic empowerment (WEE), which can enable – or hinder – WPE.

- **Advocacy for women's rights and gender justice**. This is typically addressed to actors in countries of intervention or aid recipients, when they are not focused on these issues (e.g. where donors fund other civil society actors or movements). It can also be addressed to other aid actors, such as donors.

- **Joint campaigning** (the actors undertaking such interventions are typically not donors, but international non-governmental organisations [INGOs]).

Evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions is mixed, and skewed towards short- to medium-term outcomes. Results appear to depend on the quality of programming, on the practices and capacities of the entity supported, and on broader external conditions, such as the responses of the political and social context to mobilisations for women's rights. One major common challenge is the lack of participation of the most disadvantaged women in the supported groups. Frequent recommendations for interventions include: building on existing mobilisation, local or national; choosing partners that have strong links to their claimed constituency, or that are able and willing to build these links; favouring collaboration and joint learning, not competition, among the various supported partners; working with supported partners' agenda and practices; building on strengths and what has worked for partners; and providing sustained support over time, not one-off short help.

The rest of this report is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the state of knowledge. Section 4 presents references that are reviews of the evidence base and of available data. Section 5 presents references that discuss the various interventions and approaches aid actors have adopted. Section 6 focuses on discussions of interventions in adverse contexts, such as war, high levels of violence, post-war periods, and States with weak capacities. Section 2 summarises the methodology used for this rapid review.

In sections 4 to 6, the core references are presented first[2]. These were selected for their high relevance, the strength of their methodology, and the geographical and thematic breadth of their coverage (see section 2 for details). Core references are then followed by a few suggestions of further reading, drawn from the pool of highly relevant references with broad thematic and geographic coverage. There, references with titles in bold have the highest relevance, stronger methodologies (e.g. reviews, or comparative multi-country studies), and the greatest breadth in geographic coverage.

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[2] In the summaries of the key findings from each core reference, any bolding of text was done by the author of the present report.

In addition, it is worth noting that **a number of successful interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate WPE did not involve foreign aid**, and instead resulted from domestic dynamics and mobilisations. Analyses of the successes and limitations of such domestic developments are included in some of the core and recommended references, as well as in references presented in section 7. Section 7 also lists additional references with narrower geographic or thematic scopes, and some that have less systematic or strong methodologies but whose results are highly relevant to the issue.

Box 1. References about the role of collective action
in facilitating women's political empowerment and engagement

References with titles in bold have the highest relevance, stronger methodologies (e.g. reviews, or comparative multi-country studies), and the greatest breadth in geographic coverage.

Barcia, I., & Penchaszadeh, A. (2012). Ten Insights to Strengthen Responses for Women Human Rights Defenders at Risk. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Retrieved from
https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ten_insights_to_strengthen_responses_for _women_human_rights_defenders_at_risk.pdf

Basu, A. (Ed.). (2018). **Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms**. Routledge.

Batliwala, S. (2012). **Changing their World. Concepts and practices of women's movements** (No. (2nd ed.)). Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Retrieved from https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2ed_full_eng.pdf
All 14 detailed case studies behind this report are also available at:
https://www.awid.org/publications/changing-their-world-concepts-and-practices-womens-movements

Bhattacharjya, M., Birchall, J., Caro, P., Kelleher, D., & Sahasranaman, V. (2013). **Why gender matters in activism: feminism and social justice movements**. Gender & Development, 21(2), 277–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.802150

Chambers, V., & Cummings, C. (2014). Building momentum. Women's empowerment in Tunisia (Case Study Report - Development Progress). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10319.pdf

Cornwall, A. (2016). **Women's Empowerment: What Works?** Journal of International Development, 28(3), 342–359. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3210

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., O'Neil, T., Jones, N., Bird, K., Larson, A., … Valters, C. (2015). **Women's voice and leadership. Assessing the evidence** (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9627.pdf

Dufour, P., Masson, D., & Caouette, D. (Eds.). (2010). **Solidarities Beyond Borders: Transnationalizing Women's Movements**. UBC Press.

Edwards, J., & Cornwall, A. (Eds.). (2014). **Feminisms, Empowerment and Development: Changing Women's Lives**. Zed Books Ltd.

Evans, A., & Nambiar, D. (2013). Collective action and women's agency : a background paper (Women's Voice, Agency, & Participation Research Series (No. 4) No. 92758) (pp. 1–33). The World Bank. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/511631468154151855/pdf/927580NWP0Wome00Box385358B00PUBLIC0.pdf

Fletcher, P., & Star, C. (2018). **The influence of feminist organisations on public policy responses to domestic violence and violence against women: A systematic literature review**. Social Alternatives, 37(2), 53. Retrieved from https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=814402665323207;res=IELLCC
Author's note: this specific reference could not be accessed during the turnaround time of the report, but its title and abstract suggest that it is highly relevant.

Goetz, A. M., & Jenkins, R. (2018). **Feminist Activism and the Politics of Reform: When and Why Do States Respond to Demands for Gender Equality Policies?** Development and Change, 49(3), 714–734. https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12389

Htun, M., & Weldon, S. L. (2012). **The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005**. American Political Science Review, 106(3), 548–569. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000226

Horn, J. (2013). **Gender and Social Movements**. Overview Report. BRIDGE, IDS. Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/10898/Gender%20and%20social%20movements%20overview%20report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
All the case studies are available at: http://socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/case-studies

Kabeer, N., Sudarshan, R., & Milward, K. (Eds.). (2013). **Organizing Women Workers in the Informal Economy: Beyond the Weapons of the Weak**. Zed Books Ltd.

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). **Localizing development: Does participation work?** (Policy Research Report). The World Bank. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/11859/9780821382561.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Murdie, A., & Peksen, D. (2015). Women's rights INGO shaming and the government respect for women's rights. Review of International Organizations, 10(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-014-9200-x

O'Neil, T., & Domingo, P. (2016). **Women and power. Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence** (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10443.pdf

Pandolfelli, L., Meinzen-Dick, R., & Dohrn, S. (2008). **Gender and collective action: motivations, effectiveness and impact**. Journal of International Development, 20(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1424

Pathways of Women's Empowerment [Pathways]. (n.d.). **Empowerment: A journey not a destination** (Synthesis Report). Pathways of Women's Empowerment, IDS. Retrieved from https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/SynthesisReport12DecR.pdf

Roces, M., & Edwards, L. (Eds.). (2010). **Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism**. Routledge.

Roy, S. (2012). **New South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities**. Zed Books Ltd.

Sow, N. (2012). **Women's Political Participation and Economic Empowerment in Post-conflict Countries. Lessons from the Great Lakes Region in Africa**. International Alert, & Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI). Retrieved from https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_PoliticalEqualityGreatLakes_EN_2012.pdf

Sweetman, C. (2013). **Introduction, Feminist Solidarity and Collective Action**. Gender & Development, 21(2), 217–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.819176

Tadros, M. (Ed.). (2014). **Women in Politics: Gender, Power and Development**. Zed Books Ltd.

Tadros, M. (2011). **Working Politically Behind Red Lines: Structure and Agency in a Comparative Study of Women's Coalitions in Egypt and Jordan'** (Research Paper No. 12). Developmental Leadership Program (DLP), University of Birmingham. Retrieved from http://publications.dlprog.org/Working%20Politically%20Behind%20Red%20Lines.pdf

Weldon, S. L., & Htun, M. (2013). **Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women**. Gender & Development, 21(2), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.802158

2. Methodology

This report is based on rigorous evidence selected through a rapid, non-systematic review of academic, practitioner, and policy literature. Its findings and recommendations should therefore be understood in the context of these limitations.

Its given scope was to look at empirical literature about aid interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate WPE at any level of formal or informal politics (national or local), in low- and middle-income countries, drawing on references published in the past 10 years (2008-2018). The searches and selection of references involved several steps, which are summarised below (in practice, some of the steps were run several times, based on information encountered during searches).

First, the researcher used advanced search syntax and keyword combinations in the database of academic journal articles Web of Science to identify relevant references, based on the scope above.

Second, the researcher used advanced search syntax and keyword combinations in Google to identify relevant references, based on the scope above.

Third, the researcher systematically browsed and searched multiple websites that appeared relevant from Google searches or reference lists in selected sources.

Fourth, whenever the researcher identified reviews of the literature (whether systematic or not) in pre-selected references, she looked at the relevant references identified there for possible inclusion.

Fifth, from the pool of references gathered in the first four steps, the researcher examined the pre-selected references and further refined the selection based on relevance and minimum standards of rigour (either clear methodology, or an established source).

Sixth, from the selection of relevant references, the researcher made a final selection of core references. These were chosen based on:

- their high relevance to the report topic,
- the breadth of their coverage. References about multiple countries, and ideally about multiple world regions, were prioritised. So were references about multiple types of interventions, to give a general sense of actions taken and to allow for comparisons.
- the strength of their methodology. These references draw on stronger methods to assess evidence. This typically involved reviews of literature, or meta-reviews of evaluations or practices.

3. State of knowledge

There is **very limited rigorous evidence** on the effectiveness of aid interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate women's political empowerment in low- and middle-income countries. By contrast, there are large bodies of rigorous knowledge on LMICs about broader issues, including: the links between collective action and WPE; and interventions undertaken by collective action movements to facilitate WPE internally and externally. Yet, when the issue is narrowed down to aid interventions, the pool of available knowledge is much smaller, and shrinks even further when rigorous findings are sought on the effectiveness of the interventions.

The rapid review conducted for this report suggests that **the scarcity of knowledge about aid interventions may have three causes**. First, academic research has prioritised analysing domestic, self-led dynamics in collective action and WPE, in acknowledgement that empowerment and collective action can ultimately only arise from the persons involved themselves. Academic research has paid relatively less attention to aid. Where it has, this has mostly been about aid through feminist solidarity, with few or very indirect connections to the formal international aid system. When formal international aid is considered, it is often from critical perspectives about the negative effects of dominant aid practices on collective action and on women's empowerment in domestic contexts.

Second, there appear to be a limited though growing number of internationally backed aid projects focused on advancing WPE through collective action. Such efforts seem to not be part of standard aid by most international aid actors – which seems likely to belong to the broader problem that most aid actors have, by their own assessments, failed to mainstream gender. This leaves just a few aid actors to undertake interventions for collective to advance WPE. Specifically, the key international actors are a handful of multilateral and bilateral donors (such as UN Women, Dutch or Norwegian aid), and a few INGOs and international activist groups and networks (e.g. Oxfam, Womankind, AWID, Mama Cash). Even when broadening the scope to any aid activities that address the intersection between collective action and WPE, regardless of the direction of causality between both, there remain few aid actors involved. Instead, the rapid review conducted for this report repeatedly encountered evaluations that pointed out disconnects. Aid programmes that involved some collective action and that were not focused on gender or women were frequently found to have failed to empower women (e.g. in projects that were meant to be participatory, or gender-neutral support to civil society). Conversely, among aid

programmes that focused on gender, women, or women's empowerment, some entailed no support to collective action. Of those which did, some focused on women's economic empowerment, including some with no evidence of political empowerment sought or achieved.

Third, the above means that, when considering a broader scope of interventions, hardly any programmes are entirely focused on collective action and WPE. Instead, such aid is typically part of larger programmes. Most relevant project belong to programmes focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, e.g. on political empowerment, economic empowerment, fighting gender-based violence. Other projects can be found, to a lesser extent, within programmes not focused on gender or women, such as those on: support to civil society; democracy; participatory local governance and accountability; sector-specific programmes (e.g. environment, agriculture, water and sanitation, health); activity-specific programmes (e.g. microfinance, producer co-operatives); or group-specific programmes (e.g. sex workers, home-based workers)[3]. One practical consequence is that the evaluations of such programmes often devote limited space to discussing the intersection between collective action and WPE, which leave little to be learnt from. In addition, a number of donor documents merely describe goals, inputs, and activities, or at most outputs, with little to no information available about results or impact – a fact noted in several evidence reviews selected in this report.

The literature found for this report has a number of strengths. Importantly, most references (both in the core selection and among others listed in this report) are based on **rigorous methodologies**.

In addition, taken as whole, the **knowledge base is diverse** in several ways. First, it comprises a mix of academic, practitioner, and policy literature. Second, the methodologies and materials used include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches, though qualitative approaches are more frequent, especially in academic literature. The types of methodologies used are diverse, spanning the range from questionnaires to ethnographies. So is the breadth of scope covered, from single cases to multi-case comparisons of small or large numbers of elements. Third, the cases covered are diverse geographically: all world regions are represented, as are multiple countries within each region, and multiple levels of action, from local to international. Fourth, a variety of thematic aspects of WPE and collective action are examined, in the causes, manifestations, dynamics, and effects involved. For example, discussions of collective action cover both the role of specific organisations and the role of social movements. Fifth, the types of interventions examined are varied, though donor funding is distinctly more addressed than others.

Among the selected references, **findings are broadly consistent and conclusive**, not just indicative. Further, while issues of attribution mean that a number of findings can only indicate correlations between interventions and their effects on WPE, some findings credibly identify causalities.

On the other hand, there are several **weaknesses in the literature** found for this report. First, there are **no systematic comparisons to identify and rank which types of interventions, and which individual interventions, are most effective relative to one another**. There is some – uneven – evidence about effectiveness regarding each type of intervention and most

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[3] Indeed, while time constraints on this report limited how many references, and how many thematic areas, could be explored, findings suggest that further relevant, rigorous findings on donor action could be found in this wider academic, practitioner, and policy literature, but that it is highly scattered.

identified interventions, and regarding sets of interventions. Beyond these separate pieces of knowledge though, no evidence is available on the relative effectiveness of interventions and of types of interventions. Reasons for this gap probably include the limited programming in this area, the small evidence base, the complexity of undertaking such potential research, and, importantly, the specificity of any findings to their context of intervention.

Second, another limitation is distinct from the previous one but related to it: there are **few general findings about the factors and conditions *outside* interventions that affect effectiveness**. On the factors and conditions *within* interventions that affect effectiveness, the body of knowledge does offer findings which are, if not generalisable, at least frequently mentioned in references and based on multiple contexts. With variables outside interventions, such findings are scant. A major reason for this is probably that, as multiple authors emphasise, any such findings are specific to the political, economic, social, and cultural context of intervention. Additional likely reasons include the limited programming and research in this area, the small evidence base currently available, and the complexity of undertaking such potential research.

Third, a significant part of the literature lacks a systematic engagement how distinct and intersecting **structures of inequalities** (such as class, caste, age, ethnicity, culture, disability, and sexualities) shape collective action and WPE, and how they affect the effectiveness of interventions. Most of the literature pays some attention to how different women have different experiences of collective action and empowerment due to other socio-economic characteristics (e.g. literacy, wealth, disability). Yet, discussions usually address just a few more inequalities, without consistently considering multiple, intersecting inequalities. Further, while most references do not conflate women with gender, many fail to carry over such approaches when writing about, e.g., class (rather than poverty or low education) or disability. In other words, disadvantages, when addressed at all, are often made to stand in for relational power structures. This weakness particularly affects practitioner literature, and to a lesser extent policy literature, although academic references are not immune to this. A few references do better in this regard, for example addressing how some collective action movements supported by donors have made their actions not only gender-responsive, but also responsive to all intersecting inequalities, as relevant to their members.

Fourth, in practitioner literature, the **time frames** considered for the effects of interventions are typically in the short- or medium-term, with little known about longer-term impact. This problem does not appear in academic publications, nor in most policy publications.

Fifth, some of the practitioner and policy literature is **skewed towards focusing on positive results** – partly as a bias, and partly as a deliberate research strategy to identify what has worked.

Sixth, while there is overall a **variety of authors and sources**, some individual ones are frequently represented, in good part due to their specialisation on the report topic and to established relations with sources of funding in this area (including the UK's Department for International Development). This applies primarily to practitioner and policy sources (e.g. UN Women, ODI, IDS), and to a lesser extent to some academics.

4. Reviews of evidence base and data

Core reference

O'Neil, T., & Plank, G. (2015). Support to women and girls' leadership. A rapid review of the evidence (Literature review). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9623.pdf

Type of literature: policy	**Publisher type:** policy advice institute
Type of reference: rapid literature review	**Peer review:** yes; no details provided
Geographic scope: low- and middle-income countries	**Time frame covered:** not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** rapid review of literature on support to women and girls' individual and collective leadership

Methodology & sample size:

Review of literature "on programmes or interventions that aim to build the leadership capabilities of women and/or girls", asking "(i) what the evidence is on the factors that enable women and girls' leadership capabilities; and (ii) what the evidence is on whether/how women and girls are able to use leadership positions to achieve better and/or more equitable outcomes" (p. 1).

Search of academic databases; snowballing and expert recommendations; search of grey literature. 54 relevant references, out of 99 identified.

State of research and knowledge

"**The body of evidence is relatively small**, particularly on support to girls' leadership, and is largely grey literature written or commissioned by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as advocates or programme implementers. The studies cover a relatively even spread of geographical regions, with only the Middle East and North African countries underrepresented (with only three studies)" (p. 1).

"**A minority of studies apply analytical rigour**, exploring what leadership means and establishing (and testing) assumptions about how it might be developed and/or the relationship between women's leadership and other things (e.g. women's power, their influence, changes in policy, services or social norms, etc.). These more analytically sophisticated pieces are mostly academic, although there are some notable exceptions in the grey literature (e.g. CARE, 2009, 2012; Oxfam, 2013a, 2014; Repila, 2011). **Qualitative methods are most common** in project evaluations, with quantitative methods relatively scarce and only one identified use of experimental design (Bandiera et al., 2012)" (p. 1).

Of the available studies, the **majority "look at interventions to develop grassroots women's leadership or to help women get into formal political positions**" (p. 2).

Main knowledge gaps relevant to donor support

Several major gaps are relevant to the present report (p. 2-3):

- "**Barely any studies discuss the role of external funders** or analyse how their relationship with implementing partners, women leaders and women's networks might affect the efficacy of women or girls' leadership programmes".

- **Comparative data** on women's leadership and its factors in different socio-political contexts **is scarce**.
- "There are **no long-term longitudinal studies**". This makes it impossible to determine the sustainability of outcomes. Conversely, indirect effects, e.g. on social norms or policy, may "accrue later on".
- The studies considered for the evidence review **do not consider the role "of progressive changes in gender norms and relations"**, including "the role of men and boys in developing women's leadership".
- **Evidence "on the causal relationships between individual leadership capabilities, collective action and women's social change and influence [is] scarce"**, even though there is some evidence "on the relationship between collective and individual leadership capacities". Further, "[m]ost studies do not consider directly *which* women are able to develop leadership capabilities; those that do tend to focus on family background and upbringing".
- "**With some exceptions** (e.g. Hodes et al., 2011; Tadros, 2014), **[the evidence review] did not pick up studies or interventions related to women's national movements**", though this may be due to the choice of search terms on women's leadership. It is therefore "unclear how and why certain women emerge as leaders within collectivities, for example women's networks".
- **No study looks at the development of women's leadership in the non-profit sector, or in business**. Among others, development literature and programming under-explores the relation between women's leadership and business or private enterprise.
- Research is **nascent or somewhat siloed on how women's leadership is affected by social, economic, and political conditions** beyond gender norms. This applies for example to research looking at factors such as "the type of political settlement, degree of political liberalisation and poverty and interaction of different forms of exclusion". "For instance, too little is known about the linkages between women leaders in the business world and women leaders in formal political space" (p. 22-23).
- While there is empirical evidence on the factors shaping women and girls' leadership, "**[f]ewer studies report on how women's leadership has influenced outcomes for women** – such as more equitable laws and policy, improved services or more inclusive political settlements – and this discussion is almost entirely absent from the studies of girls' leadership".
  - There "are few in-depth studies of whether women are effective leaders once in office, or of the success of interventions to support women politicians". Available evidence "is cursory and tends to focus on individual traits and barriers and to neglect broader political, social and institutional enabling factors".
  - However, there are some common findings about the factors that influence whether women are able to use their leadership capabilities and positions to advance their interests and achieve their goals […]. […] there is consensus that the ability to achieve individual or group objectives (whatever the content or source of these objectives are) […] is a measure of successful or effective women's leadership, as distinct from women having leadership capabilities or occupying leadership positions".

In response to the above gaps, **more research is needed** on "the factors that explain when and how women leaders of all types are able to advance their interests and change others' ideas and behaviour" (cover page; also see pp. 22-23).

<u>Lessons from programming for successful donor support</u>

"The evidence on programme design and ways of working and funding leadership interventions is **scant**" (p. 21). Some of the important factors for success include (p. 21):

- "**Long-term support to a core group of activists** rather than *ad hoc* interventions to large numbers of women (Oxfam, 2013b);
- **Locally relevant and led leadership programmes**: for example girls and women are able to propose their own understanding of leadership, what problems they face and what inputs they need (Wijnen and Wildschut, 2015);
- **Politically smart programme design and implementation**: programmes not only use political analysis but also are designed in ways that enable women leaders, and the organisations supporting them, to work politically (Hodes et al., 2011; Oxfam, 2013b);
- **Flexible programming**, which enables programme participants to focus on 'locally determined objectives' (p.57) and on 'what works and why', rather than on problems or deficits (p. 68) (Larson and Tian, 2005), and where funders have a 'goal oriented' rather than 'project oriented' focus (p.30), and appropriate monitoring and evaluation (Hodes et al., 2011)".

<u>Lessons from broader evidence for programme content</u>

The evidence on what enables women and girl's leadership offers several messages relevant to interventions to strengthen collective action that facilitate women's political empowerment (p. 21-23).

First, "**[a]utonomous women's movements are the vanguard of gender justice**". "Women's organisations and movements foster solidarity and collective purpose among women, strengthen social capital and create safe environments to help women confront adverse and disabling norms and conditions". Further, women's coalitions have bolstered "the ability of women politicians and feminist bureaucrats ('femocrats') to work effectively within government to advance gender equity". They have also produced future political leaders. Women's organisations and movements therefore need to be supported (p. 22).

Second, women's "**individual and collective leadership is important to counter adverse gender and social norms**". These norms "are the main constraint to women and girl's leadership". They can be progressively changed by women's leadership, which normalises "the idea and practice of women holding power" for persons of all genders, and offers role models. However, there is "no automatic link between the emergence of individual women/girl leaders and women/girls' collective leadership and action. Programmes need to explicitly build connections and solidarity between women, and their ability to act together to change harmful social norms" (p. 22).

Third, "**informal institutions and spaces are […] critical for women to be effective leaders**". Informal spaces and norms are highly important "both to the development of women's political skills and to their effective exercise of these once in leadership positions. […] Once in leadership positions, women's ability to influence decision-making processes depends heavily on whether

they are able to gain access to, and negotiate within and around, the informal processes and spaces where alliances are built and backroom deals made" (p. 22).

Fourth, **men and boys "are critical partners in changing gender norms"**. Their role in supporting women and girl's leadership is necessary, "and should be factored into international support" (p. 22).

Fifth, **donor programming and theories of change "need to reflect the combination of factors that support women and girls' leadership**. Support for the development of particular leadership skills can be important, but women and girl's leadership arises from a range of factors and over time". Supporting leadership capabilities therefore needs to be ongoing, as women "enter leadership positions and as they continue to develop once in them – and not as discrete or *ad hoc* interventions (e.g. focused around elections). Leadership development also needs to be placed in broader social, political and institutional context", among others "because effective women leadership benefits from enabling institutional frameworks as well as individual skills" (p. 22).

Sixth, "**[f]ormal institutional change is important to counter gendered social norms**. Institutional change that evens the playing field, such as through affirmative action or quotas in parties, electoral lists or seats, contributes to women's descriptive representation and to their access to decision-making and leadership positions". However, "there is variation in how quotas intersect with wider political economy conditions (e.g. regime type, party and electoral systems and informal political rules) and wider socio-normative and development patterns". These differences "affect whether and how quotas contribute to women's access to leadership roles and their ability to advance gender equality agendas. More research is needed in this area" (p. 22).

Seventh, **support to girls' leadership and to their families** is essential to provide the foundation for girls to develop and exercise political capabilities and leadership in adult life. "External interventions and positive role models, both in and out of school, can help […] by building girls' self-belief, skills and networks". This matters especially for girls in disadvantaged groups (p. 21).

Eight, **education for all girls is critical**. One reason is that women "need an education to access power, but they also need further education and professional training to be credible and have influence once they are in leadership positions, within civic associations, business and formal political positions" (p. 21-22).

Ninth, donors could **support research "on the processes through which women are able to influence public decision-making**. More cross-country evidence is needed about the factors that explain when and how women coalitions, women politicians and other types of women leaders (including women leaders in the private sector) successfully advance their interests and change the ideas and behaviour of others. This includes the need to look at how these effective leaders work strategically and politically to advance their and other women's interests" (p. 22). "There is a need to invest in research on the trajectories and impact of women's individual and collective pathways to leadership and decision-making roles".

Major factors and conditions affecting the effectiveness of women's individual and collective leadership

Distinct from "women having leadership capabilities or occupying leadership positions", a central **"measure of successful or effective women's leadership" is their achievement of individual or group objectives**, as this is central to leadership (p. 2).

The factors that affect individual women's formal political leadership include: "family background and home environment, 'political entrepreneurship', paid and voluntary work, gendered social norms, quotas, electoral and party systems, decentralisation, community leadership, and poverty and disadvantage" (p. 2).

The factors that affect the links between women's individual and collective leadership include: "networks and sharing of expertise, linkages between movements and formal leadership, movements standing in for political parties, and the socialisation impact of women in leadership" (p. 2).

Enabling conditions for women's leadership are: "the development of capabilities, both individual and collective; supportive political institutions, including quotas and women's access to and appointment into political careers; and increased levels of socioeconomic development within society as a whole" (p. 2).

- **Key constraints** "on women's leadership, whether in political, civic or business spheres, arise from discriminatory social and gender norms more generally. However, when gender relations and roles change over time, the opportunity structure for women's leadership appears also to change, in ways that allow more women to gain access to leadership capabilities and positions" (p. 2).
- **Key enabling factors** for women's effective leadership include: "having professional expertise and credibility (which also mirrors educational achievement); the existence of an autonomous women's movement (and its relationship with/support to women in government/the bureaucracy); the lobbying capabilities of women civic leaders; and collaborative approaches with government and 'working politically'" (p. 2).

Further reading

Academic references (all peer-reviewed)

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Moore, L., Chersich, M. F., Steen, R., Reza-Paul, S., Dhana, A., Vuylsteke, B., … Scorgie, F. (2014). Community empowerment and involvement of female sex workers in targeted sexual and reproductive health interventions in Africa: a systematic review. Globalization and Health, 10(1), 47. https://doi.org/10.1186/1744-8603-10-47

Practitioner and policy literature (internal or external editing)

Castillejo, C. (2011). **Building a State that Works for Women: Integrating Gender into Post-Conflict State Building**. FRIDE. Retrieved from http://www.fride.org/publication/896/building-a-state-that-works-for-women:-integrating-gender-into-post-conflict-state-building

The report could not be accessed, but a summary is available at: http://gsdrc.org/document-library/building-a-state-that-works-for-women-integrating-gender-into-post-conflict-state-building/

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., O'Neil, T., Jones, N., Bird, K., Larson, A., … Valters, C. (2015). **Women's voice and leadership. Assessing the evidence** (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9627.pdf

Eckert, S., Gerring, N., Jun, K.-N., Lacouture, M., Lean, S. F., Liu, J., & Walter, A. (2017). **Strengthening Women's Civic and Political Participation: A Synthesis of the Scholarly Literature** (Research and Innovation Grants Working Papers Series). Wayne State University, & Institute of International Education, for USAID. Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/-/media/Files/Programs/USAID-Democracy-Fellows-and-Grants/LAQ/DRG-Center-Working-Paper-WSU-LAQ-Literature-Review.ashx?la=en&hash=39B7077B2A12A6C7589E87B62837796169BC7ACD

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). **Localizing development: Does participation work?** (Policy Research Report). The World Bank. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/11859/9780821382561.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Moret, W. (2014). **Economic strengthening for Female Sex Workers: A review of the literature**. ASPIRES, FHI 360, for United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Retrieved from https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Economic_Strengthening_for_Female_Sex_Workers.pdf

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OECD. (2018). **Aid to gender equality and women's empowerment. An overview**. DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), OECD. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-to-gender-overview-2018.pdf

5. Discussion of interventions and approaches

Core references

References on interventions in general, or on programmes with multiple interventions

Horn, J. (2014). Supporting social movements to advance women's rights and gender justice. An approach for donors (Policy Brief). BRIDGE, IDS. Retrieved from https://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/ids-document/A68552?lang=en

The points in this brief are based on a rigorous multi-country study. See the reference by the same author cited under 'Further reading' in this section.

Type of literature: policy	Publisher type & location: policy advice institute
Type of reference: policy brief (based on academic research)	Peer review: likely; no detailed information provided, but contribution by internal experts within BRIDGE noted in addition to author's work (p. 5)
Geographic scope: world	Time frame covered: not indicated
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	Approach to material: multi-case comparative study
Methodology & sample size: "This briefing draws on findings from the Cutting Edge Pack on Gender and Social Movements created with input from over 150 social movement activists, scholars and supporters from around the world. […] the findings and recommendations have been developed as part of a rich participatory process" (p. 5).	

Donors' strategic goals on gender justice in social movements

Donors interested in inclusive development and human rights need to adopt a strategy "to resource the work of social movements in ways that **promote the full integration of women's rights and gender justice in the politics and practices of the movements** themselves". This is because, despite progress, "many seemingly progressive social movements have yet to make [gender] a consistent priority in both their internal policies and their external change strategies" (p. 1).

Roles of donors, and choice of supported partners

"Private and public **donors have always played a part** in progressive social movements". Such movements can encompass "a constellation of actors, including individuals, trade unions, religious organisations, community organisations, national and international non-governmental organisations, businesses and donors themselves".

In particular, donors have **funded organisations** that:
- were created by movements;
- "provide services to movement members or the public"; or
- "are engaged in movement-building" (p. 3).

Positive donor strategies for women's rights and gender justice in movements

First, donors can advance women's rights and gender justice in mainstream progressive movements. In particular, they can **support "women's rights and gender justice as movement priorities"**, when supporting any movements or their affiliated organisations (p. 4). Donors should (p. 4):
- Ask for a clear articulation of supported partners' approach to women's rights and gender justice. This should cover the approach "both within the movement (its leadership, resource management and decision-making structures) and in their strategies for change (including goals and constituency)".

- Fund programming and accountability mechanisms for women's rights, such as women's caucuses.
- Include women's rights and gender justice in their discussions on grantees' strategy and situation analyses, "and – importantly – in the indicators for measuring progress and results".

Second, donors can **support movements focused on women's rights and gender justice**. In particular, donors should:

- **Fund organisations that are linked to, and building, gender-just movements**. "Donor resources should prioritise support for organisations advancing gender-just movement-building". Several viable strategies can ensure "that funds reach movement actors, in particular for donors with larger […] grants". They include (p. 4):
  - "Resourcing women's funds or independent public funds established to support initiatives aligned with gender-just social movement goals".
  - "Funding organisations that in turn have links to grassroots movements with a strong focus on gender equality". The Dutch government's MDG3 Fund was an example of this approach.
- **"Fund women's rights movements and organisations themselves"**. Donors should "[c]ontinue to support women's movements, including through women's rights organisations". These movements remain "central actors in sustaining a focus on women's rights and gender equality in policy and law, as well as in civil society activism and public debate and thinking" (p. 4).

Third, donors can adopt **helpful practices in their programming**. This includes:

- Offering "**core and multi-year funding**". This resources the heart of an agenda for development and social justice. It also "allows organisations affiliated with and building movements" to develop their thinking and dedicate the time needed towards work on deep structures which shifts gendered power (p. 4)[4].
- **Keep building appropriate "monitoring and evaluation methods** that capture the complexity of gender equality shifts. This includes measures for formal, institutional change (e.g. laws, policies, patterns of access to resources and services) as well as informal change (social norms, individual attitudes and beliefs), and the impact of backlash on achieving expected outcomes (McGarvey and Mackinnon 2008; Batliwala 2011b; AWID Monitoring and Evaluation Wiki)" (p. 5).

Fourth, donors can work to **change the larger politics around donor support** in these areas. In particular, they can:

- **Consider their "own accountability to movements"**. In providing funding, donors "become actors in movements and need to be attentive to the roles that they play in influencing movement dynamics (McGarvey and Mackinnon 2008)". For instance, participatory grant-making which involves constituents or applicants in funding decisions and strategic advice can help donors "better align their funding with social movement

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[4] 'Deep structure' refers to the "hidden layers within organisations and movements where unconscious or even conscious but hidden processes occur", including assumptions that are taken for granted about gender roles and women's place (Rao and Kelleher 2005, cited p. 3). In turn, these layers "affect how people think and act, and can explain discordance between 'official' positions on gender equality and actions that reintrench sexism and related prejudices such as racism, classism and able–ism" (p. 3).

priorities while increasing donor accountability". Examples include: the Nicaragua-based Central American Women's Fund; UHAI – the East African Sexual Health and Rights Fund; and FRIDA – The Young Feminist Fund (p. 5).

- **Become a donor advocate within their own sectors**. By becoming agents of change, they can (p. 5):
  - o commission research to track investments in women's rights that use movement-based strategies;
  - o convene peers and build collaborations "to bring greater awareness around movement-based strategies for gender-just social change";
  - o critically review "donor relationships with social movements to improve practice";
  - o model new funding approaches.

Tensions in donor-movement relationships

The **relationships** between donors and movements "**can be complex"** (p. 3):

- Legal and policy frameworks on donor funding for activities by civil society can affect **relationships within movements, and strategies used by movements**. "For example, in receiving formal funding, the actions of movement-linked organisations come under the jurisdiction of laws that regulate philanthropy, which may prohibit strategies such as civil disobedience or certain forms of advocacy (International Centre for Non-Profit Law 2010)".
- "Donor policies can also impact upon the **ability of movements to voice their full political positions**".

Eyben, R. (2011). Supporting Pathways of Women's Empowerment: A Brief Guide for International Development Organisations (Pathways Policy Paper). Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/5847/supporting_pathways_of_women_s_empowerment.pdf?sequence=1

The points in this brief are based on a rigorous multi-country study. See the reference by Pathways of Women's Empowerment [Pathways] in the section on 'Further readings'.

Type of literature: policy	**Publisher type & location:** policy advice institute
Type of reference: policy paper	**Peer review:** yes, no details provided
Geographic scope: world	**Time frame covered:** not indicated
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** multi-case comparative study
Methodology & sample size: the paper draws on "empirical evidence from a five-year international research programme. Pathways researchers from West Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the UK used quantitative surveys, ethnographic fieldwork, participatory action research, life-histories, storytelling and film-making to discover how empowerment happens". "Although other than in a few projects, the research was not directly investigating international development activities, Pathways findings carry significant implications for development practice", as laid out in the paper (p. 1)	

Empowerment developed without domestic or foreign interventions

"[D]eliberate policy interventions may be just one element" in an empowerment process, or even "entirely absent", as shown in the case study about women watching television in Bangladesh (p. 4).

Partial contribution of aid interventions to women's empowerment (incl. WPE)

"Donor support to government policies and direct financing of programmes and projects do not by themselves empower women but they **can enable and support people's own efforts**" (p. 5). Within this, women's empowerment "through grassroots organisations and popular participation is one of the most important steps towards changing historical relations of inequality and exclusion" (p. 6). "Women's organising is key to securing government policies and private sector practices that make a difference to women's lives". "Women's collective action can make demands for change and hold authorities to account for delivering on existing laws and policies. Collective action is especially important for women who experience other […] forms of discrimination, for example because of their poverty, sexual orientation, disability, religion or race" (p. 6).

"**Agencies can improve their practice – and avoid undermining locally generated empowerment** processes – by adopting the following six steps:
- Facilitating locally generated changes to the political economy
- Supporting the power of women organising
- Getting to grips with policy implementation
- Designing for multiplier empowerment effects
- Going beyond comfort zones: responding to what women want
- Securing value for money in support of women's empowerment" (p. 5).

The following sections highlight points from these steps as relevant to collective action and WPE.

Interventions to support "the power of women organising" (p. 6)

- Conditions of success: successful women's organising **can take a long time**, as shown by Pathways research on women's organisations in Ghana since the 1980s, and donors need to take this into account (p. 6).

- Factors with negative effects: the above research on Ghana demonstrated that, between the 1980s and the early 2010s, a combination of several donors practices towards women's organising were "detrimental to securing social transformational outcomes". The negative practices were: "**short term and fluctuating project-related** rather than core funding"; "donor pooling of funds – with a **decrease in direct relationships**"; and "growing emphasis on inter-organisational **competition** for increasingly scarce funds" (p. 6).

Similarly, women's rights organisations in Bangladesh highlighted to Pathways researchers what makes a bad donor: "being **top-down**, not giving the organisation a 'decent hearing', **no transparency** in decision-making, wanting **too much publicity**, imposing their decisions, being **bureaucratic and inflexible**, and **thinking too much of themselves**. (Nazeen et al 2011)" (p. 10).

- Positive donor practices:

On **building good relationships with WROs**, women's rights organisations "in Bangladesh highlighted to Pathways researchers what makes a good donor: mutual respect, solidarity, responsiveness and helpfulness". Among other benefits, such positive relations help secure value for money (Nazeen et al. 2011, cited p. 10).

On **financial support to women's rights organisations** (WROs), a Pathways research project interviewed gender specialists at the head offices of donor agencies "about the effect of external financing on" WROs (Mukhopadhyay et al. 2011, cited p. 6). The specialists "wanted their donor agencies to improve the quality of their support" to WROs by (p. 6):

- "Letting WROs own the agenda
- Providing medium-to-long term financing, including institutional support
- Being sufficiently in touch with the WROs to ensure that those they are supporting are 'well anchored and representative'
- Understanding the political context of the organisations' work
- Investing time in managing the relationship with WROs because that is what matters most
- Being better at articulating women's rights as a theory of change
- Using WROs as a source of knowledge for policy dialogue".

On **empowering women workers in the global economy**, "given the changing gender dynamics of global production networks, innovative strategies are possible and openings can be found to raise women's voices in the corridors of corporate power (Barrientos 2009)". This was shown by "qualitative case studies of women's organisations – supported by big international NGOs – who were representing respectively garment workers and fruit pickers and engaging successfully with the global corporate sector" (p. 6-7).

<u>Interventions to get "to grips with policy implementation" (p. 7)</u>

- Conditions of success: "Development agencies should not only help establish policies that facilitate empowerment but also enable their implementation. This includes supporting front-line workers, fostering public debate and facilitating monitoring of performance" (p. 7).

- Factors with negative effects:
Donors have not always helped women's organising play its important role "in monitoring the implementation of laws and policies affecting women and thus in holding the state accountable". For example, in Sierra Leone after the civil war, "women's organisations sought to monitor the implementation of United Nations commitments to involve women in peace-building", "within the international peace-building framework and resolutions such as Resolution 1325". While the framework is partly transformational, Pathways research (Abdullah et al. 2010) found that its application "is disjointed and full of loopholes. International organisations must apply their commitments more systematically, along with support to women's organisations to monitor and hold to account those charged with implementing women's empowerment within the post-conflict peace-building framework" (p. 7).

<u>Interventions to respond creatively to what women want</u>

Development organisations should **go beyond their comfort zone and "be both more responsive and more imaginative** in their support to empowerment, responding creatively to women's and girls' lived experience and aspirations" (p. 9).

In particular, **sexuality is an important lens** on women's empowerment, even though donors do not like to talk about it. Donors should be more aware of this, and open to using this lens "to understand the constraints and opportunities in women's lives", and to orient their programming (p. 9).

Other under-used interventions include **imaginative means like collaborative arts and online forums**. Through these, "prejudices can be challenged and perspectives changed. Role models that inspire, challenge and strengthen others are invaluable. Despite technical difficulties in measuring the impact, development agencies should not give up on their potential of these activities". For example, in Bangladesh, "Pathways researchers ran workshops in Dhaka and the Chittagong Hill Tracts where participants made their own short films with a first person audio narrative, illustrated with a slide show of photographs or sketches. […] the women developed technical and creative skills and confidence. The collaborative nature of the workshops and the sharing of each other's stories, helped the women develop a sense of solidarity". It also helped them use film more widely "including for advocacy on particular policy issues. (Rahim 2010)" (p. 9).

<u>Aid approaches to facilitate "locally generated changes to the political economy" (p. 5)</u>

- Conditions of success: "Support from international agencies is more likely to be effective when **harnessed to already initiated, locally-owned processes**". Donor-supported processes of empowerment "have the greatest chances of success when women face pressing challenges, are motivated to envision and enact change and when political opportunities become available" (p. 5).

- Successful donor approaches:

In light of the above, aid actors need to conduct "thorough and regular **political economy analysis of gender inequality**". "Such an analysis can point to where empowerment is already in process and identify whether, when and how to play a supportive role" (p. 5).

- A central component of it must be "respecting the **knowledge, experience and perspectives of people local to a country or region[n]**" (p. 5).
- "Good political economy analysis is not only about formal governance institutions, but also goes behind the facade to understand how **informal, less visible, power structures** can block or promote change" (p. 5). For example, an analysis of quantitative data on quotas and women in formal politics in Latin America found that quotas were not enough, and showed "the need for a strong feminist movement with grassroots support (Alcântara Costa 2010)" (p. 5).

In addition, **support is needed to grassroots organisations and mechanisms for popular participation** that advance women's empowerment. Support entails equipping the members of these organisations "with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to learn to engage step-by-step with national political processes" (p. 6).

At the same time, "**policy makers may need support** to facilitate women's political participation e.g. through legislation ensuring women and the organisations that represent them have a seat at the table" (p. 6).

Finally, support to local empowerment can also become more effective when **staff at international development agencies "learn to be reflexive about their own power** and are able to map how power operates within the international development system (Rao […])" (p. 6).

Aid approaches to design "for multiplier empowerment effects" (p. 8)

- Conditions with negative effects:

Lack of attention to project design can "have adverse disempowering effects even when the intervention aims to be empowering. The design of conditional cash transfer and micro-finance programmes for women is a case in point" (p. 8).

Further, donors can "introduce negative multiplier effects. **Policy changes in areas not directly associated with women's empowerment** should therefore be checked for their potential negative impact on the enabling environment for empowerment". For example, Pathways "research into Ghana's capacity to implement gender equality commitments found that a donor-encouraged scaling back of the civil service in the 1990's had a serious impact on the state's capacity, just when it was signing up to the commitments of the Beijing UN women's conference […] (Manuh et al. […])" (p. 8).

- Conditions of success:

"Careful attention to project design can encourage and strengthen empowerment processes taking advantage of the possibility of multiple entry points so that supporting empowerment in one domain - economic, social or political - can have wider positive effects" (p. 8).

- Factors of success:

"All programmes and services […] that aim to benefit people in poverty can be **designed to facilitate women's empowerment and encourage multiplier effects**". This includes sectors

such as infrastructure (p. 8). To achieve this, aid actors need to (p. 8): understand well how to enhancing the possibility of multiplier effects; and optimise the "relations between different kinds of empowerment".

<u>Aid approaches to secure "value for money in support of women's empowerment" (p. 9)</u>

- Conditions of success: Aid actors need to design "interventions that reap long term and sustainable development dividends", as "women's empowerment is about transformative processes" (p. 9).

- Successful donor approaches:
"Donors can support empowerment processes through all of their aid instruments, from budget support to micro-level projects" (p. 9):

- "**Even where the objectives may not seem directly related to empowerment**, such as the construction of an irrigation system or rural roads, an intervention can be designed so that women's empowerment is supported in its planning, management and delivery" (p. 9).

- Where the objectives include empowerment, projects need "to **design for multiplier effects**". For example, "an investment in economic empowerment can facilitate transformative change through social and political empowerment. This is easier to achieve if interventions are informed by a theory of change, costing the most appropriate approaches in relation to that theory, monitoring progress, assessing what is working and not working and learning and adapting accordingly". From there, agencies need to choose the combination of approaches that maximises potential multiplier effects in each specific place and time, and that promises to have the best value for money in the quality and sustainability of impact (p. 9-10).

Budgets need to "**reflect the real costs of an intervention**", including what is required to implement adaptive learning "within supportive relationships with partners, characterised by mutual respect, solidarity, responsiveness and helpfulness" (p. 10).

Further, donors "need to **value empowerment outcomes**, their contribution to the sustainability of […] impact, and their multiplier effects beyond the programme". This will enable them "to properly balance the importance of short- and long-term impacts" in the design and management of their programmes. A practical way of doing this is to develop indicators for empowerment outcomes and their effects, and to include them into M&E or results (p. 10).

<u>Constraints on the effectiveness of interventions</u>

"Even when policies do support empowerment, their **effectiveness in one context does not necessarily transfer to another time or place**" (p. 4).

While empowerment is "a useful concept in development practice, donors should be careful when speaking of empowerment, as **in many languages there is no direct translation** and referring to it in English makes it treated with some suspicion as an imported word associated with foreign agendas (Kuttab 2010, Sardenberg 2010)" (p. 2).

<u>Enabling factors in the effectiveness of interventions</u>

"Even if effective policies are context specific, it may still be **useful to learn from what has worked elsewhere, provided good ideas from abroad are grounded in their own local**

reality. Pathways demonstrated how to achieve this through an action research pilot project for an Egyptian conditional cash transfer scheme […], which incorporated lessons from experience in Latin America (Sholkamy 2010)" (p. 4). Relevant lessons on making such transfers empowering and transformative included: design "to encourage a more equitable sharing of caring responsibilities within the household"; and design "to avoid increasing women's time burden through the lost labour of children or reinforcing existing gender divisions of labour in which fathers are not involved in child-rearing responsibilities" (p. 8).

For planning and design, "**it is useful to distinguish between 'social', 'political' and 'economic' empowerment**. This helps […] appreciate the potential for these different dimensions of empowerment to be mutually reinforcing" (p. 2).

O'Neil, T., & Domingo, P. (2016). Women and power. Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence (Report). Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved from
https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10443.pdf

Type of literature: policy	**Publisher type:** policy advice institute
Type of reference: synthesis report (policy paper summarising two-year research)	**Peer review:** no information provided
Geographic scope: low- and middle-income countries	**Time frame covered:** not indicated
Empirical material: primary and secondary (qualitative and quantitative)	**Approach to material:** synthesis of findings from two-year research project about women's voice and leadership in decision-making
Methodology & sample size: Research project entailed: 1. A "global review of the evidence on women's voice and leadership, with thematic chapters on women's political participation, social activism and economic empowerment" (p. 3); 2. Two rapid reviews of academic and grey literature, respectively on women and girls' leadership programmes, and on their use of digital information and communication technologies; 3. A multi-case comparative study, with five empirical studies on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Gaza, Kenya and Malawi.	

Roles and limitations of aid actors in advancing WPE

Only the actions of the women and men concerned can achieve women's rights and more equitable gender relations. However, **international aid organisations can help** (p. 12). ODI's report presents four approaches towards this – below are the components most relevant to strengthening collective action such that it facilitates WPE.

Effective approaches and interventions

First, **donors must** "**support and work with organic, locally anchored organisations** able to work with their members" and wider society to change gender relations. Donors should have two main objectives in this area. One is to "help women to organise around common interests and problems". The other is to facilitate "connections among different organisations (peer–peer, grassroots–elite), not to determine their agenda" (p. 12; also see p. 33). In practice, this means to:

- "**Support […] feminist organisations of different kinds and build relation[s] between them** (e.g. rights organisations, professional associations and grassroots groups)" (p. 12).
    - Where these exist, **invest** in feminist organisations and movements (which include rights organisations, professional bodies such as "women lawyers' associations or women's medical associations, and grassroots groups that seek to improve conditions for women"), and in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) organisations. These various organisations "have been the vanguard of gender equality advocacy and reform" (p. 33).
    - "To improve their ability to select partners, donor country offices should **build relations** with women's organisations, and also **help grassroots and elite groups to network**" (p. 33).
- "**Nurture diverse civic associations** by working through intermediaries to invest in long-term partnerships with women's organisations of all types" (p. 12). This is because "[p]olitical pluralism and broad-based women's movements are […] important". Intermediaries may "disburse relatively small amounts to promising organisations, including those supporting marginalised or isolated women" (p. 33).
    - "**Where there is a more mature civil society, […] work through national organisations and networks** that have long-term relationships with grassroots women's groups – including those that may not label themselves as women's rights organisations" (p. 33; also see p. 12).
    - **Where civil society is weak, work through specialist or international women's organisations** "that can invest in building the capacity of emerging women's organisations" (p. 33; also see p. 12).

Second, **donors must focus "on groups, not individual women"**. To be influential, women need political skills, which "are often built through associational or professional life". "Long-term, well-targeted capacity-building or mentoring" can help with this. Such interventions are particularly helpful "when they create networks between women", and when they "explicitly seek to tackle barriers to their leadership" (p. 33). Donors need to:

- **Invest in collective leadership**.
    - Funding is "better invested in **long-term support and engagement with organisations** where adolescent girls and women (could) hone their political and leadership skills and that might nurture future women leaders" (p. 33). Such organisations include "student groups, trade unions, professional associations, faith-based organisations, [and] political parties" (p. 12).
    - Convincing "**political parties** to regard women members as an asset is essential to women's political power" (p. 33).
    - **Facilitating** "**strategic dialogue, alliances and networks** including with powerful men" is another useful approach international actors can take (p. 33).
- "**Work with families and communities, not only women**, to change the beliefs and expectations about gender roles and capabilities that are the main barrier to women's empowerment and to gender equality" (p. 12). "The aim should be to help groups critically […] evaluate and change harmful gender norms and practices […]. Sensitivity to legal pluralism and customary norms is vital" (p. 33).

Third, **donors must "[t]arget all sectors, not just gender"**. "Women's political power is strongly associated with their economic power". In addition to gender programmes, sectoral ones are required "to build the capabilities and resources" which will increase women's substantive power (p. 12). In addition to investing in women's higher education, donors need to support the following collective activities (pp. 12, 34):

- "**Invest in women's economic power**", prioritising women's move towards formal employment. On informal work, livelihood, and economy programmes, programmes that increase women's power to make decisions include those "that encourage women to interact/organise and that engage male leaders and family members". This is because such programmes "seek to shift gender norms that prevent women's ownership of and control over assets" (p. 34).

- "**Invest in women's role in post-conflict and regime transition processes**".
  - Aid actors should provide "logistic support to women's organisations and networks" (p. 12). Such logistical support is critical regardless "of whether women are part of the formal negotiations". This enables them to lobby decision-makers, and to "act as a link with community-based women's groups [that have] an ongoing role in sub-national conflict resolution and peacebuilding" (p. 34).
  - Where needed, international actors should also use UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 and related ones to apply pressure and "advocate for women's inclusion in high-level peace negotiations and political reform processes" (pp. 12, 34).

- "**Invest in national knowledge production** by funding local think tanks and academic departments" interested in women's rights and well-being (p. 12). "Applied research and analysis is best done by national organisations". Women "are best placed to identify problems and solutions", and need to "generate the evidence to lobby and make effective arguments for reform" (p. 34).

Fourth, **development agencies need to "put [their] own house in order"**, to be credible in their advocacy and assistance. "High-level organisational leadership, resources and actions are needed to change gendered norms, practices and outcomes within national and international organisations and bureaucracies" (p. 34). Rules and systems – especially those on performance, procurement, funding modalities, and programme design – need to "incentivise collaboration, learning and problem-driven approaches within organisations and across programmes" (pp. 12, 34-35). Gender advisers and programme managers need to work "closely with governance and sector colleagues, and vice versa, to spot opportunities for international assistance to advance both women's power and wellbeing, and wider sector objectives" (p. 34).

Lastly, policy-makers and practitioners should **never assume "that women leaders will act in the interests of women more generally"**. "[I]ncreasing women's leadership, on the one hand, and increasing gender equality and women's wellbeing, on the other, [are] two related but distinct objectives". Women's public presence and positions are preconditions for their influence, but will not automatically lead to gender equality. To "achieve gender-sensitive policy and better outcomes for poor and marginalised women, it matters which women (and men) have political power". In this regard, a more productive focus than women leaders is to **look at "the women and men who have an interest in gender equality, the power to advance it, and how they do this in practice** (Childs and Krook, 2008; 2009)" (p. 32).

Factors with negative effects in aid policy and programming

"Rather than working with organic, locally anchored organisations, **development agencies often fund those that ostensibly share their values or meet pragmatic or bureaucratic requirements** (speaking English and fluent in 'development speak', based in the capital city or secure areas, able to handle large grants, with proper accounting procedures) (Denney and Domingo, 2014)". At best, this strategy is ineffective, "because donors are not funding organisations that are well placed to change gender relations in their communities". At worst, "it undermines voluntarism and the development of a diverse and mature civil society (Bano, 2012)" (p. 33). "**Where civil society is weak, channelling funding through 'briefcase' NGOs** is unlikely to encourage [these NGOs] to establish a clear membership base and agenda" (p. 33).

Donors should not **focus on individual women**, but on groups. First, on skills, they should not invest in **individual leadership**, but in collective leadership. For example, to support women's political skills, **"project-based support that tries to quickly plug" individual women's skills gaps** is unlikely to be an effective use of resources (pp. 12, 33). Second, on gender norms, they should not **work only with women and girls**, but also with families and communities (p. 33). In work with families and communities to change gender norms, the aim should never be "to **lecture, judge or try to dictate** what they should do", as this "is likely to be counterproductive" (p. 33).

Donors must not **target gender only**. Discrete programmes on gender or governance cannot increase women's substantive power (pp. 12, 34). Further, **programmes on WEE in the informal economy that are not explicitly designed to "increase women's decision-making power"** will fail to generate such an effect. This is true even of programmes that do "raise the level of household income and assets (e.g. through credit or loans)" (p. 34).

International aid actors have perpetuated their internal "gender ghetto", "where gender advisers sit in separate teams and [where] agencies seek to change gender relations primarily through working on discrete gender programmes" (p. 34). "Changing this is not about mandatory mainstreaming and checklists, which takes the needed politics out" of gender equality, related programming, and organisational relationships (Batliwala, 2007; Cornwall and Brock, 2005, cited p. 34).

Conditions for success in aid policy and programming

"**The political and social environment shapes the opportunities** women have to advance which issues". Often, "new openings arise from the mundane ebb and flow of political life, such as a change in government or the party system, a corruption scandal, legislative reform, an international agreement or new evidence". In addition, some critical moments, such as "[p]olitical transition, post-conflict peace processes and constitutional reform", offer openings when "women can try to significantly renegotiate their access to rights and resources" (p. 11).

Women's "**collective strength is critical** to amplify their power", precisely because women are marginalised politically. "Organisations, alliances and collective action matter". (p. 11).

To advance gender equality and improve ordinary women's wellbeing, "**what matters is *which* women hold power in their communities and the state and whether they are able to take advantage of political opportunities**". There is diversity among women and in their political environments. "[N]ot all women leaders advance other women's interests", but "women

politicians, bureaucrats and feminist activists" can and do advance other women's interests (p. 11-12).

However, "[w]hile women's organisations can foster women's critical consciousness and solidarity, **changes in gender norms and practices do not come from changes in individual attitudes but from changes in shared expectations** (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016; Marcus and Harper, 2015). Work with individual girls and women can only go so far, and there is a need also to engage with entire families and communities, including male leaders (Edstrom, et al., 2015)". This is all the more essential since gender norms assigning "particular and unchanging roles to men and women are the principal barrier to women's empowerment and to gender equality" (p. 33).

Indeed, women's political influence also depends on their **ability to make strategic alliances in relation to "mainstream organisations**, such as political parties, government departments, judiciaries, universities, unions, armies and the UN Security Council". This is because public power and decision-making are concentrated in these institutions. To achieve progress within these organisations, women therefore need to make alliances "with the men who are often the leaders and gatekeepers", and/or amongst women themselves (p. 11).

For programmes on WEE in the informal economy to increase women's power to make decisions, "**reform of laws that prevent women from owning or inheriting property and other assets**" are needed, alongside good programming that seek to shift gender norms about "women's ownership of and control over assets" (p. 34).

Beardon, H., & Otero, E. (2013). Women's Right to Be Heard: An evaluation of Oxfam GB's "Raising Her Voice" portfolio. Leitmotiv, for Oxfam GB. Retrieved from https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/301544/er-raising-voice-final-evaluation-010114-en.pdf;jsessionid=05076B4A5B1C0B001A96BE1624E88756?sequence=1

Type of literature: practitioner	**Publisher type & location:** international NGO (UK-based)
Type of reference: external final evaluation	**Peer review:** no information provided
Geographic scope: 17 national projects, in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin American, and Eastern Europe (in Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia - Aceh, Indonesia - Papua, Liberia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia and Uganda); 2 regional projects (Mercosur, from Uruguay, and Pan Africa, from Kenya)	**Time frame covered:** 2008-2013 (duration of programme)
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative). The 5-year Raising Her Voice (RHV) programme consisted of 19 projects across four continents (17 national, two regional), funded mainly by the Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) of the British Department of International Development (DfID), and coordinated by Oxfam Great Britain (OGB).	**Approach to material:** multi-case comparative study, about the RHV programme. The evaluation approach was a combination of "a meta-analysis of the national components", and an "assessment of the global portfolio as an entity" (p. 7)

Methodology & sample size: The methods were (p. 7):
1. Desk reviews. These primarily examined "the 16 national evaluations and effectiveness reviews (all except The Gambia), regional meeting minutes and global portfolio communication and documentation".
2. In-depth interviews (5), and group discussions (5 in total).
3. Online survey for 5 target groups (44 responses out of 122 recipients).
4. Case studies (2): in Honduras and the Gambia, with 4-5 days of participatory field research.
In total, the "evaluation team directly consulted 123 people, from 18 organisations from Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Cambodia, Chile, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda and UK" (p. 7).

State of the evidence base

The nature of partnership funding and financial reporting means "it is **not always possible to attribute changes directly** to the contribution or work of RHV […]". In addition, the timeframes for "impact on women's lives, political structures or (particularly) social attitudes are long, on the whole **much longer than the 3-5 years** of the RHV projects" (p. 8). Further, DfID's parameters "did not support a 'theory of change' approach […]. The **standard evaluation template** […] **focused *on measuring performance*** (program inputs and outputs), **rather *than change*"** (p. 8).

Information from each project was "very rich, but **not always comparable, or adequately captured** in the evaluations". In fact, the "16 project evaluations were of very mixed quality" (p. 8). Besides, as usual with such evaluation work, the constraints on time and resources of the evaluation "limited the ability to capture, analyse and include all of the relevant information" (p. 8).

Programme and approach, as relevant to collective action for WPE

RHV is a "global portfolio of Oxfam GB projects to promote women's rights and capacity to engage effectively in governance at every level: raising women voices, increasing their influence, and making decision-making more accountable to women". "Directly participating in RHV activities and implementation are **43 OGB staff, 45 partners and 410 coalition members, as well as hundreds of thousands of grassroots women and activists**. Seven African national projects are managed within a regional Pan-African programme. This has links to a continent-wide coalition which is working to ensure the ratification, domestication and implementation of the African Women's Rights Protocol. Ten country projects in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe have developed out of their own national priorities. A small global coordination team supports project management and accountability, facilitates the sharing of learning and carries out global advocacy" (p. 1).

"RHV was developed as a portfolio, […] and **started as a diverse range of locally relevant projects with a common theme of gender and governance**". By design, constructing the portfolio "privileged context, and in particular the expertise and entry points of OGB country offices and partners, over global conceptual coherence", although over time the "conceptual identity and theoretical framework has become clearer and stronger, especially from the centre" (p. 2).

Types of supported interventions involving collective action

Some projects took the **political sphere** as an entry point, while supporting this with work for women's social capital and for women's rights activists. For example, in Nigeria, to get the rights in the Maputo Protocol into national law, "RHV partners built the national campaign coalition, increasing membership, grassroots participation and advocacy capacity, strengthening relationships with decision makers, and providing key inputs and resources". In Chile, the RHV partner campaigned, facilitated networks of women politicians, and collected and disseminated information "to strengthen the 'gender agenda' in parliament, and increase numbers of women candidates" (p. 6).

Yet other projects chose the **social sphere** as their entry point. They brought together women and women's rights organisations at grassroots or national levels, and raised public awareness. In Guatemala, RHV focused "almost exclusively on the social sphere, building the capacity of women's organisations for strategic communications to position the women's rights agenda and build legitimacy". In Albania, Armenia and Indonesia, "RHV partners promoted participatory budgeting, establishing and training groups for women to meet, discuss and research local needs, decide investment priorities, plan and negotiate funding from private and public sources". Participating in such groups or networks was closely linked with the personal sphere, as it improved "individual members' capacity and confidence" (p. 7).

Several projects took the **personal sphere** "as an entry point, including Nepal, South Africa and Pakistan". They focused on the **confidence and capacity of (especially grassroots) women to effectively raise their voices**" (p. 6). Examples of RHV activities included (p. 6):

- Nepal: engaging "marginalised rural women in regular facilitated meetings for collective analysis, planning, learning and personal growth to build and support their knowledge and confidence to participate in local management committees".

- Pakistan: building up the skills of actual and potential women leaders from all walks of life so they could "interact effectively with local actors from government, service providers and civil society".
- South Africa: working "with members of women's organisations, groups and their own staff to explore issues of power, voice and vulnerability in a crosscutting way".

In the three cases above, "empowerment work was supported with work on the social sphere to create a more supportive and enabling environment for women's participation and voice" (p. 6).

Lastly, some projects linked up **all three spheres**, for example in the Gambia and Honduras (p. 6 – see details under the section of positive factors, and conditions of success).

<u>Results and impact of the interventions</u>

RHV achieved **high relevance for the partners involved, for OGB, and for the country contexts**. The partnership between OGB and partner CSOs was brought into play from design phase, through to implementation. As a result, "partners have been able to build RHV into their own objectives, programming and expertise, with a common focus on 'gender and governance'". This ensured "strong ownership and relevance to implementing partners and national contexts", although it limited "opportunities for conceptual coherence and leadership across the portfolio" (p. iii).

Regarding sustainability, **some changes are deep and long-lasting, "including changes in individual and organisational capacity, confidence and attitudes"**. These changes were manifest in OGB's and partners' increased "capacity for, commitment to and mainstreaming of women's political rights", and in grassroots women's and activists' increased "capacity and self-confidence to participate in the decision-making of their families, communities, and – to some extent – political parties and structures". These types of changes are more sustainable, but "tend to be slow and gradual, the result of multiple inputs and influences" (p. vi).

In contrast, **some changes "appear to be more fragile"**. For example, better "openness and responsiveness of public systems and officials or leaders […] can be vulnerable to changes in the environment, or individuals. The numbers and influence of women leaders […] can also be vulnerable to decreases if women are not supported, or come under attack" (p. vi).

Political sphere

In projects that addressed women's voice, participation, and influence in the political sphere, all projects except the one in Guatemala had the expected outcomes, such as "changes in policies and quotas for women's participation, increased numbers of women leaders and some movement towards more open and inclusive decision making, especially at local level" (p. iv). Below are specific examples of results or impact.

New women leaders emerged at local level, e.g. in RHV project areas in all focus countries (p. iv).

A few RHV projects (Honduras, Nepal, Nigeria, Albania, and Armenia) **directly campaigned and lobbied for quotas** towards "women's participation in governance, **with some success**" (p. iv).

For instance, there are "**many examples of local government systems becoming more accessible**". In Indonesia, "women's participation and project activities have resulted in participatory budgeting taking place for the first time in villages in the project areas. An important result of this greater participation in budgeting and planning has been the closer scrutiny and accountability of local government for the delivery of their promises and plans. Women activists have held community decision makers to account, and now local MPs have to report on their engagement with citizens routinely". A similar experience was reported in Albania (p. iv).

RHV partners **worked successfully "with women's rights coalitions to draft and lobby parliamentarians" to pass bills for women's rights** (e.g. Women's Act in the Gambia), **and supporting legislation** (e.g. domestic violence bills in Nigeria and Mozambique). For example, in Nigeria, the government chose the coalition-drafted Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill to incorporate the Protocol into domestic law, and then passed the supporting Violence Against Persons Bill. OGB and partners were "lauded as major contributors to this process" (p. iv).

RHV partners have also "had **some impact in making public institutions more gender aware and sensitive**", e.g. "with gender focal points named in local areas in Indonesia and Nepal".

Social sphere

In most countries, RHV projects "established, built and supported **groups of women**, women's rights activists and women's organisations at local and national levels". This had a positive "impact on the **capacity, confidence and influence of individual members as well as the groups** themselves" (p. iii).

In many places, partners' and participants' actions have "**increased the social acceptance and support for women to actively engage in public decision making**". In some project areas, this has reportedly increased respect between women and political leaders and officials, and the interactions between them. It has also reportedly opened up "spaces for influence and engagement". A broader impact of RHV "on public awareness and support for women's rights and participation has been visible mainly in the local areas around the project. There is little systematic reporting of impact (as opposed to outputs) of reported monitoring of media coverage" (p. iv).

OGB produced and disseminated up-to-date information about gender politics and RHV issues. This had a notable positive "**impact on organisational thinking and capacity and [on] some peer organisations**" (p. iii-iv).

An important area of impact is "**the institutional capacity and commitment of OGB and partners to sustain […] work on women's participation and voice**". For example, some partners have mainstreamed and deepened their "understanding of the political aspects of women's rights and empowerment". RHV has also been an important source of learning and evidence for Oxfam itself, influencing it even "beyond the participating departments and country programmes" (p. iv).

Personal sphere

In most countries, activities improved "the **self-confidence and sense of agency** of individuals in the target groups". The project with most reported impact was Nepal (p. iii).

In many cases, **marginalised women engaged and took action "in planning and policymaking in a more strategic and organised manner**. Where RHV has supported grassroots women to come together in groups, there have frequently been correlated increases in members' participation in local governance and decision making structures" (p. iii).

Women's increased confidence, solidarity, and awareness of their rights **increased their ability and willingness "to speak out on rights abuses and [to] access justice" on behalf of themselves or their peers**. For example, in several cases, women accessed property rights, stopped harmful and discriminatory traditional practices, and reported cases of violence against women (p. iii).

<u>Positive factors, and conditions of success</u>

Increasing women's voice, influence, and participation is best reached through **holistic approaches that address the personal, social, and political spheres at the same time** (p. v). This conclusion was reflected in the theory of change crafted mid-way through for the portfolio. The theory noted that these three broad spheres "influence women's opportunities to participate in governance", and "need to change in order to strengthen women's voice" (p. 3). For instance, while sustainable improvements "in women's lives, voice and influence depend on *changes in all three spheres*", they are "rooted in work in the personal sphere" (p. iii). Similarly, the evaluation concluded that the social sphere, especially in the form of networking and solidarity, was "the glue enabling greater changes in the two other spheres" (p. iii).

Combined attention to the personal, political, and social spheres "can effectively address barriers and create opportunities for women's participation and voice". For example, in the Gambia, Oxfam's partner used RHV "to extend and link up their *policy advocacy* […] with *grassroots capacity and activism*. They brought together women's CSOs into a formal network to enhance collective voice for domestication of the [Maputo] Protocol, and strengthen the political awareness and participation element of members' work with women leaders at the grassroots". In Honduras, RHV partners promoted "*marginalised women's active citizenship* and participation in public decision-making processes at local level, building *grassroots networks* and engaging with and reinvigorating *public mechanisms* for women's issues. This was linked to national level coalition *campaigning* to increase quotas for women's representation in national decision-making spaces" (p. 6).

Similarly, it is important to **integrate "work across local, national and international levels"** (p. v).

Consequently, to be effective, "gender and governance projects must **consider and address all three spheres at different levels - local, national and regional/global - employing a range of diverse strategies and alliances** depending on the context" (p. 6).

At the same time, given the "recurrent tension between contextualised, independent projects and overall conceptual coherence", giving "**more resources for central coordination and greater conceptual leadership**" could lead to better testing and improving of "the underlying theory and approaches" (p. v).

Work for women's voice, influence, and participation must be **understood as long-term and collaborative**. This is because improvements will happen over the long-term, and because the barriers and challenges faced are entrenched. Work on public awareness and attitudes are thus "essential strategic pieces of the larger change process, but [are] beyond the scope of any single project or actor" (p. v).

"Some of the strongest and most sustainable impact has been found **where RHV has contributed meaningfully to the strength, collaboration and organization of CSOs working for women's rights**". The "natural 'home'" for work on women's voice, influence, and participation "is with the national and global women's movements, who are addressing [the] broader issues over the long term". Feminist actors recognise "that entrenched male domination and power is the context for women's limited participation and voice" (p. v).

"The efficiency, effectiveness and results of the projects have derived from the **quality, commitment and competence of the local partnerships**". Competent partners, with appropriate support, have efficiently and effectively delivered results. "In some cases, partners have benefited greatly from considered and continued support from Oxfam". In other cases, partners have appreciated OGB's flexibility (p. v).

Mixed effects of context-based portfolios for effectiveness

It is **difficult to balance contextualisation and overall coherence**. On the one hand, the original breadth and diversity of the portfolio allowed for flexibility, enabling competent staff and partners to do important work. The initial process of design was effective to build "contextualised projects in many countries". As countries had been given much freedom to define their approach, participation was strong. This showed "the breadth of possible approaches and innovation" (p. 2).

On the other hand, in a large-scale, multi-country intervention, "particularly working on such complex social issues and with the additional layer of partnership working", this left "relatively little scope within the limited and highly stretched resources, for elements of global coordination, shared learning and exchange". The design made it difficult to get the programme started quickly, to achieve consistency and coherence between projects, and thus to enable learning (p. 2).

Clarity and effectiveness in "delivery and advocacy for women's voice and participation" "would be **stronger in a programme of work – and working relationships - designed around the implementation of the theory [of change]**, and outside of the constraints of a portfolio design and limited potential for investment in OGB capacity" (p. v).

Factors and conditions with negative effects

At the time of the evaluation, governance was "an area of women's rights with **relatively low focus and expertise** in [Oxfam GB] and across civil society as a whole" (p. 2).

The portfolio structure, and the limitations in Oxfam's staffing and internal capacities, lead to OGB **being unable to systematically provide partners with the support they needed** to efficiently and effectively deliver results. In some cases, partners found OGB's support insufficient or irregular. Similarly, there were "missed opportunities for OGB to add value to the partners' work, by providing a strong conceptual framework […] to understand their context and plan their work and contributions […]" (p. v).

As this area of work was relatively new, "**more conceptual and theoretical clarity was needed**. […] it was sometimes difficult to understand how some projects related to governance, or voice". While "empowerment, voice and participation and rights are interwoven", "there is a danger that, by **tackling all of the interrelated issues without clear justification in terms of 'voice'**, projects […] on 'raising her voice' become indistinguishable from generic 'women's rights' projects. While their impact may be important at personal or social level […], they are not helping [OGB] and wider women's movement to better understand how to positively contribute to women's political participation and voice". This was particularly an issue in African projects around the Maputo Protocol, where many had gone on to focus on legislation, awareness, or services on violence against women, "with no distinct link to women's participation" (p. 2-3).

Given the scale of the needs and demands in the programme, and the limited resources available at the global level, managers at global level were overstretched. As a result, their **global coordination role could not extend to building relationships and shared learning**, which were supposed to use the theory of change "as a basis for communication and comparison across the portfolio" (p. 4). The investment made by RHV in reporting and evaluation in line with the requirements of donor and OGB contract management took up "large amounts of human and financial resources which could have been more efficiently used for reflection and shared learning" (p. vi).

The **challenge of attributing changes** directly to the contribution of RHV **brings up the difficulties for the lead organisations** in such programmes. These will wish "to support partners in their core work, while needing to assess and understand their contribution both for accountability and to learn and improve as partners" (p. 8).

Recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation

Future programmes on women's participation and voice should "take as a starting point the [RHV] theory of change, building relationships and planning processes which recognise the multi-faceted and contributory nature of this type of work". Within the theory of change, programmes need to address all three spheres – political, social, and personal. They need to "engage staff and partners to validate and interpret the theory of change, given their own context, values and knowledge" (p. vi). Additional recommendations include (p. vii):

- **Long-term planning** (e.g. having a one-year inception period; monitoring and evaluation about both the short term and the longer-term vision; building relationships beyond the project, and "building capacity for more strategic and long-term action").

- **Greater resourcing for global coordination, and for the national support staff of the lead organisation**. Coordination should including facilitating reflection and shared learning, communicating findings, and accessing the lead organisation's policy- and decision-making.

- **A "smaller number and range of countries and contexts"**, as a point associated with the previous one. This will "enable more effective facilitation of shared learning and common strategies".

- **Building up the lead organisation's institutional capacity** (e.g. so that Oxfam staff and the whole organisation have better "institutional capacity and commitment to increase women's voice and participation", which should one objective in any such project).

- Reflection-based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. The system should be "based on reflection and developing the theory", to create "a unified global external evaluation process with ample case studies" which recognises multiple perspectives and actors. It "should be based on regular opportunities for staff and partners to reflect, also with participating women, on progress, effective strategies and emerging opportunities. This means explicitly seeking to include women's voices".

In addition, partners felt "that an organisation of the size and influence of OGB could **contribute to [partners'] work**" **in several areas beyond the funding relationship**, including (p. v):

- "**technical support and capacity** for project design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation and addressing women's rights and voice issues";
- "**long term, flexible and resilient relationships** which can allow for a longer term, less reactive, process and attention to the bigger picture";
- "**access** to audiences, debates and decision making spaces, at national and international levels";
- "**sufficient convening power, relationships and neutrality** to facilitate networking, shared learning and reflection".

UN Women. (2018a). Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership (Synthesis Report). UN Women. Retrieved from *http://www.unwomen.org/-* */media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/corporate-evaluation-* *womens-political-participation-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1503*

Type of literature: practitioner	**Publisher type:** multilateral organisation
Type of reference: internal evaluation (UN Women Independent Evaluation Service)	**Peer review:** no information provided
Geographic scope: world	**Time frame covered:** 2011-2017 (period of activities and effects considered)
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative)	**Approach to material:** systematic evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's political participation (WPP) and leadership

Methodology & sample size: 1. Portfolio analysis, on a sample of 43 countries (about 50% of the global portfolio). The analysis also included: data collection from two online surveys administered to 246 internal respondents and 119 external respondents, and 37 scoping interviews with 48 individuals; and a review of approximately 575 documents.
2. Based on the portfolio analysis, development of a narrative to provide a full picture of UN Women's past and ongoing work in WPP.
3. An evaluability assessment.
4. The in-depth analysis of a sample of 24 countries (about half of the larger sample), with: 359 interviews; six in-country field visits (Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan and Zimbabwe); one remote study on the region of Europe and Central Asia; and six WPP theme sampled (five sub-thematic, and one cross-cutting)

Results and impact

UN Women "has **achieved results across its normative and operational mandate**" on WPP (p. 12). UN Women has achieved relevant results on WPP with its "current capacities, resourcing and organizational structure" (p. 11).

However, UN Women's work presents **some problems**. In some countries, linkages between policy and operations remain weak, "and operational results have been uneven across and within sub-themes". The sustainability of some results also raises questions (p. 12). Consequently, the current **level and sustainability of results** could not "generate the expected broader impact on WPP", let alone constitute a driver for broader influence on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) (p. 11). In addition, progress towards **addressing marginalisation in WPP** was uneven in country offices (p. 13).

Another weakness is that **work on changing social norm to support WPP** is promising, yet it remains a "relatively **under-analysed, under-developed and under-measured** area of programming" for WPP. UN Women needs to "develop more concerted and specific programming around social norms change that will complement" its existing strategies for WPE (p. 13).

Positive factors and conditions of effectiveness

UN Women's achieved operational results "**across all sub-themes and countries**" due in large part to its (p. 12):
- **advocacy capacity;**
- **convening credibility;**
- **strong partnerships**.

For the most part, UN Women country-level leadership and local staff are seen as '**politically savvy**' and able to take advantage of political opportunities, although findings were uneven across countries. UN Women's work "was generally consistent with best practices associated with […] 'thinking and working politically'". Some country offices were "particularly adept at taking advantage of political opportunities, and could therefore leverage UN Women's "credibility and effectively advocate for political change, even in contexts of limited resources" (p. 34). Such offices "tended to share some key traits" (p. 34):
- **flexible funding** (e.g. the Women in Politics Fund, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).
- **small-scale programming**.
- **savvy leadership** that had "keen political analysis and strong political relationships".

In closing democratic spaces, adaptation was effective in several programmes, for example "by shifting support to the regional level, the subnational level or through links to public administration capacity building". "These democratic challenges highlight the critical importance of [the] **capacity for 'smart convening'**". This includes: careful leveraging of the UN flag; consistent commitment to neutrality; use of informal spaces; bridging government and CSOs; "linking national groups to international forums"; and coordination of the UN or of the broader diplomatic community (p. 34).

Adaptations to any political context and change requires **identifying risks and planning for contingencies**, especially during political transitions. Identifying and analysing risks is

particularly important to anticipate and plan for potential backlash and resistance that can arise in the face of progress in WPP (p. 34).

<u>Promising practices related to collective action for WPE[5]</u>

Promising practices that enhanced **relevance** included (p. 68):
- Promoting "**cross-country networking** for knowledge exchange and mutual support, particularly in contexts of closed political systems or gender backlash".
- **Facilitating dialogue between marginalised groups and MPs**, as was done in Cambodia with youth groups.

Promising practices that enhanced **effectiveness** included (p. 68):
- **Linking capacity-building for women active in political life to goals in other thematic areas** (e.g. "preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence")
- **Supporting** "**regional dialogues** in partnership with regional bodies that reinforce a common language and shared commitments"

Promising practices that enhanced **efficiency** included (p. 69):
- Showing leadership "in **convening and coordinating, including for joint programming** among international organizations engaged in WPP". One example was "UN Women's role in Colombia as a founder and active participant and sometimes leader of the International Cooperation Roundtable on Women's Participation and Coordination".
- Using "the Sida-supported **Women in Politics Fund** as a tool for […] a timely initial response to emerging political opportunities".

Promising practices that enhanced **sustainability** included (p. 69):
- Providing **capacity-building that enhances partners' ability** "**to consolidate and fundraise** independently, as seen in Cambodia with the Young Women's Leadership Network".
- "**Training local institutions so that knowledge is institutionalized** and can be replicated with regular intervals". For example, training on transformational leadership that was run in partnership with national or regional institutions showed "how leveraging existing institutions to provide training supports sustainability".

<u>Negative factors and conditions affecting effectiveness</u>

The uneven progress of country offices **towards addressing marginalisation in WPP** was due among others to: **gaps in data; gaps in strategy; and "limited partnerships with groups representing marginalized communities"**. "Internal and external stakeholders want UN Women to provide more support to marginalized groups" (p. 13).

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[5] In this evaluation, a promising practice meets "at least two of the following criteria: leads to an actual change, has an impact on the policy environment, demonstrates an innovative or replicable approach, or demonstrates sustainability" (p. 68).

The sustainability of results in WPP is hampered by several factors, which are due to the specific environment of WPP work, and to some limitations of UN Women (p. 12). The factors include:

- In the environment of work on WPP:
    - **political volatility** (p. 12).
    - **the entrenched nature of social norms** (p. 12). "The political empowerment of women may not be sustained unless there are real shifts in social norms around women entering and staying in politics" (p. 13). Consequently, the focus on WPE "is essential and important, but sustaining gains requires addressing and influencing social norms on gender equality" (p. 16).
    - **the long-term nature of the changes** UN Women is working towards (p. 12).
    - **the reversible nature of the changes** UN Women is working towards (p. 12)[6].
- At UN Women:
    - **the limitations of systems for monitoring and evaluation** (M&E), including a risk management system that is only nascent (p. 12). While UN Women "has contributed to strengthening normative frameworks at the country level", further monitoring on signs of regression and on implementation at the sub-national level would help sustain the gains (p. 16).
    - **a short-term approach to conceptualising and operationalising results** (p. 12).

"While UN Women's ability to respond to emerging political opportunities is a strength", it needs to **better** "**balance adaptability with a longer-term systemic and holistic perspective**". This includes (p. 13):

- prioritising projects based on potential for scale-up and sustainability (e.g. "electoral context vs. election period; *de jure* vs. *de facto* laws; descriptive as well as substantive representation");
- "balancing and sequencing efforts across the integrated mandate";
- "gauging and mitigating potential negative reactions that may arise in the form of violence", or in the form of backlash in public opinion or in public policy.

There is **high demand** for collaborations with UN Women. External actors, especially Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), are "keen to work with UN Women on WPP given its specialized GEWE mandate" compared to other actors (p. 11). Although UN Women possesses the necessary building blocks on WPP, **constraints on its ability to meet demands for, and expectations of, support** include: its prioritization of WPP in a broad geographic scope (91 countries in 2016); the political complexities of work for WPP; persistent staffing gaps and under-resourcing, at the global, regional and country levels; inadequate levels of capacity to implement its integrated mandate effectively (especially gaps in thematic policy expertise, and variations in the skills of country leadership (p. 11).

"Strong policy expertise at the global level and in the two regions with dedicated Regional Policy Advisors, combined with flexible funding mechanisms, have enabled UN Women to overcome capacity limitations somewhat". Nonetheless, structural constraints related to staff remain in the long term. UN Women needs more investment: externally, through funding and support for its coordination mandate on WPP; and internally, "through investment in knowledge management,

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[6] The wording in the original text is 'regressive', not 'reversible'. But the context on this page and in the rest of the evaluation strongly suggests that the intended meaning is 'reversible', not 'regressive'.

training, planning, monitoring and evaluation, partnership management", and through decisions on staffing, roles, and responsibilities (p. 11-12).

In addition, the **wide range of activities implemented makes it difficult to achieve shared institutional learning**. "Some sub-thematic areas would benefit from defining a few key 'signature' products around which UN Women could invest in specialized Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), internal learning, knowledge production and branding" (p. 12). For such programming models, the relevant sub-thematic areas "that are innovative, low-cost, and with potential for scale-up and sustainability, considering potential to apply UN Women's universal mandate", are, among others: "new technologies for civic education"; women' public decision-making in formal and informal settings; and an advocacy tool and global knowledge product about local government (p. 14).

<u>Recommended practices</u>

To prioritise and increase efforts to address marginalisation in WPP, UN Women needs to draw on its "effectiveness in developing and maintaining strong partnerships with civil society groups". This is "key to reinforcing and widening its partnerships with marginalized groups […]" (p. 13). It should therefore "**strengthen and increase partnerships and networks with marginalized groups**" (p. 15). Further, it can use its **convening power** to ensure that marginalised groups are included in national or local processes related to WPP (p. 13). In addition, it could **strengthen its attention to marginalised groups within sub-themes**. Priority groups in this regard can include "young women, indigenous women[,] and women with disabilities" (p. 13). In its programming, UN Women should develop tailored strategies "to fill basic data gaps on marginalized voices and vulnerable groups at country level", and implement models relevant to marginalized groups' needs (e.g. on citizenship, voting, protection against violence against women in politics, "dialogue with local governments, and constituency engagement"). It should also strengthen its knowledge management and results monitoring "to better plan, document and report on work with marginalized groups, as well as how best to engage and support their political empowerment". Similarly, it should support learning on prioritization by developing strategic pilots, careful testing and scaling up as necessary (p. 15).

More and better programming on **changing social norms for WPE requires deeper analysis and targeting regarding** "**the context-specific attitudes, stereotypes and perceptions** held by men, women, boys and girls" about women in politics and women as leaders which prevent WPP and WPE (p. 13). In choosing sub-thematic areas and activities of focus for social norm change, UN Women should **prioritise areas "that allow for leveraging work in other areas for maximum effect"** (p. 15).

Similarly, it "would be helpful to **build on existing upstream and downstream work to affect social norm change**, identifying the appropriate sequencing of activities for mutual reinforcement of symbolic, descriptive and substantive work to achieve greater effectiveness" (p. 15). As a complement to this, innovative approaches need to tackle social norms change on WPP 'upstream', and to link this with new strategies for addressing social norms change downstream'. This needs to go beyond general or *ad hoc* awareness-raising activities. Instead, UN Women should develop "more long-term and sustained programming" towards men and boys, but also towards women and girls (p. 13).

In addition, UN Women needs to **produce "specific outcomes, outputs, indicators, baseline and targets" on interventions for social norms change for WPP**. This requires long-term

monitoring methods that track change beyond a specific programme and leverage new and innovative monitoring methods" (p. 13). Producing evidence on effectiveness over time "requires training and guidance to staff". This could make use of new technologies, including through partnerships on big data "for potential synergies or links to SDG monitoring efforts" (p. 15).

Interventions to support collective action in parliamentary support

There were "some positive examples of facilitating dialogue between women MPs and other actors/constituencies (e.g., Timor Leste, Uruguay and Zimbabwe)". Still, UN Women could focus more "on **supporting constituency relations, especially at district level**. This could help bridge the gap between women MPs and women activists. It also could improve dialogue with marginalized groups and with media and civil society to support post-legislative scrutiny of gender equality legislation, including those related specifically to WPP" (p. 46).

Similarly, the evaluation did not find any examples of UN Women's **support for post-legislative scrutiny of gender equality legislation**. This is an area deserving more focus to ensure that laws passed make a difference for constituencies (p. 46).

Interventions to support collective action in transformational leadership

There is a **gap in literature about developing women's individual and collective skills in political engagement**. This includes having limited evidence "on how to nurture leadership skills or political apprenticeship". Furthermore, compared with advocacy, "leadership development tends to be cost-intensive". UN Women has encountered **difficulties in supporting women's transformational leadership** in political life. Many interventions to date "have been carried out through one-off trainings, with little evidence of replication or sustainability, although a number of good results were found" (p. 54). Still, there were some examples where **institutional capacity-building of skills** in political leadership facilitated legislative change to support gender equality and women's empowerment.

With resource scarcity and competing demands, strategic approaches are important, such as **collaborating with other organisations, building on existing programmes or materials, and focusing on scale and sustainability**. Efforts need to **focus on collective structures** to support institutions as well as individuals. For example, in Kenya and South Sudan, "partnerships with local universities and government enhanced the possibility of a sustainable model for future leadership training" (p. 55).

Interventions to support collective action on Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP)

"To ensure peaceful voting and meaningful participation in elections, UN Women provided technical and financial support to civil society organizations in Africa for violence prevention and election-monitoring initiatives known as **Women's Situation Rooms** (WSR). The WSR is a citizen engagement effort that aims to raise awareness of, and where possible, prevent and respond to election violence through election observation". WSRs were typically available before, during and after the elections, though the duration varied by country. Learning "on this approach is ongoing, and experiences have been mixed. A 'lessons-learned' conference in 2017 indicated that WSRs might be too narrowly focused and costly compared with other more long-term initiatives […]". Still, the concept and applications of WSR would warrant a thorough evaluation, to assess the potential for further consideration and implementation (p. 50).

Type of literature: practitioner	**Publisher type & location:** government (Netherlands)
Type of reference: internal evaluation	**Peer review:** yes, internal and external
Geographic scope: 1. On women's political participation: Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Egypt; Mozambique; and various countries where projects were implemented in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). 2. On women, peace and security: various countries, with a focus on Afghanistan, Burundi, and the DRC.	**Time frame covered:** 2007-2014
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material) 1. On women's political participation: projects financed under the MDG3 Fund projects in Egypt and Mozambique; a project of UN Women co-financed by the Netherlands in Egypt; projects funded under the second National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and projects implemented in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). 2. On women, peace and security: the Dutch National Action Plans (NAP) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and to mainstream gender in the Netherlands peace and security programmes, i.e. the Stability Fund and the Reconstruction Fund; and the UN Peacebuilding Fund.	**Approach to material:** multi-case studies, with some comparison

Methodology & sample size:

1. On women's political participation: a. desk study of policy documents, documents of programmes or projects, evaluation material, and academic and grey literature; b. semi-structured interviews "with staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch and international NGOs, organisations contracted to manage centrally financed programmes and external experts" (p. 31); c. short field visits to Egypt and Mozambique (methods used during these included interviews "with staff of the Netherlands embassies, representatives of organisations that had received Dutch funding, government bodies, plus embassies of other countries", and where possible focus group sessions and timeline exercises with beneficiaries of interventions supported by the Netherlands).

2. On women, peace and security: a. desk study of policy documents, documents of programmes or projects, evaluation material, and academic and grey literature; b. semi-structured interviews "with staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch and international NGOs, organisations contracted to manage centrally financed programmes and external experts" (p. 31).

<u>State of the evidence, and gaps</u>

It was **neither easy nor always possible to rely as much as possible on existing evaluation materials**. Evaluations of Dutch policies, including IOB's own evaluations, often failed to pay attention to how gender mainstreaming has worked out in practice (p. 32). "Moreover, gender-disaggregated data were generally not collected […]".

In addition, **assessments of outcomes and impact were limited in several ways**. First, "outcomes and impact may only appear some time after the (often short-term) interventions were completed". Second, where it was available at all, "measurement at outcome or impact level was […] often based on self-reporting – with little if any cross referencing". Using other evaluations, academic and grey literature, and field work could fill this gap only to a limited extent (p. 33).

It was **impossible** "**to get a coherent and objective picture of the funding allocated to promoting gender equality**, apart from the stand-alone track in Dutch budget article 3.2. This reflects an international tendency. The use and usefulness of the OECD/DAC gender marker and related reporting have limitations, even though the marker was supposed "to allow the donor community to track how much money it was planning to allocate to support gender equality and women's empowerment under the heading of 'gender mainstreaming'". As a result, the tracking of gender financing has remained weak (p. 33).

General findings on collective action for WPE based on assessment of multiple projects

- Types of interventions: Activities generally consisted of: **campaigns to raise awareness**; **building up the capacity** of women candidates and women's organisations; **lobbying and advocacy** (p. 150).

- **Limited evidence**: the evaluation "finds only limited insight into the effectiveness of Dutch support to women's political participation. One reason is that many projects are still on-going, another is the insufficiency of M&E systems". Tentative findings include: "increased knowledge and awareness, primarily among women"; increased turnout of women during elections; and "increased acceptance of women as political actors" (p. 150).

- **Negative factors and conditions affecting effectiveness**:

  - **systems for monitoring and evaluation were insufficient** (p. 150).
  - There was a "**lack of contextualised and gendered analyses of the issues** at stake", and a similarity in the instruments used (p. 150).
  - There was "**little activity to address the underlying factors** that hamper women's effective political participation" (p. 150).
  - **sustainability remained an issue**. As the evaluation of the MDG3 Fund showed, "it is unlikely that many of the smaller (women's) organisations that have been (co-)financed by the Netherlands will be able to sustain their activities without external support. Both institutional and financial sustainability remain weak, in most cases because of the absence of clear capacity development strategies, the short timeframe available for such capacity development, as well as the persistent difficulties in getting access to money. The area of combating violence against women is a case in point. In many countries, governments are unable and at times also unwilling to live up to their international obligations. In reaction to this, many women's organisations and NGOs have filled the gap in supporting survivors. As the government is not able or willing to support these organisations, they remain dependent on external funding. This hinders their financial sustainability" (p. 20).

Assessment of collective action for WPE supported through the MDG3 Fund

- Types of interventions: Over 50% of the 45 projects in the MDG3 Fund "targeted women's political participation, often combined with at least one other thematic priority". These projects "focused on increasing women's skills to take up leadership positions in community based organisations and/or local politics, rather than in national parliaments" (p. 144).

The main activities were: **civic education; peer learning; making tools and curricula available; training** of trainers for NGOs; training of current or potential leaders and counsellors. In some cases, such activities were complemented by **lobbying and advocacy** "to shape public opinion to accept women as political actors, to vote for women in public leadership and governance positions and/or on the implementation of quotas". "Work with and through political parties was very limited" (p. 144).

- Findings and knowledge gaps on results: The projects contributed to **increasing the "awareness and understanding of women's political rights**, [of] the political context in which they operate as well as [of] local governance processes". They also contributed "to increased voter turnout among women and an **increased presence of women in local decision making bodies**, although numbers are not available (p. 144).

However, little is known about "**whether increased participation** and women taking up leadership positions **is also linked to policy outcomes that favour women's needs**" (p. 144).

Further, "**little was done to address the underlying factors that hamper women's effective political participation**. This particularly concerns issues like the domination of political structures by men, [and] high illiteracy rates among women […]". Very few projects gave "longer-term support to address some of these issues by (i) investing in participatory development of a local political agenda on gender equality and providing advice on how to defend this at national level; (ii) rendering technical support to develop policy proposals for discussion in local governance bodies; or (iii) linking (female) politicians to grassroots women and human rights organisations" (p. 145).

Assessment of bilateral aid that supported collective action in Egypt

- Interventions: In 2011-2014, the Netherlands provided **funding "to a range of civil society and women's organisations"**. This "allowed them to undertake lobby, advocacy activities in relation to Articles 36 and 68 of the new Constitution that threatened women's rights", and to raise awareness "on women's participation in politics and the training of female candidates and youth on campaigning and communication skills" (p. 143).

Additional supported activities included: "(i) campaigns to raise public awareness on women's constitutional rights and calling for a bill criminalizing sexual harassment; (ii) the creation of a Women's Parliament with some 1,000 representatives from (youth) civil society organisations; (iii) preparation and dissemination of reports and studies on perceptions, attitudes and practices on topics related to gender equality and women's empowerment" (p. 143).

The Netherlands also supported "the drafting of a Gender Equality Act and a series of workshops for (i) 390 first-time women candidates and 251 campaign managers, focusing on women running for parliament; (ii) employees of the governorates, women leaders, youth, NGOs, and media focusing on electoral systems and the new Constitution and its gender related articles and; (iii) researchers of the Secretariat of the Parliament on the Constitution" (p. 143).

- Results: it was impossible "to describe concrete results at outcome level", because "many of the projects and programmes on women's political participation were still ongoing at the time of [the] evaluation [in 2014] and were often implemented in highly volatile contexts" (p. 143).

- Negative factors and conditions:

Adaptation to the constantly changing context was difficult. The legitimacy of government authorities – including the National Council of Women – was problematic, so collaboration with them was challenged. Design and implementation took place during "major unrest, insecurity and unpredictable change", "funding restrictions imposed by a new NGO law", and the abolition of quotas for women's seats in parliament (p. 143).

Monitoring and evaluation were inadequate, "and focused only on activities and outputs" (p. 143).

<u>Assessment of interventions on gender, peace and security involving collective action</u>

- Results of Dutch National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325:

As a framework for cooperation among signatories, NAPs have "by and large been successful". Cooperation among signatories, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been a success in the diplomatic realm and in raising awareness on women, peace and security. A NAP budget was introduced in response to lobbying by the civil society partners in the NAP (p. 165).

However, the "**knowledge institutes have by and large withdrawn** from the cooperation". In addition, the NAP budget "has, unintentionally and temporarily, resulted in a **focus on programmatic operations** (i.e. project preparation and coordination) **rather than more strategic cooperation**". From 2012, it has served to start projects on women's leadership and political participation; most were ongoing, with results not available at the time of the evaluation. (p. 165).

- Results of multilateral and bilateral gender mainstreaming in peace and security:

Despite international agreements and tools "on e.g. gender and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration or security sector reform, **women were easily disregarded in large-scale programmes in (post) conflict and fragile states**. Benefits tend to be small and concern only few women. Attention to women was factored in too late and too little", e.g. in the Great Lakes region in Africa, in Afghanistan, and in the UN Peacebuilding Fund. In the UN Fund for example, there "has been insufficient consideration of 'gender' in the selection and allocation of PBF funds and in the dialogue with government counterparts and civil society" (p. 166).

By contrast, women "featured in the Dutch bilateral Security Sector Development programme in Burundi from the beginning. Recent reports mention positive results, but there is still a long way to go" (p. 166).

<u>Lessons from the overall evaluation, applicable to interventions on collective action</u>

- **Build local capacity** (p. 22).
  - "**Women's organisations, both large and small**, […] have a role to play. They have good knowledge of local issues and not only play a role in lobby and advocacy, but also fill the gap resulting from the lack of government responsiveness in areas like combating violence against women. Yet, often these organisations face problems of sustainability and require longer-term assistance. Such support should focus more on building their institutional capacities instead of only conceiving them as implementing bodies".
  - "At the same time, focusing on traditional 'women's organisations' may not always be the most effective way to address strategic gender concerns. **Working with (conservative) men** may sometimes be a better way forward".
- "**Be realistic, be patient and stay committed**" (p. 22).
  - Advancing gender equality "is a long-term and multi-dimensional process that requires persistent commitment". "[A] government has quite a limited role in changing the social fabric elsewhere and […] addressing the root causes of gender discrimination is clearly fraught with tensions".
  - "Supporting gender equality therefore requires a firm dose of realism and modesty […]". The logic of interventions must be "based on sound analysis", and have "attainable objectives and indicators, which help to measure and assess progress".
- **Context matters**. "there is clearly no 'one size fits all'". "Context matters a great deal; what works in one setting for one particular target group can be counterproductive in another". Contextualised gender analyses are therefore essential (p. 21).
- **Interventions need to be comprehensive by involving both women and men**, to address "the power dimensions between women and men" (p. 21).
- "**What gets measured, gets done**". Quantitative, evidenced-based methods need supporting and enhancing, "to account for what is happening. At the same time, […] M&E has its limitations. This underlines the need for investing in (academic) longer-term research collaborations, especially for thematic areas like private sector development and food security, where still (too) little is known about what really works for women and men" (p. 21).
- **Assign accountability for gender mainstreaming**, not only within the Ministry but also at the level of partner organisations, both within and outside the Netherlands", such "that gender issues […] be included in the design *and* implementation of *all* policies, programmes and projects" (p. 21).
- **Strengthen the Ministry's own capacity**. There "are no blueprints for best-fit" on the best organisational structure (p. 22).

Tadros, M. (2011). Working Politically Behind Red Lines: Structure and Agency in a Comparative Study of Women's Coalitions in Egypt and Jordan' (Research Paper No. 12). Developmental Leadership Program (DLP), University of Birmingham. Retrieved from http://publications.dlprog.org/Working%20Politically%20Behind%20Red%20Lines.pdf

Type of literature: policy	**Publisher type & location:** policy advice institute
Type of reference: research paper	**Peer review:** yes, double blind / yes, single blind / yes, no details provided / no / no information provided
Geographic scope: Egypt, and Jordan	**Time frame covered:** period of the respective coalitions' work, which by design had to have emerged in the previous 10 years (research conducted in 2010)
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** two-country, six-case comparative study, about six coalitions that have sought to advance gender equality

Methodology & sample size: comparative political analysis of 3 coalitions for gender equality in Egypt, and 3 in Jordan. In each country, cases included one successful coalition, one failed coalition, and one emerging coalition. Methodology:
1. Use of structured sets of research questions and hypotheses, with sets of variables and factors used "to compare the origins, processes and outcomes of the coalitions and to provide a framework for their comparative analysis" (p. 11).
2. "A thorough literature review in English and Arabic of academic material and grey literature" (p. 16).
3. Desk-based analysis of internal coalition documents.
4. Semi-structured interviews, with all but one of the leaders of the coalitions, and with founding members, other active members or staff, some gender experts in both countries, donors, as well as other stakeholders. With many of the leaders, more than one interview was conducted.

Effects of aid interventions on the coalitions

The international community, including aid donors, "plays an important role supporting women's coalitions as a means of furthering gender equality. **While some positive support has been provided by donors, there is room for improvement**" (p. vi). "In five out of six coalitions studied, donors played a critical role at some point in the life of the coalition, in both positive and detrimental ways". In all six cases, "strong linkages existed between international and national actors". It is therefore important to understand "how international actors can play an enabling role to support coalitions" (p. iv).

Negative factors affecting effectiveness

Donors (and high-level officials) should **avoid**:

- "**Creating local coalitions themselves**: When international donors seek to 'create' local coalitions, and are seen to do so, these coalitions can often be perceived by the public as 'creatures' of the donors or as being driven by financial or professional incentives rather than commitment to the cause. Their work and legitimacy can hence be severely undermined by questions regarding their integrity and commitment to the cause" (p. vi). Consequently:
  - Donors "should not establish the coalitions themselves nor be the ones to select the organisations which will work together" (p. 49).

- The internal organisations, not the external actor, should craft the vision, mission and strategy of the coalition (p. 50).
- In highly sensitive contexts, "donors should not publicly attribute positive change to their support. This undermines the sense that this is a local-led and local-owned initiative" (p. 50).

- "**Criticizing gender inequality without careful consideration**: Donors, political spokespersons and officials need to be sensitive to the wording and timing of criticism of gender inequalities locally in order not to undermine local efforts" (p. vi).

- **Treating coalitions** "**as projects** with a project life (three year or five year set period) and a project cycle (planning, implementation and evaluation). […] In other words, projectivisation of coalitions should be avoided at all costs" (p. 50). This is because (p. 50):
  - It is **impossible to support coalitions while complying with all the usual tools of aid project management**, such as logical frameworks and results-based management.
  - **The collective mediation of different interests which is integral to coalitions** "**is more complex** than in projects, where the focus is on outputs". Building coalitions involves "creating consensus, identifying appropriate mechanisms of mobilising support, finding mechanisms for work that accommodate differences and adapting internal organisational dynamics to changing political contexts".
  - **Monitoring and evaluation used for projects are inappropriate to coalitions**.

- **Supporting positive leadership in coalitions "through project support or capacity development for public organisations"**. While donor interest in this has been strong, the findings on both successful and failed coalitions suggest instead that a focus on agency within coalitions "is critical for building an effective leadership process" (p. 50-51).

- **Having policies that embed "financial and institutional incentives" that support "the one woman/one man show phenomenon"** in coalition leadership (p. 51).

Positive factors affecting effectiveness

Five policy areas are central for donors to successfully play an enabling role (p. 49). The first area is **knowing the context, its actors, and its nuances**. Donors were effective when they had worked in the country over a sustained period. This enabled them to have "a nuanced and deep knowledge of the institutional and agential factors" in this context (p. 49). Characteristics of successful donors were thus (p. 49):

- Having an institutional memory of experiences, endeavours, and relationships, and having "an analysis of their successes and failures".
- Having developed relationships and networks over a long time, amounting to social and political capital.
- Knowing the history of the actors and structures of the context very well.
- Understanding both the political constraints and openings for engaging with actors in government and civil society.

The second area is **understanding donors' and recipients' own positionality**, and responding to the opportunities and limitations associated with it. Enabling donors recognised "the opportunities and limitations of their own positionality", particularly "in highly conservative,

politically volatile contexts". Likewise, they knew "the political nuances associated with the positionality of the leaders of the organisations they support[ed]" (p. 49). Specifically:

- "Local ownership is very important" (p. 49).
- Donors should 'only' support local agents to form coalitions. "Their role should be enabling agents, not creators of coalitions". Consequently, one important role for donors is to offer "politically nuanced, highly skilled facilitation between different parties" (p. 49-50).
- In advocacy of the cause, donors' role "should be sensitive to how their own positionality will affect the coalition's legitimacy and power" (p. 50).
- Donors should be aware of the positionality of the organisations they support.
- Donors should respect the importance that the organisations they support be "perceived as indigenous and national (which is also critically important for strengthening the leadership process of the coalition, in view of the importance of local ownership)" (p. 50).

The third area is "[r]ecognising that **supporting coalitions is not the same as supporting projects**" (p.49). Supporting coalitions requires:

- **Time** (p. 50).
- A "**focus on internal organisational strengthening** as well as the achievement of goals" (p. 50).
- **Ensuring a high level of financial transparency within the coalition about the donor funding**, even if "funding is given to one organisation on behalf of the coalition (for legal and financial accountability mechanisms)". Transparency will help prevent funding from becoming a source of internal dispute (p. 50).
- **Adapting monitoring and evaluation** to coalitions (p. 50):
  - **Monitoring will not only be about the activities**. It will also be about how much initiatives are based on consensual decision-making, how institutionalised leadership processes are, and how inclusive and representative leadership processes are.
  - "**Opportunities for engaging with all members of the leadership** of the coalition and not only the leader of the organisation that received funds needs to be integrated in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms".

The fourth area is recognising that **agency is central** to success, within donors and within coalitions (p. 50-51).

- Donors can strengthen agency **within coalitions** through a number of policies, such as (p. 51):
  - "Introduce financial and institutional incentives that support collective leadership within the coalition […]".
  - Help give coalition leaders opportunities "to broaden their horizons and their exposure to other actors' engagements with the issue they are tackling through more focus on experiential learning. Visits to other initiatives in other contexts and exchange programmes can be highly effective, if introduced at the right time and to the right people, in encouraging out of the box thinking on local strategies of engagement".

- **Donors themselves** can use their agency positively by (p. 50):
  - Having leadership "that thinks outside the box".
  - Having leadership that "is willing to take risks".
  - Having leadership that invests in relationship-building among the different local actors as much as it invests in project outputs.
  - Having leadership and staff that can bring together different actors "in a space where they can dialogue, open lines of communication and engage". This requires that the leadership know the local actors very well, and therefore that it know "where the personal and institutional tensions lie".

The fifth area is "[c]reating **links across donors** to share experiences on supporting coalition work" (p. 49). Since strengthening developmental coalitions differs from "supporting an organisation involved in project implementation, there is a need to create a donor forum specifically on how donors can be enabling agents for coalitions" (p. 51). This forum would serve many different purposes (p. 51):

- "Share experiences and best practice on working with coalitions".
- "Harmonise policies towards coalitions".
- "Develop specific guidelines and new frameworks for engaging with developmental coalitions".

Tadros, M. (2011). Women Engaging Politically: Beyond Magic Bullets and Motorways (Policy Paper). Pathways of Women's Empowerment, IDS. Retrieved from *https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/5835/Women%20and%20Politics%20Policy%20Paper%20final.pdf?sequence=1*

The points in this paper are based on a rigorous multi-country study. See the reference by Pathways of Women's Empowerment [Pathways] in the section on 'Further readings'.

Type of literature: policy	**Publisher type & location:** policy advice institute
Type of reference: policy paper	**Peer review:** no information provided
Geographic scope: multiple countries in several world regions, including Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ghana, India, Sierra Leone, and Sudan	**Time frame covered:** not indicated
Empirical material: primary and secondary (qualitative & quantitative)	**Approach to material:** multi-case comparative study, about bottom-up pathways to WPE, especially in contrast with top-down electoral quotas for women
Methodology & sample size: methods varied by case study; "all had a strong ethnographic nuance to them" (p. 2). This is part of the research led by the Pathways of Women's Empowerment Consortium.	

Failure of approaches not tailored to context

The messages in the policy brief "are **not a checklist or a blueprint** for how to empower women politically. They serve as points of departure for further debate" (p. 2). "Earlier attempts to institute a 'cookie cutter' approach to transfer best practice from one country context to another have either had limited success, backfired or worse been instrumentalised by authoritarian regimes to enhance their power base" (p. 10-11).

Aid policy on collective action towards WPE

- Types of interventions: The research findings confirmed that women's collective action around gender equality is critical. In light of this, policymakers should aim to, among other goals:

- Strengthen "[w]omen's movements' abilities to link with networks and build alliances with other political forces" (p. 2).
- Support women's movements to "hold both governments and competing political forces accountable for delivering on their promises of supporting women in politics" (p. 2). This can include supporting women's movements "to influence the design and implementation" of electoral quotas (p. 2).

- Positive factors: "**Strategic support is needed for the actors, alliances and coalitions who strengthen women to advocate a gender and social justice agenda**" (p. 2). For example, in relation to work in parliaments, policy could be to "support parties and coalitions not with the most numbers of women but rather those with the most progressive gender agendas […], even if the advocates are a group of gender-sensitive men as well as women" (p. 6).

Interventions to strengthen collective action towards WPE

- Positive factors:

Support to WPE needs "**to be better tailored to women's ongoing networks of support and influence** […]". This is because women's political trajectories are a process, not a moment (p. 2). "Rather than focusing strictly […] on providing skills to individual women, capacity support efforts should adopt a more relational approach to engaging with women. Policymakers and programmers should consider working to strengthen the network of enabling agents in which women are embedded" (p. 9).

By the same token, **less conventional approaches to enhancing capacity** are needed (p. 9). Approaches need to (p. 9):

- **be context-sensitive**.
- **recognise "both individual and collective strategies of engagement", with women and men**. For example, where relevant, they need to find appropriate ways "of integrating men as partners in women's leadership programmes". Such approaches might engage with those who are considering political office. But they could also engage with "key influential actors in the community, who if joined in a coalition would play an influential role in creating an enabling environment in which to challenge gender hierarchies".

Aid policies must also shift their focus "to **providing women opportunities for political apprenticeship, and ultimately women's leadership**", **in a variety of settings** (p. 2). "There are many sites and spaces for supporting women's untapped potential to assume leadership

positions". Many spaces (beyond just political parties) "provide critical junctures for women to assume leadership. These include non-governmental organisations, clubs and community centres, universities and schools as well as in the workforce" (p. 10).

Such wider support to political apprenticeship "will broaden the base of women who have opportunities to assume leadership and build repertoires of support". Political apprenticeship allows "policymakers and programmers to work with a broader and more diverse spectrum of politically engaged women" (p. 10).

- Negative factors:

Aid policies must **shift away from an almost exclusive focus on getting women into legislatures** (p. 2). "The current policy focus on improving the count of women in parliament and local councils may have inadvertently led to a narrowing of the scope of possibilities to support women to engage politically". Similarly, there are **many other spaces in addition to political parties for women** to assume leadership" (p. 10).

Similarly, **support to WPE needs to be less focused on international 'blueprints' or on pre-election moments**. Women's political trajectories are "not a moment that begins and ends with a project or election cycle" (p. 2). Yet, "[m]any programmes aiming to empower women politically share the same approach: the extension of short training modules to individual women on how to be effective leaders and run campaigns. This **reductionist approach to capacity support** demonstrates weak conceptualisations of how women engage politically and the reasons behind their inequitable participation in politics. Conceptually, it suggests that women rise to power exclusively on account of their individual capacities and practically, that it is their lack of know-how that is preventing them from engaging politically" (p. 9).

For example, research "by Jad about women nominating themselves in local councils in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, shows that families play a pivotal role in providing women candidates with moral and logistical support. They also provide support for them to mobilise and be organised. In most cases, "family serves as a crucial medium for women's entrance into public offices", concludes Jad. And yet the family never feature in any of the capacity development programmes" (p. 9).

References on funding interventions

Barnes, J., Bishop, J.-A., & Vaca, S. (2016). Fund for Gender Equality. Meta analysis 2011–2015. ImpactReady for UN Women - Fund for Gender Equality. Retrieved from http://www.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2016/8/fund-for-gender-equality-evaluations-2011-2015-meta-analysis

Type of literature: practitioner	**Publisher type:** multilateral organisation
Type of reference: external evaluation	**Peer review:** no information provided
Geographic scope: 23 countries, across five world regions	**Time frame covered:** 2009-2015 (period of activities and effects covered)
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative and quantitative material); 17 of the evaluations focused on Women's Political Participation (WPP), five on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)	**Approach to material:** meta-analysis of evaluations, about what works for who in WPE and WEE, and in the processes and approach of UN Women's multi-donor Fund for Gender Equality (FGE)
Methodology & sample size: Systematic review. 1. Identification of the 22 FGE evaluations produced between 2011-2015 that were rated as satisfactory or above according to the standards of the UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (p. 1-2). 2. Systematic extraction and tagging of findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons, and good practices from this sample, resulting in 658 quotes and statements. 3. Qualitative synthesis, with structured and cluster analysis.	

Overview of types of interventions and participants

Taken together, the WPP projects supported by the FGE addressed three main aims: **increasing women's participation** "in decision-making bodies and processes **(formal and informal)**; **bolstering their capacity to raise issues** related to their needs and priorities; and **addressing structural barriers** to women's meaningful political and public participation" (p. 34). Key "beneficiaries and target groups included **rural women, young women and socially and economically vulnerable groups** such as low-income women and indigenous women" (p. 35).

The approaches of projects varied from region to region. "In the Asia Pacific (AP) and Africa regions, bottom-up community driven approaches were seen as most effective for enhancing women's participation in politics and decision-making processes. In both regions, there was also a strong focus on garnering community and family support for women's political participation. FGE projects in the AP region also employed innovative strategies (including through the use of ICT and social media) to connect women elected leaders with women's organisations and movements in order to increase their capacity to represent and voice the needs and priorities of women in their communities". "In the Arab State region, FGE evaluations focused on supporting the participation of women leaders and elected representatives in normative processes in order to secure women's rights, foster coalitions, and leveraging international instruments to seize momentum to affect normative processes". "In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, the focus of FGE interventions was primarily on increasing and reinforcing a strong body of women leaders through capacity building, and leveraging this to influence legislative and policies to advance decent work and social protection" (p. 34).

Lessons for interventions found across thematic areas

Engaging men and boys is crucial. It was "a key contributing factor in interventions aimed at" increasing women's political participation and leadership, and at developing gender-responsive

legislation and policies. Engaging men was also "an effective strategy for creating an enabling environment in households and communities for women's increased public and political participation". There are positive examples on this from projects in India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, and Palestine (p. 46-47).

For example, in Kenya, "the GROOTS project has established mixed gender task forces at the local level to promote women's leadership. A cohort of 650 men, including women leaders' spouses and equality advocates, mobilized to publicly support […] a mandatory gender quota […]. Men champions have engaged with the council of elders, religious leaders, the judiciary and other opinion leaders to change community perceptions. They have also managed to mobilize other men, including by mentoring adolescents" (p. 47).

In addition, engaging with men and boys was "an important contributing factor in achieving attitudinal and behavioural transformation at the community level". It has also helped improve power dynamics within families. However, "translating these changes into more gender equitable social norms has proved to be more challenging", though it was done e.g. in Palestine (p. 46).

Using information and communication technologies (ICTs) for learning or for action and social change is an effective strategy. "Mobile devices were used by a number of FGE grantees in order to support advocacy efforts and allow for peer-based exchanges of information and knowledge between elected women, leaders and communities". For example, in India, three organisations "supported rural and socially excluded women to participate effectively in political processes through the use of techno-social innovations. This includes an Interactive Voice Response […] platform for telephone information exchange among elected women and women's collectives […]" (p. 47-48).

Involving young women and men in designing and implementing activities was an important strategy. Many FGE grantees recognised the importance of youth not only as future leaders, but also due as change-makers whose potential had been untapped. For example, in Palestine, youth were involved in reflection and revision about a gender-sensitive constitution. Even as young women and men had minimal experience in legal and technical issues, involving them proved to be "a strong tool to integrate their needs in legal reform process". Thanks to "good capacity building, techniques and advocacy tools", young women, supported by men, participated in driving change and in influencing opinion-makers and decision-makers towards a public discussion on social justice and inclusion, among other issues (p. 48).

Specific findings on interventions to expand and strengthen women's leadership

- Types of interventions: Projects focused "on developing women's **capacities** to participate and influence formal and informal decision-making spaces primarily at the local level". Interventions "included supporting women in learning about their rights and political systems and building their self-confidence, communication and leadership skills".

- Positive factors of effectiveness:

Building women's self-confidence, individual awareness of their rights, and individual agency was an effective strategy. It can be "a critical success factor for strengthening women's empowerment" (p. 35). This was the case for example with the PRADAN project 'Facilitating Women in Endemic Poverty Regions of India to Access, Actualise and Sustain Provisions of Women Empowerment'. It made "significant investments […] in capacity building and empowerment processes for women", focusing "on strengthening women's agency with the 'self'

at the centre of interventions". As a result, women became more empowered politically, economically, and socially (p. 35).

"Developing comprehensive project strategies" that clearly understand and address the barriers to women's political participation is another effective strategy.

- Among the most effective projects "were those that employed a **mix of intervention strategies** such as combining capacity development interventions with the establishment of strong networks and collectives whilst also tacking structural constraints and attitudinal barriers to women's public and political participation". For example, the successful PRADAN project "employed a mix of strategies that recognized that women will raise their voices when there is self-realization, that collectives give women space and strength and that economic stability gives them the freedom to think about themselves and other related issues" (p. 35).

- Projects with "**a detailed analysis of barriers to women's participation and specific strategies to address these**" were highly effective. "For example, under the GROOTS project, cultural attitudes and norms were seen as a major barrier to women's public and political participation". The project recognised that capacity development to increase women's leadership and confidence "could only be successful when obstacles to women's participation were removed". As a result, it made significant efforts "to engage with men at the community level and to garner their support (as husbands and community leaders) for women's increased engagement in decision making structures and processes" (p. 35-36).

A "**cascading and peer-based approach" to training and developing for knowledge and skills** is another effective strategy. Interventions to build women's leadership skills were most effective where "peer exchange, mentoring and accompaniment" were used. "Such approaches enabled women to receive support whilst applying their knowledge gained". By contrast, classical training workshops were comparatively less effective. In addition, capacity development that enables beneficiaries to transfer their knowledge "further through cascading training programmes" was highly effective (p. 36).

For example, in India, "grantees PRADAN and Jagori created over 900 collectives supported by a cadre of 1,000 women leaders and 2,000 resource persons for mutual support and empowerment, mobilizing 73,000 women across nine districts. The groups have used a cascading training system […]". As a result, 60% of trained members "have participated in the Gram Sabha (community level decision-making forum), contacted their duty bearers about their needs, made policy and programme proposals and/or stood for election themselves". 45% "have submitted applications claiming their land title rights or their pension, housing or toilet entitlements" (p. 36).

Increasing women activists' visibility in various community activities is another effective strategy. Interventions have included support to "women's participation in forums and public dialogues, grants to increase women's economic participation[,] and community sessions on women's rights and political participation". These opportunities increased "acceptance for women's engagement and active participation in […] platforms such as local councils and community meetings" (p. 36).

Involving male champions for women's leadership is another effective, and often critical, strategy. For example, in Kenya, the GROOTS project included male allies. This facilitated women's work for empowerment, demystified gender equality, and allowed messages to enter

spaces that were often closed to women. In the PRADAN project, "the behaviour of men changed and there were examples where they were able to give greater space to women in decision-making and also assume a greater burden in assuming household chores" (p. 37-38).

On a few more effective strategies identified in the evaluation, it is not clear if and how they entail collective action. These strategies are: "connecting decision-makers and elected women representatives with their constituencies through the creation of interaction spaces"; creating and using "spaces for dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers"; closing gender gaps in technology, e.g. through ICT (p. 36-37).

- Conditions of effectiveness:

Economic empowerment "**is a prerequisite for marginalised women to participate** in public and political life", and "**WEE can be effectively leveraged** to support WPP". These conclusions were present in a number of the project evaluations (e.g. in India, China, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Palestine). Economic empowerment "raises women's self-confidence, changes their position in families and local communities and motivates them to raise their voice and be more politically active. For example, in Palestine, the grants managed by women […] helped generate immediate improvements to 10 priority community issues and contributed to positively influencing community perceptions about women's active engagement in political and public life" (p. 36).

Demands for gender equality "**need to be bound together with strengthening democratic systems** to be effective", as shown by a finding from El Salvador (p. 37).

<u>Findings on interventions to promote legislative and policy change</u>

- Types of interventions: Projects in this area focused on national and regional advocacy for gender-responsive laws, and efforts to foster inclusive law- and policy-making. Interventions sought, among others, to increase women's capacity "to demand accountable leadership and equitable service delivery" (p. 38).

- Positive factors of effectiveness:

"**Maximizing the potential of networks and coalitions to advocate for national-level constitutional and legal reforms**" is an effective strategy. A number of FGE projects (e.g. in Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, and Palestine) "demonstrated how collectives and networks give women space and strength to negotiate and advance advocacy efforts". For example, in Bolivia, forming CSO coalitions "was influential and strengthened CSO's shared causes and calls for reforms. The coalitions enabled the crafting of a country action plan and also enhanced advocacy efforts at a national, regional and international level" (p. 38).

Fostering inclusive processes for legislation and policy-making is another effective strategy. Grantees and related CSOs engaged "with women and girls who are marginalized politically, socially and culturally". In doing so, a large number of projects prioritised "CSOs that engage the most excluded and marginalized communities of women such as domestic workers, home-based informal workers, women living in extreme poverty, ethnic and cultural minorities, rural and indigenous women, refugees and IDP women, young women and women affected by HIV/AIDS" (p. 38).

In turn, this engagement enabled grantees and CSOs "to bring new perspectives into the mainstream to make laws and policies more inclusive and responsive" (p. 38). For example, the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) "transformed traditional consultation into 'consultaction' by obtaining information directly from the end recipients of public services, including previously excluded groups" (p. 38).

Timing interventions to seize political opportunities is another effective strategy, as shown e.g. in evaluations of projects in Bolivia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. For projects seeking legislative and policy changes, "timing is a key success factor [...]. In all three projects, grantees succeeded in capitalising on propitious political momentum". These projects also show that "often the period before elections is more favourable for advocacy campaigns and for promoting women participation in elections. New constitutions and often new governments are followed by legal reforms", and gender is progressively more common on the agenda in many countries (p. 39-40).

Using media successfully (press, radio, TV, and social media) was another effective strategy, as shown by evaluations e.g. on Bolivia, and Palestine. In particular, "obtaining the support of political, social leaders and journalists, as opinion makers, around gender sensitive legislation was [...] critical to enhance women's empowerment". For example, in Bolivia, "the evaluation found that large sectors of press and media were mobilized to advocate for women's rights". Using social and traditional media was also "effective in generating discussion about traditional values and stereotypes and contributing to efforts to challenge discriminatory norms and practices" (p. 40).

On one more effective strategy identified in the evaluation, it is not clear if and how it entails collective action. The strategy is: "Adopting a rights-based approach by holding duty bearers accountable for international commitments" (p. 40).

- Conditions of effectiveness:

A **combination of effective collective action for gender equality and political opportunities and support within the State** can lead to positive impact. For example, in Bolivia, "after the 2009 Constitution was adopted and a new legislative framework had to be developed, Asociación Coordinadora de la Mujer rallied civil society and peasant organizations, which proposed the introduction of substantive gender-specific measures in 23 legislative proposals. Of these, 13 were adopted as a result of advocacy and negotiations [...]". This success stemmed from "the confluence of three factors: the Government's openness to including women's groups in the reform processes; the engagement of women in key decision-making positions (e.g., presidents of upper and lower houses in Parliament); and the rallying of 663 indigenous, peasant and urban women's rights organizations in a united movement. This was made possible by the larger grant size available in Round I of FGE" (p. 38-39).

One more condition affecting effectiveness is identified in the evaluation, but it is not clear if and how it entails collective action. This condition is: "[s]etting up structural bodies to institutionalize and sustain gender-responsive budgeting and policy-making" (p. 39).

Overall findings and lessons about the Fund

The evaluation includes many overall findings and lessons about the Fund, regarding relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. On each of these, it identifies key findings, strengths, challenges, and recommendations. These will not be summarised here, due to length

and time constraints; please refer in the first instance to the relevant sections of the executive summary, pp. 2-7.

AWID, FIMI, & IFIP. (2016). A Call to Action: Insights into the Status of Funding for Indigenous Women's Groups. AWID, FIMI, & IFIP. Retrieved from
https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/a-call-to-action-status-of-funding-for-indigenous-women.1-94.pdf

Type of literature: practitioner & policy	**Publisher type & location:** two NGOs & one fund
Type of reference: external commissioned research report completed by independent researchers	**Peer review:** yes, internal, with participatory contributions by external stakeholders (esp. participating indigenous women)
Geographic scope: world, with all relevant world regions covered	**Time frame covered:** not indicated; focus appears to be 2010-2015
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** review, combined with multi-case comparative study, about the status and practices of funding for Indigenous women's groups

Methodology & sample size:

1. Crafting of guiding research questions, defining the parameters of the study, followed by setting of research objectives.
2. Desk-based searches and/or analyses regarding practitioner and policy literature (including documents and data sets).
3. Desk-based analyses of large sets of documents (e.g. grants, proposals) from five major funding sources.
4. Twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews with leading grant-makers.
5. Input from Advisory Committee members, incl. "four Indigenous women activists and five donors committed to Indigenous women's rights" (p. 9).
6. Four mini-case studies of donor-grantee collaborations.
7. Presentation of preliminary findings at the 2014 World Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy set up by IFIP, with substantive feedback from the participants and with leading Indigenous women's agreement on key recommendations.

State of knowledge, and gaps

Until this report, "**no global study [had] been conducted on the status of funding for Indigenous women's rights**" (p. 7). Separate studies had looked at funding available for Indigenous peoples, and funding for women's rights organisations, but no global study had focused on the intersection between both. This report is thus the first of its kind, providing "high-level analysis of the current funding landscape", and highlighting "possibilities for sustainable support and solidarity between funders and Indigenous women's groups" (p. 13).

Even this report "is **by no means an exhaustive account** of the 'financial state' of Indigenous women's rights groups globally. […] there are **significant gaps and challenges** in this avenue of research. Rather, the analysis shared is an initial snapshot into the more visible funding trends impacting Indigenous women's groups, along with […] important considerations" (p. 7).

More research is needed to give visibility to the organising work and needs of Indigenous women's groups. Additional research could do the following (p. 76):

- Map the financial state of Indigenous women's groups, to help monitor resource flows.
- "Evaluate the collective impact of the work being carried out by a selection of Indigenous women's rights groups. This […] could highlight innovative ways of measuring change".
- "Conduct mapping to learn more about Indigenous women's groups around the world, including their organizing patterns, structures, and leadership models".
- Carry out more sectoral analysis to deepen understanding of "how Indigenous women's groups can diversify their funding sources, and overcome barriers accessing key resources. Funding sectors that were not explored in depth in this research include bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs), as well as Corporate Sector partnerships".
- Carry out more regional analysis of funding, to provide a more global picture, with special attention "to the Middle East, parts of Europe, and North America".

<u>Gaps in funding</u>

Indigenous women's groups are receiving **insufficient funding in proportion to their population**. For example, "Indigenous women received 0.7% of all recorded human rights funding between 2010 and 2013, or less than one-third of their proportion in the population", according to Foundation Center/IHRFG data (p. 13).

Regional analysis "points to a **potential under-representation of Indigenous groups located in Asia, and Africa** (the majority of groups receiving funding are located in Latin America)" (p. 13).

<u>Types of funding available, and funders' approaches</u>

The three **strategies most used by funders** to implement their goals were: programme development, or direct service provision; re-granting through intermediaries; and emergency or rapid-response grants (p. 14). Within donor agencies, resources "for Indigenous women's rights are largely channelled through the Human/Women's Rights and/or Environmental Program portfolios" (p. 14).

"Indigenous women's groups receive funding from a **variety of sources**". "Public and Private Foundations, Women's Funds, Issue-based Funds and grantmaking NGOs" lead in percentages of total grants provided. Public and private foundations account for 37% of grants, and 57% of grant value. "The funding landscape is characterized by **many small funders and a few big ones**. For example, 11 donors account for 72% of all grant value in the Foundation Center/IHRFG data from 2010 to 2013, and Ford Foundation alone accounts for 32% of the total value" (p. 14).

Grants to Indigenous women's groups tend to provide **annual support, not multi-year support** (p. 14). They also "**tend to support empowering individuals**, **not institutions or systems**. "For example, AYNI grant applications focused on education (40%) and economic empowerment (33%), rather than on institutional strengthening (14%) or political participation (13%)" (p. 15).

<u>Approaches of Indigenous women's groups receiving or seeking funding</u>

The **top thematic issues** that Indigenous women's groups seek funding for are: **equality or non-discrimination; rights related to the environment or resources; and land rights**. For comparison, in AWID's global survey in 2011, which targeted more mainstream women's rights

organisations, only 5% of organisations prioritised land rights, and 9% environmental rights and justice. This is because "land, territories and resources" have constitutive cultural, economic and spiritual significance for Indigenous persons (p. 14). Similarly, the persons interviewed for this report identified the following issues as top funding priorities: "defense of their land and natural resources, freedom from violence, promoting Indigenous women's leadership[,] and sexual reproductive health rights" (p. 14).

Regarding Indigenous women's leadership, the interviewed funders and activists "discussed the **importance of funding intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, investing in organizational growth and capacity, and political participation**". For example, this is a key area of support for the Bolivian Women's Fund. There, "grantees use capacity building strategies to support women growth in leadership positions in their communities and to have their voices heard in decision-making processes. Such programs also serve to educate and inform Indigenous women on political issues in their own communities and cities". In another example, "the Central American Women's Fund (FCAM) offers an integrated approach to supporting Indigenous leadership – as one of many identities in struggle across the region". FCAM consistently supported "young women's leadership, reaching many Indigenous women from communities all over Meso-America […]. The main strategy used to reach Indigenous and other minority communities has been through implementing training camps designed to strengthen young women's leadership and movement building across the region" (p. 53).

"**Nourishing young women's leadership through capacity building and training is especially important** because of the social, environmental and territorial threats Indigenous peoples are facing – both physically and culturally. Ford Foundation, a key ally and long-term funder of Indigenous peoples reported that by investing in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, funders are meaningfully contributing to the growth of an ecosystem of young Indigenous leaders engaged in decision-making on issues impacting their communities" (p. 53).

The top three **strategies that Indigenous women's groups which receive funding use** to promote change are: "**capacity building and training; advocacy, campaigning and lobbying[;] and leadership development**. The other strategies mentioned include: base building, education and awareness raising, communications and information, and convenings". By contrast, funders did not name strategies for movement-building and mobilisation, such as convenings and to some extent communications. This "is a potential indicator that these strategies are less supported or difficult to fundraise for" (p. 59).

Indigenous women's groups work with smaller groups and populations compared to other women's rights groups. An analysis of IFAD proposals "reveals that groups are averaging 450 direct beneficiaries and 2,500 indirect beneficiaries". The "beneficiary groups are larger in Asia and Africa than in Latin America and the Caribbean" (p. 15). This being said, "[w]hen compared to women human rights groups and young feminist groups, Indigenous women's groups are not markedly different in size and profile e.g. in terms of size, income, age, or assets" (p. 13).

Negative factors and conditions hindering effective funding

Indigenous women's groups "face **significant barriers to accessing the resources they need**", with major barriers to accessing long-term funding (p. 13). The barriers are:

- "The prominence of '**traditional philanthropy'**" in diverse funding sectors, i.e. an approach rooted in "**providing charity and aid**, instead of funding social change" (p. 13). Such models "remain **trapped in old attitudes of discrimination** which do not

sufficiently respect and value" Indigenous peoples' views and knowledge. There is a "long history of paternalism, maternalism, and 'saviour models' that continue to be pervasive in the landscape of funding available for Indigenous communities. This history has left Indigenous women and their organizations sceptical about engaging in new partnerships, concerned that their own expertise and value will be minimized" (p. 64).

- Practical impediments to channelling funds to Indigenous women's groups (p. 65). These include:
  - A "**lack of legal status** as a registered NGO" (p. 13). Few Indigenous women's organisations are registered, by constraint or by political choice (p. 65).
  - A l**ack of administrative systems, and of capacity, e.g. in budgeting** (p. 13, 65). This is one of the biggest obstacles for small Indigenous women's groups (p. 66).
    - "This makes it difficult for groups to apply for funding in the first place, especially with few skills and experience to write grants, little knowledge of funding opportunities, and usually without paid staff (p. 66).
    - In addition, there are "technical challenges and requirements associated with getting the funds to the grantees". There, barriers relate "to access and registration of bank accounts, lack of computer and internet access, and fiscal and tax requirements" (p. 66).
  - A **lack of accessibility, due to language or geographic remoteness** (p. 66).

Positive factors and conditions enabling effective funding partnerships

While no two Indigenous women's groups are alike, key characteristics that build strong partnerships between such groups and donors include (p. 13-14):

- **respecting collective rights**;
- "supporting **intergenerational transmission of knowledge**";
- "offering support to **build administrative and financial capacities**";
- "considering **re-granting as a key strategy** to reach grassroots Indigenous women".

To overcome the barriers due to a lack of accessibility in language or geography, "dedicated funders are finding new ways". For example, the Global Fund for Women "is exploring alternative application and reporting formats that will be more voice-led, visual and in respect of oral traditions of Indigenous groups so their storytelling can be captured. […] Global Greengrants Fund has set up an advisory network to help grantees with receiving the funds and overcoming any technical hurtles, such as getting bank accounts set up" (p. 66).

Recommendations to funders for effective work

Funders should ensure **Indigenous Women's full and effective participation** "across the globe **in designing** funding priorities, projects, and initiatives beginning with the earliest conceptual states of strategy-building **and continuing throughout the entire course of the grant making**, technical assistance, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and any other steps in the funding and evaluation process" (p. 75).

In doing so, donors should **"[a]cknowledge, honour, and respect** in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner, **the resources and contributions of Indigenous peoples and their own governance** structures and other organizations including time, spiritual ancestral knowledge and

movement building" (p. 75). "Because the human rights demands of Indigenous women are distinct, funding for Indigenous women's groups needs to be done entirely differently from existing paradigms". Donors can work from the **principles of Intercultural Philanthropy**, where Indigenous women's knowledge, experience, and efforts are valued. Donors thus have the opportunity and responsibility to help advance social justice (p. 15). In this regard, "[m]eaningful and culturally sensitive collaboration with Indigenous women's groups requires" that funders **gain a foundational understanding** "**of Indigenous peoples' worldviews or cosmovision** which can include knowledge of The Pursuit of Common Good, *Buen Vivir*, and the concept of territoriality or Mother Earth" (p. 15).

Funders can **cast a wider net, and** "**ensure resources are more widely accessible** to Indigenous women's groups". One helpful way to do this "is through **developing broader and more flexible funding application criteria**". Some of the interviewed funders indicated "that doing so allowed for the reception high-quality proposals from Indigenous women's groups who framed their work *their* way", respecting Indigenous peoples' cosmology and experiences (p. 15).

Donors should **support programmes** "**carried out directly by Indigenous women** across the globe, especially in rural and remote areas". They should also **encourage the building of networks and alliances** (p. 75).

Donors should **help build** "**the institutional capacities** of Indigenous Women's organizations and other initiatives so that they can participate as full leaders in any projects conducted on their territories or that impact them" (p. 75). "**Developing organizational capacity and administrative systems** are critical pathways to securing sustainable resources for Indigenous women's groups". Funders can develop more agile mechanisms for identifying organisations in need of longer-term support, so they contribute to developing these groups' technical and organisational capacities (p. 15).

"Funders, intermediaries and Indigenous women's groups should **collaborate to enhance**" **practices in monitoring and evaluation** (M&E). "Funders can play a leadership role [in] building M&E tools and systems that are responsive to the needs of the Indigenous women's groups they are supporting. Specifically, this could mean developing culturally appropriate evaluation indicators or launching separate Calls for Proposals for Indigenous women's groups. These kinds of efforts not only serve to recognize the diverse characteristics of Indigenous women's groups but also place Indigenous and worldviews at the center of an M&E system" (p. 15).

<u>Recommendations to all stakeholders for effective funding</u>

"To put ideas into action, and build knowledge, learning and collaboration along the way" (p. 78):

- "Convene an **intergenerational dialogue** focused on Indigenous women's leadership, to capitalize on the critical mass being built up (particularly in Latin America and Asia)".
- "Hold workshops to **break down existing tensions and discriminations between Indigenous [movements] and women's rights movements**—especially when it comes to working with Indigenous women who are working with men in their communities". "This is complex terrain, when 'traditions' are deployed to justify sexism, and false dichotomies are set up between 'community' and individual rights". International Network of Women's Funds (INWF) would be a source for learning on this, as it has "conducted several workshops to address these tensions", including 'Building a gender transformative

agenda' within the climate justice movement and one focused on the deployment of 'tradition'.

- Arrange for key funder allies and Indigenous women's groups to partner in order to "**host strategic convenings centered on key areas of institutional strengthening**", such as: "proposal writing, M&E, securing legal status, budget monitoring and oversight, [and] strategic planning".

- Have more "discussion, strategizing, and **collaboration […] between organizations and groups playing intermediary roles**/ re-granting funds to Indigenous women's groups".

- "Take advantage of key advocacy moments (regional or international) to **convene Resource Mobilizations dialogues** between Indigenous women's groups" and diverse funders.

- For women's Funds, continue to play a key role, or develop a plan, "to lead **philanthropic advocacy and donor education** around […] funding for Indigenous women's groups". More broadly, stakeholders could "develop and implement an advocacy plan targeting key funding sectors encouraging them to tracking resource flows funding going towards Indigenous women's groups". In addition, collaborate "on a communications campaign targeting untapped funders and explaining why they need to pay attention to Indigenous women and what is happening on the ground".

Reference on advocacy interventions

Policy and Operations Evaluation Department [IOB]. (2015). Opening doors and unlocking potential. Key lessons from an evaluation of support for Policy Influencing, Lobbying and Advocacy (PILA) (IOB Evaluation No. 407). Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/derec/netherlands/Opening-doors-unlocking-potential-PILA.pdf

Type of literature: practitioner	**Publisher type & location:** government (Netherlands)
Type of reference: internal evaluation	**Peer review:** yes, internal, with external advice
Geographic scope: focus on several low- and middle-income countries in various world regions	**Time frame covered:** 2008-2014
Empirical material: primary & secondary (qualitative and quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** multi-case study with comparisons, about the effectiveness of the support provided by donors and non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) to the capacity of Southern civil society organisations (CSOs) to practice Policy Influencing, Lobbying and Advocacy (PILA)
Methodology & sample size: "The evaluation selected illustrative country and thematic case studies that serve the learning goal of this evaluation. IOB does not claim that these cases are representative" (p. 133).	
Overall, methods included: 1. Desk-based studies or reviews of academic, practitioner, and/or policy literature or documents (esp. evaluations), and thematic case studies; 2. Field-based country studies in Kenya and Mozambique, including semi-structured interviews.	
To assess and attribute change, combination of contribution analysis and stakeholder analysis.	

State of knowledge, and contribution of report to evidence base

"**[L]ittle systematic knowledge is available** about the effectiveness of donor support provided for lobbying and advocacy, or about the factors leading to or impeding its success" (p. 15).

"**This report provides lessons that are generally applicable** to improving the effectiveness of support for PILA capacity development. PILA support could be more effective if the insights generated by this evaluation were addressed systematically by all actors, including donors, Northern NGDOs [and] Southern CSOs" (p. 15).

Overarching findings

- Results: "CSOs succeed to varying degrees in placing issues **higher on the agenda** and in **influencing policy**. However, **policy implementation, let alone impact on the ground, is far more difficult** to realize" (p. 15).

- Factors and conditions affecting effectiveness:

"The **environment in which Southern CSOs operate** is one of the major factors to explain PILA effectiveness, as it determines the conditions in which CSOs' PILA takes place and therefore the possibilities for success or failure" (p. 26). In particular, restrictive environments for PILA are a major reason for lesser effectiveness (p. 15).

In restrictive environments, CSOs "continue their PILA activities despite the opposition and persecution they face. However, they have to go about it carefully and strategically, with cooperative strategies being the only feasible approach. Aspects that are particularly important for effective PILA in restrictive environments are: 1) civic engagement, because creating strong support is key; 2) national networks; and 3) international contacts, for example with donors" (p. 26).

The studies in Kenya and Mozambique "illustrate that the political economic context in a country is often underestimated. Political economy analysis (PEA) is an important tool to help achieve a better understanding and it provides for more realistic prospects and mechanisms for change. In practice, however, solid PEAs are often missing or outdated" (p. 26).

"The **capacity of CSOs to handle these contextual factors** is another element that determines effectiveness. The CSO's Theory of Change [ToC] and the choice of strategies are particularly important aspects" (p. 26). In particular, the limited capacity of Southern CSOs is a major reason for lesser effectiveness (p. 15).

For example, in Kenya and Mozambique, the supported "CSOs respond quickly when issues emerge or when they are invited to advise government", but "their ability to remain on course is weak, as is the coherence of their actions under duress". This is because most of them tend to be reactive, and are dependent on donor agendas (p. 26). In addition, the examined CSOs in Kenya and Mozambique "tend to have weak connections with the communities they claim to work for and represent – the poor and marginalized […]. Their ability to identify with those groups and develop and maintain relations with them is seriously at stake". In addition, they "experience problems with working in coalitions, which are generally weak or tend to fall apart. These weaknesses combined make CSOs vulnerable and less effective when contexts are restrictive" (p. 26).

Developing capacity for PILA is evolutionary, and rooted in each CSO's work and experiences. "Tacit knowledge, the informal knowledge of how and why things work, is an essential part of this. Regular reflection based on a ToC helps to systematize this knowledge and make it available for broader application. However, much capacity development is centered on training, although little is known about whether the skills and knowledge acquired in these trainings permeate in the operations of the CSOs and improve their effectiveness. Strengthening CSO capacity by systematic reflection on which PILA strategies and activities may work and are effective in realizing the organization's objectives, is generally underutilized" (p. 27).

In addition, while Southern CSOs appreciate the Dutch support, that **support** "**is not strategic**", and "does not address issues such as Southern CSOs' questionable political and social legitimacy" (p. 15). Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, additional challenges for effective support arise out of **dilemmas in policy priorities** (e.g. aid vs. trade, economic or security interests vs. human rights and democracy), and out of **varying knowledge and experience** (p. 28).

Donors "primarily fund their own priorities […]. These choices do not necessarily reflect the priorities of the CSOs they support. Furthermore, mobilization of citizens through social media and mobile communications often bypasses formal CSOs. This presents new challenges to donors, as it is difficult for them to reach more informal civil society groups" (p. 27). Indeed, donors "tend to equate civil society with CSOs". Their support has focused on professionalised organisations, and excluded "other organizations that may be more successful in mobilizing the population", such as informal or religious groups. Furthermore, "donors generally neglect Parliament as a state interlocutor", favouring the executive (p. 27).

- Lessons for effectiveness:

To deal with restrictive environments (p. 15):
- "Donors can **help defend the operating space** for conducting PILA.
- A Theory of Change based on **political economy analysis** is indispensable.
- **Customized approaches** are required as are experiments. Donors need to allow **room for failure**.
- **Coalitions** pursuing a common goal are paramount".

To improve capacity development on PILA (p. 15):
- "Donors and Northern NGDOs should give **precedence to Southern CSOs' ownership**.
- Southern CSOs need **sound monitoring and evaluation systems** for learning".

<u>Specific findings on funding support to PILA for gender equality</u>

- Types of interventions: Findings on this focus on the Dutch MDG3 Fund for gender equality. This Fund, introduced in 2008, had a total expenditure of EUR 77 million. Around 80% of the funded projects "claimed to pursue **advocacy and lobbying** as their main strategy. The main activities included conducting research, organizing conferences, strengthening advocacy-oriented networks and alliances and investing in raising awareness on equal rights and opportunities for women. This involved targeting the general public, specific target groups and government institutions" (p. 62).

"Most of the grantees were larger, well-established organizations like women funds, international networks and INGOs, which in turn often sub-granted to **smaller local and grassroots organizations**". Most grantees developed interventions aimed at enhancing women's political participation (most often through women's leadership at local level, to enhance women's capacity for voice and claim-making), and aimed at fighting gender-based violence (GBV) (p. 62).

- Mixed results and impact:

"Most of the MDG3 projects have **contributed to putting gender issues on the public and political agenda**, which is supported by awareness creation on specific issues among different target groups. This in it turn has contributed to **changes in the enabling environment**, including for example improvements in legal frameworks and enhanced knowledge of traditional leaders, government and community members" (p. 61).

However, how much "the interventions contributed to real improvements for women remains to be seen. In almost all projects the **socio-cultural sustainability of [...] 'changed discourse' and 'changed attitudes' is at risk**" (p. 63).

- The Fund "was too short-lived to change social norms and traditions that underpin the discrimination of women".
- The "grantees did not sufficiently challenge prevailing standards and patterns through community dialogues or by challenging the perceptions of individual men and women".
- The risk to the sustainability of changes "may be less in projects that also involved 'professionals', such as teachers, public officers, lawyers, journalists and religious leaders, besides community volunteers. In those projects social and cultural standards that form the basis of women's discrimination are discussed. Gender equality is embedded within the work of these professionals and this contributes to continuation of dialogue addressing root causes of gender inequality and its many manifestations".

- Lesson: It is "necessary to **combine a focus on policy change with efforts aimed at achieving changes in society**". Changes in policy are not enough. "There is still a gap between increased knowledge and changing attitudes that eventually lead towards changed behavior. Social and cultural values, standards and practices constrain the possibilities to further gender equality. This needs to be addressed in order to achieve real progress, but changing personal attitudes and social practices is very hard" (p. 61).

Yet, "only a limited number of projects have effectively invested in changing social standards and cultural practices that form the root causes of discrimination of women, by entering into real dialogues at community level" (p. 61). "On issues like gender-based violence, female leadership, women workers' rights and property and inheritance rights for women CSOs have achieved little consolidated change" (p. 62).

Specific findings on support to PILA in Mozambique

CSOs' PILA **successfully promoted women's political participation**, combated "violence against women and corruption, and improved the transparency of MPs pension schemes. "Government officials are starting to recognize the role of CSOs. However, once CSOs succeed in influencing policy, the bigger **challenge is to have these policies budgeted and implemented**" (p. 25).

Reference on interventions involving women's groups or self-help groups

Brody, C., Hoop, T. de, Vojtkova, M., Warnock, R., Dunbar, M., Murthy, P., & Dworkin, S. L. (2017). Can self-help group programs improve women's empowerment? A systematic review. Journal of Development Effectiveness, 9(1), 15–40.
https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2016.1206607

Also see the full review at:
Brody, C., De Hoop, T., Vojtkova, M., Warnock, R., Dunbar, M., Murthy, P., … Brody, C. (2015). Economic Self-Help group Programs for Improving Women's. Campbell Systematic Reviews, 19. Retrieved from
http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/media/k2/attachments/Brody_Self_Help_Review.pdf

Type of literature: academic	**Publisher type & location:** academic
Type of reference: journal article	**Peer review:** yes
Geographic scope: region - indicate / country - indicate / sub-region - indicate	**Time frame covered:** years 0000-0000 / not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative & quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** systematic review, about "the impact of women's self-help groups (SHGs) on women's economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment" (p. 1)

Methodology & sample size: The theoretical framework was a "theory of change that describes the pathways through which SHGs can influence women's empowerment" (p. 3).
The systematic review used an integrated mixed-methods approach: 1. Examining quantitative studies that focused on "the impact of women's SHGs on various dimensions of women's empowerment"; 2. Examining qualitative studies on "the perspectives of female SHG members on their experiences of empowerment resulting from their participation in women's SHGs"; 3. "Synthesising the findings of the quantitative and qualitative studies" through triangulation. The review followed the standards set out by the Campbell Collaboration (p. 3-4).
Review of "an extensive range of electronic databases, grey literature, relevant journals and organisation websites", with keyword hand searches, as well as requests for recommendations from key persons (p. 5).

State of knowledge

The systematic review reviewed 3,536 abstracts from searches in electronic databases, and 351 abstracts from searches in grey literature. It selected for inclusion "**23 quantitative and 11 qualitative studies** in the final analysis" (p. 2). The qualitative studies had "an emphasis on SHGs in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bolivia, and Tanzania" (p. 14).

There are "**some indications of publication bias** in studies that estimate the impact of SHGs on economic empowerment" (p. 2). There was only a "limited number of quantitative studies with a low or medium risk of selection bias" (p. 3). "[E]ach of the 23 included quantitative studies had some risk of bias. Of the 23 included quantitative studies, 3 were rated as low risk of selection bias, 5 were rated as low risk of performance bias, 6 were rated as low risk of outcome and analysis reporting bias, and 8 were rated as low risk of other biases" (p. 8).

In addition, "many quantitative studies **did not include sufficient information about the details of the programme design**" to enable the article authors to "determine the moderating effect of programme characteristics identified in the qualitative research" (p. 3).

Similarly, "although both the quantitative and the qualitative studies indicated a positive moderating effect of training of SHG members on empowerment, both the quantitative and qualitative studies **did not present sufficient details about the contents of the training to establish what type of training is needed** to stimulate women's empowerment among SHG members" (p. 3).

<u>Effects of women's participation in SHGs on their political empowerment</u>

"Of the 23 included **quantitative** studies, 2 included an estimate of women's political empowerment resulting from SHGs that [the review could] include in [the] meta-analysis and had low or medium risk of selection bias". The "results suggested that **women's SHGs have a positive effect on women's political empowerment**. The average effect of women's SHGs on political empowerment was estimated as 0.19 standard deviations (SMD = 0.19, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.36 […])" (p. 9).

Based on a meta-ethnographic analysis of the **qualitative** studies, the review identifies **largely positive effects of women's participation in SHGs on their political empowerment**:

- "**Catalysing broader social action** (high confidence in findings)": "In seven studies, women described their participation in a SHG as a 'stepping stone' (Mathrani and Periodi 2006) towards wider social participation but not necessarily a political act in itself. Participation in SHGs did expose the women to women's rights through participation in social activities, give them political capital through networking (Kumari 2011; Dahal 2014). Their SHG participation also encouraged them to speak out on political issues such as transparency and accountability (Knowles 2014; Sahu and Singh 2012). In addition, women who participated in local village governments indicated that participating in SHGs enabled them to take leadership positions in the government (Kilby 2011)" (p. 20-21).

- **Understanding and acting on political context** (moderate confidence in findings) (p. 21):
  - "In three settings, women talked about understanding what they could change in their communities. Women were able to identify the barriers to affecting change in their community through even small political acts (Mathrani and Periodi 2006; Pattenden 2011; Ramachandar and Pelto 2009)".
  - "In two other settings, women reported that the gradual acceptance by husbands and community member gave way to broader acceptance and respect, which lent strength to their political efforts (Mathrani and Periodi 2006; Ramachandar and Pelto 2009)".
  - "In one case, however, women reported that changing the status of women in their society was not their priority and not on their stated agenda (Mathrani and Periodi 2006). In this case, it appeared as if women SHG members remained focused on poverty reduction through income generation and community development – not directly challenging gender norms or women's status in society".

Qualitative studies also revealed **some adverse outcomes** on women's political and/or social empowerment relevant to the present report. One of these was **disappointment** (with review authors having moderate confidence in these findings). "Five studies reported that some women felt a degree of disappointment when their groups did not deliver on perceived promises such as

solving social problems in their villages such as alcoholism (Mercer 2002) and challenging cultural norms (Dahal 2014; Kabeer 2011). Another source of disappointment occurred when women gained new awareness about rights but were not able to enact them (Kumari 2011), or when their group took on new responsibilities but in the end did not have the authority or financial power to make changes (Maclean 2012)" (p. 21).

Another adverse outcome related to stigma (with review authors having moderate confidence in these findings). "Some SHG members reported facing **public shame or discrimination**, especially during the formation of the groups". This experience was "reported to a lesser degree than experiences of increased respect by community member[s]". "Nonetheless, women reported hearing stories of other SHG members being stoned for their membership (Pattenden 2011) or that they felt that SHG women were seen as troublemakers accused of trying to take over the local council (Mathrani and Periodi 2006)" (p. 21).

Findings on social empowerment with likely relevance to collective action and WPE

Qualitative findings point to several relevant effects on social empowerment:

- **Networking** (high confidence in findings): "Women SHG members reported more confidence speaking in front of others and feeling more comfortable working with various stakeholders to achieve positive changes in their communities (Kabeer 2011; Kilby 2011; Knowles 2014; Kumari 2011; Mathrani and Periodi 2006; Pattenden 2011; Sahu and Singh 2012). For these women SHG members, networking experiences represented a significant change from being confined to the domestic sphere and speaking only to family and close neighbours" (p. 20).

- **Community respect** (high confidence in findings): "being an SHG member may have resulted in increases in respect from community members in five studies (Dahal 2014; Kabeer 2011; Kumari 2011; Sahu and Singh 2012; Ramachandar and Pelto 2009). Women described walking confidently through their villages and having the courage to approach authorities in a group whereas before they had not felt this way" (p. 20).

Overall findings on effects of women's participation in SHGs on their empowerment

Women's economic SHGs "have **positive effects on economic and political empowerment**, women's mobility, and women's control over family planning. The estimated effect sizes range from 0.06–0.41 standardised mean differences" (p. 1). By contrast, there was no evidence "for positive effects of SHGs on psychological empowerment" (p. 1), based on qualitative evidence (p. 11). Triangulation "of the quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that SHGs do not have adverse consequences for domestic violence" (p. 1).

However, "although SHGs have positive effects on various dimensions of women's empowerment, these **positive impacts do not necessarily translate to positive effects on the poorest of the poor**" (p. 3). For example, several of the selected qualitative studies noted barriers to participation in SHGs based on class, caste, or religion (p. 21).

Factors of effectiveness

The qualitative research "suggested that the positive effects of SHGs on economic, social, and political empowerment may run through the channels of familiarity with handling money and **independence in financial decision-making, solidarity, improved social networks, and respect from the household and other community members**" (p. 14).

However, "**it remains unclear which of the various SHG models are most effective**", because "the included evaluations often did not include sufficient information about the specifics of the activities that were implemented by the SHGs" (p. 1).

Reference on interventions to engage men and boys

Edström, J., Hassink, A., Shahrokh, T., & Stern, E. (2015). Engendering Men. A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality (Evidence Report). Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice, & Institute of Development Studies. Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7059/EMERGE%20Evidence_Report_final.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Type of literature: practitioner & policy	**Publisher type & location:** NGOs and policy advice institute
Type of reference: report	**Peer review:** yes, internal and external peer review
Geographic scope: world, with focus on low- and middle-income countries	**Time frame covered:** 2005-2015, with a few key publications from earlier dates
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative & quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** literature review, about what works best to engage men and boys for gender equality
Methodology & sample size: 1. Framing of priority questions; 2. Review and selection of academic, practitioner, and policy literature; 3. 1-3 key informant interviews on each of the 9 thematic areas (which include public and political participation, and conflict, security and peace-building), to facilitate the interpretation of literature "and highlight key additional information" (p. 5).	

State of knowledge and evidence gaps on public and political participation

Evidence is sparse "**on effective strategies and practices for men's progressive engagement** in gender-equal public and political participation" (p. 161). This knowledge gap is part of a larger issue whereby relatively little evidence seems available on men's relevance to – and roles in – achieving greater gender equality in public participation and politics. "Considerable research exists on many areas of politics, citizenship and participation generally, as well as studies with a specific focus on women's participation. Nevertheless, little of this has focused on the role of men in direct or substantive ways and little has emerged directly from […] studies of men and masculinities (Cornwall, Edström and Greig 2011)" (p. 151).

Although "some interesting examples" are available about helpful aid (p. 161), **key gaps in evidence remain**. Major points that call for attention and learning include the following (p. 162).

First, there is "**a gap in programming with men in support of women's political empowerment**, and beyond current programmes focused on interpersonal issues" of health, violence or caring. **There need to be pilot programmes to** "**engage men in advocating** for women's civil and political rights and demanding the reform of patriarchal political institutions. This should include working with male politicians to address their attitudes to gender issues and/or organising men to hold decision-makers to account for voting against progressive gender equality legislation, for example. However, it may require 'pilot interventions' to become more

linked in with politicised movements – thus engaging activists in their design – where possible linking across movements for social justice" (p. 162).

Second, there "is **a serious lack of evidence on effective approaches for increasing men's active support for and engagement in women's public and political participation**". Available knowledge shows that "male champions of women's leadership and gender equality, especially those in positions of power, can play an important role in [creating] more inclusive and gender-equal political institutions and in [promoting] gender equality. Yet structured interventions or well-documented strategies for working on this seem to be lacking". Interventions in this area are needed, "not only to engage with the 'everyman' but also, and particularly, with elite men in positions of power. This may be facilitated by working with activist women and men, who engage with people in power", but there are very few documented examples of development initiatives attempting to do this (p. 162).

Third, **better evidence is needed on how institutions (including political ones) and their cultures can be reformed**. "Combining targeted support to women employees, candidates and politicians with concrete reforms to political and public institutions" seems "necessary to challenge the masculinity (or masculinised cultures) of public and political arenas, and to change the institutions that sustain gender orders. There is a need for further, and deliberate, action research on specific strategies for this within 'live' settings of institutional reform" (p. 162).

<u>Effective strategies and practices on public and political participation</u>

Three sets of effective strategies and practices emerge from the limited evidence available.

First, strategies "**in formal politics and other institutions of power** can usefully (p. 161):

- "identify and engage male champions of women's political participation, especially in leadership positions;
- frame the issue around the wellbeing of society and the fact that gender equality affects everyone;
- lobby for men's buy-in and support, in direct debates interacting with strong opponents;
- provide progressive men with roles and responsibilities for gender equality; and
- involve men strategically in public campaigning activities to build men's support and direct discussion and learning with those facing discrimination".

Second, strategies "for **women's equal participation in wider social justice movements** include" (p. 162):

- "bringing men together with women from NGOs that are addressing issues of social justice, to show how gender justice is intrinsic to social justice, as in the experience of the Grupo de Hombres Contra la Violencia/GMAV (Group of Men Against Violence) in Nicaragua; and
- women organising within social movements to increase gender awareness within the wider movements, as was done with CLOC-Via Campesina in Latin America, which can enable women to have a greater voice along with male members' greater acceptance".

Third, "**pro-feminist activism can emerge from men's engagement**" in, e.g., "addressing sexual and gender-based violence in community-based initiatives" (p. 162). Approaches to this include (p. 162):

- "building on men's sense of responsibility in the issue, and recognition that it also affects men (as brothers, fathers and sons of women facing abuse), as in projects such as Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) and Rape and Violence End Now (RAVEN) in the United States". This "approach is sometimes criticised for falling back on patriarchal ideals of male responsibility and protection".

- "pro-feminist work building a consciousness that men can and often do have personal investments in challenging oppressive gender orders, in direct collaboration with women's organisations, as was done in South Africa's Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT)". This approach "takes a more politicised perspective on violence as structurally driven and rooted in broader social injustice".

State of knowledge and evidence gaps on conflict, security, and peace-building

Much of the literature on war still exists in parallel, rather than in concert, with gendered analyses (Mazurana and Proctor 2013, cited p. 148). This is despite international aid actors' "increased attention to women's and men's varied experiences of both conflict and peace-building, including the roles of perpetration, victimisation and change-making". Additional **research is needed** to better understand "how trends in conflict, victimisation, humanitarian assistance and peace-building processes and policies affect gender relations both during and after conflict, **to facilitate the development of more effective policies and programmes**" (p. 148). Recommendations for future that relate to collective action for WPE include (p. 148):

- "Further explore how to combat and change patriarchy, misogyny and militarised masculinities to prevent conflict, promote peace, and limit the subsequent damage done to the emotional, physical and social lives of women, girls, men and boys".

- "Expand the gendered lens of conflict beyond experiences of violence", to include various disparities amongst men and women, e.g. in conflict-related economics and migration (Buvinic et al. 2013; Theidon et al. 2011).

- "Increase context-specific research and learning […] (Mazurana and Proctor 2013)".

- Conduct more research to understand "the diversity of men's and women's experiences of conflict" (Kaufman 2012; Myrttinen et al. 2014).

- Develop more nuanced and contextualised research on the drivers of sexual violence during wars and into peacetime (Theidon et al. 2011).

Effective strategies and practices on conflict, security, and peace-building

Few recommendations emerging from the literature are about support to collective action for WPE. Of these, **recommendations on structures and policies** include (p. 149):

- On peace-building processes: "Meaningfully and substantively include women […], whilst building men's support for, collaboration and engagement with this".

- On wartime atrocities: Ensuring "that policies hold perpetrators accountable […], while engaging both men and women in the prevention of further abuses".

Recommendations on programming interventions include (p. 147-148):

- "Programmes that engage men and boys in initiatives for women and girls should […] not inadvertently exacerbate trauma or harmful norms". They "should provide safe spaces for men to heal, but also to educate, […] change social norms, rebuild families and provide opportunities for jobs and economic growth (Kaufman 2012)".

- When engaging men and boys during post-conflict restoration, men's needs must not be "juxtaposed against the needs of women and girls, who are generally in the most vulnerable positions. Spaces must exist where women and girls feel safe and have their own […] support needs provided for […] (United Nations 2014)".

- "[L]onger-term engagement in post-conflict settings may include men's positive involvement in women's economic empowerment programming, campaigns and programmes to encourage men's caregiving and alleviate the inequitable burden of care on women, and transformative programming for adolescent boys and girls, designed to question traditional or harmful norms (Kaufman 2012)".

- Important directions in programming include: "[…] life skills training (interpersonal communications, relationship skills, conflict management, etc.), and addressing and providing alternative definitions of masculinity, particularly for ex-combatants (LOGiCA and Promundo 2014)".

Further reading

References on interventions in general, or on programmes with multiple interventions

Academic references (all peer-reviewed)

Edwards, J., & Cornwall, A. (Eds.). (2014). **Feminisms, Empowerment and Development: Changing Women's Lives**. Zed Books Ltd.

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6. Interventions in adverse contexts

Adverse contexts include settings of armed conflict or their aftermath, other settings with high levels of violence, and States with weak institutions or capacities.

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Type of literature: academic	**Publisher type:** academic
Type of reference: journal article	**Peer review:** yes
Geographic scope: conflict-affected and fragile States (FCAS)	**Time frame covered:** not indicated
Empirical material: secondary (qualitative & quantitative material)	**Approach to material:** review of evidence, about how gender equality could be strengthened in FCAS
Methodology & sample size: review of evidence commissioned by DfID. No specific indications about methodology within the article *(see the original study by O'Connell for details on this, referenced in this report)*.	

Prevailing gaps in donor policy and programming

State-building in FCAS "has been widely regarded as an opportunity for securing greater gender equity and equality. While there has been some success in relation to women's participation in elections and formal politics and engagement in small-scale economic enterprise, **inequitable gender power relations within the household and wider society have not been considered or understood, and thus opportunities have been lost**" (p. 455).

The study finds that the **gap persists between external actors' stated commitments** "to integrating gender analysis in all interventions" in FCAS, **and what they actually do** (p. 462).

"Gender analysis is not systematically used in situation analysis, programme design or evaluations" (p. 462). The study found no "examples of country programmes or large-scale sectoral programmes where gender analysis had been fully integrated throughout the programme cycle. Gender analysis […] is not fully understood as an analytical framework that enables effective interrogation of and changes to gender power relations" (p. 463).

"Gender mainstreaming by the donor community tends to be regarded as placing gender components within mainstream programmes. […] external actors' policy commitment to gender equality, women's human rights and gender mainstreaming are not explicitly articulated in political dialogue" (p. 463). "Work on gender-related issues was also not covered in many reports and evaluations of interventions, and so its nature and extent remained […] impossible to assess" (p. 462-463).

Evaluations of humanitarian and development aid devote "surprisingly **little systematic attention" and analysis "to the roles and impact of local and national women's organisations"**, "despite the dependence of international agencies on these organisations'

access to marginalised communities, their energy and efforts". Women's organisations "are regarded primarily as implementers rather than change agents" (p. 464).

The **factors behind this failure** included: 'policy evaporation'; feeble will and interest on part of management; competing priorities; "weak planning, reporting and accountability systems"; and inappropriate staff training (p. 462). "Even where the exclusion of women from political, economic and social power was understood as a core cause of the fragility of the state, resources were not channelled to address this" (Chapman and Vaillant 2010, cited p. 463).

Support to collective action for participation in peace-making

In some contexts, aid actors have successfully supported women's movements. For example, with the 2006 Juba Peace Talks on the conflict in northern Uganda, "UNIFEM's funding and advocacy support was critical in ensuring women could participate […] and have their voices heard in the negotiations (International Alert 2010)". "Following a protest march for peace, organised by the Uganda Women's Network, women were successful in gaining observer status and four women on the government team" (p. 457).

However, overall, "the hopes invested by women's organisations and feminist activists in Resolution 1325 remain unfulfilled" (p. 457). Women were, and are, "largely excluded from formal peace and political settlement negotiations" (p. 457). For example, there were many cases where women "were unsuccessful in their efforts to participate in the peace settlement negotiations", e.g. in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Kosovo. Women's "demands for inclusion were resisted by male elites who commanded the formal and informal processes, even where women had been prominent as peace activists, as in Sierra Leone and Southern Sudan" (Castillejo 2011, cited p. 457). For example, "the quota demanded by women was not incorporated into the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) or in the new constitution", which Sara Abbas (2010) views as "a 'deliberate strategy' by male politicians who wished to use a form of words that would 'guarantee the most flexibility and possibilities for change'" (cited p. 457).

The **wealth of academic literature** on gender power relations during conflict and in its aftermath **has not been informing international policy-making** (p. 457).

In addition, "[g]reater **investment is needed in building the capacity of women's peace coalitions** to better engage in and influence peace processes" (p. 457-458).

Support to collective action for participation in constitution-making and institution-building

With support from external actors, women's movements were able to, in some situations, "**use the leverage of international conventions and agreements** to make the case for enshrining gender equality within new constitutions" (p. 458).

However, "**overall support to peacemaking and political settlement processes lacked integration of gender issues**". External actors "who supported peace and political settlement negotiations" had a marked reluctance "to act on their own policy commitments or [to] encourage national partners' compliance with international human rights standards (see, for example, Castillejo 2011). The opportunities presented in political dialogue for discussing gender equality and equity issues were also underused". This can have significant implications for women's political empowerment and citizenship (p. 458).

Constraining conditions in this area included:

- "cultural assumptions about women's status and acceptance of the status quo". This included misalignment between customary law and international human rights standards, in some cases (p. 458).

- "lack of awareness and understanding of the impact of gender inequality" (p. 458).

- "[f]ear of derailing a fragile political settlement by advocating equality and social inclusion" (p. 458). Yet, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, international "cautiousness in advocating for gender equality and equity goals" was matched by "no evidence that such donor advocacy would lead to instability" (Benard 2008, cited p. 458).

- lack of resources and political influence for "ministries or government bodies with responsibility for women's affairs and gender equality", even though these institutions "contributed to building an enabling policy environment for gender equity and equality". "The challenges these bodies faced were common to many contexts: no clear political agenda, marginal influence within government, and few human and financial resources" (p. 458).

<u>Support to collective action for economic empowerment, with effects on WPE</u>

"There is a **shortage of rigorous evaluations** on interventions aiming to challenge gender inequality explicitly, alongside their practical needs, and little interrogation of (anecdotal) impact on gender relations" (p. 462).

Interventions to support women's economic activities after armed conflicts "need to **reflect and build on women's political empowerment gains** by enabling women to challenge gendered economic relations and constraints and take leadership positions in economic and political structures". External or internal activities should **avoid solely targeting women's "roles as carers and household managers"** (p. 462).

Indeed, some interventions for WEE "tried to **address women's strategic interests** (such as, enabling women to participate in decision-making inside and outside the home and challenge gender power relations) alongside their practical needs". These interventions "brought greater political, economic and social empowerment outcomes" than those which merely addressed their practical needs (p. 461).

For example, in Nepal, "investing in water and sanitation infrastructure and in measures to promote the inclusion of women and the poorest and most marginalised groups in service decision-making brought positive results (see WaterAid in Nepal 2009)" (p. 461).

"In Angola, 'cross-over' interventions that combined support to livelihoods and access to public services with the development of municipal fora appeared to have been effective [...]. The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP) financed [...] by DFID from 1999 to 2010, focused primarily on microfinance, water and sanitation, early childhood development, and participatory governance. Civil society organisations had grown in the [...] poor suburbs and shantytowns". There were "interactions and political engagement between CSOs and the local state. The municipal development fora established in five municipalities had provided a space for women and men from the community to express themselves, build relationships with local authority officials, and close the gap between state and society" (Earle 2011, cited pp. 461-462).

The study concluded there was "**no blueprint** for promoting women's empowerment and gender equity" in FCAS, because of the context of each location and history (p. 464).

However, the evidence shows that context-specific progress "can be made through **systematic action in a number of areas and at several levels**. These include constitutional and legal frameworks that enshrine gender equality and equity, inclusive and equitable political institutions and gender-responsive economic and social policy-making, and clear accountability mechanisms. Progress on women's political empowerment, on economic empowerment and on access to quality services is mutually reinforcing. Vibrant women's organisations, and a gender-aware media, have crucial roles to play. Fulfilling women and girls' human rights is an intensely political, controversial and long-term project, and one that, ultimately, has to be locally driven. However, […] external actors can assist in many ways" (p. 464).

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8. Further information

Key websites

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- BRIDGE – Gender and social movements: http://socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/
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- *Development* – Power, Movements, Change (special issue, Volume 52, Issue 2): http://test-www.palgrave-journals.com/development/journal/v52/n2/index.html
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- Pathways of Women's Empowerment (IDS): http://archive.ids.ac.uk/pathwaysofempowerment/www.pathwaysofempowerment.org/index.html
- UN Women - Women's leadership and political participation: http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation
- UNDP – Research and publications – Gender equality: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/library.html?start=0&sort=date&view=cards&tag=topics:gender-equality

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